

From underserved to understood:

How to transform women's health innovations from niche research into viable ventures

It's clear that female-focused MedTech ventures are sorely needed, with women spending a higher proportion of their lifetimes in debilitating health than men do. But despite women comprising half the world's population, women's health continues to be considered a "niche" market.

"FemTech" ventures therefore typically must overcome challenges that are hallmarks of under-resourced or underserved health areas. In this article, IDE Group — a leading MedTech partner for developing and commercializing products and ideas into meaningful healthcare ventures — shares advice on how to overcome those challenges.

Challenge #1: Plugging data gaps

"Health innovations must be data-driven," say IDE Group's changemakers. The challenge? In underserved health areas, data is often lacking. Despite a promising trend toward collecting data to enhance health equity, these markets have historically been overlooked, resulting in limited reference data.

Therefore, you will likely need to collect new data to succeed. To de-risk your venture and limit costs, it's essential to gather sufficient data to rigorously assess market viability and desirability, develop a product that matches users' needs, and convince cautious investors of its promise — without going overboard.

As an example, take the Pixi: medical equipment company ResMed's pediatric sleep apnea face mask. As with female-specific face masks, the need to develop face masks designed for children was long overlooked, and data was sorely lacking.

IDE Group helped ResMed to strategically leverage a small dataset on children's facial structures, and correlate it to public datasets to build a model fit for a global pediatric population. Iterative design decisions minimized the requirement for expensive prototypes while developing the much-needed product.

The lesson? You may not need extensive novel data, but you must strategically collect the right data for your venture's stage and goals.

Challenge #2: Constructing a convincing product proposition

Ironically, in health areas where innovation has been lacking, it can be particularly challenging for stakeholders to understand the need for innovative solutions. A holistic approach that deeply considers the needs of end-users, care providers, investors, and regulatory agencies is essential to overcome this challenge.

A holistic, data-driven approach can also illuminate gaps in the current standard of care and support you in developing a product that not only meets, but exceeds standards that may be non-inclusive or outdated. This can also help you to build a compelling product proposition— as demonstrated by IDE Group while assisting Baymatob with the development of an AI-guided maternity sensor, monitoring and diagnostic platform.

Prenatal monitoring is crucial for helping doctors identify women at risk of postpartum hemorrhage — the leading cause of preventable maternal death. Yet, the clinical toolkit has received few modern updates, with care still relying on technologies such as the 19th century Pinard horn and the 1960s-era cardiocotograph.

IDE Group helped Baymatob challenge this standard of care by concomitantly developing and showcasing the necessity of their breakthrough healthcare innovation. Baymatob's Oli PPH is the first product to identify women at higher risk of developing postpartum hemorrhage well before childbirth. By proving the feasibility of this health gap, IDE Group assisted Baymatob in building a robust product that has since received the FDA Breakthrough Device Designation alongside innovation awards.

The lesson? Critically assess standards of care, and design a product that holistically addresses patient needs. This will enable you to plug healthcare gaps and build a rock-solid product proposition.

Challenge #3: Bringing innovations into the clinic

IDE Group emphasizes that engaging with the right stakeholders is key to navigating the path to the clinic. In doing so, you may even uncover unexpected ways in which your technology can serve patients.



When Atomo Diagnostics approached IDE Group with plans to develop an improved blood collection device, at first there was no clear market gap in high-income countries. Through background research and discussions with relevant stakeholders, IDE Group helped identify an underserved market in which the technology could make a real difference: point-of-care HIV-1 testing in low-income countries. As a result, they pivoted to create a user-friendly device that now provides rapid and reliable testing.

The lesson? Early discussions with the right stakeholders will boost your chance of success — and your impact for patients.

A bright future

As McKinsey recently proclaimed, we are at the "Dawn of the FemTech revolution", with increasing funding, support, and recognition for emerging ventures. This revolution has reached the Netherlands: at **Innovation for Health 2025, IDE Group invites you to join their unique session on women's health**, in which companies can pitch their work and compete for a **sponsored prize valued at €10 000**.

Interested innovators can submit proposals for presentations here, or contact IDE Group directly for expert and comprehensive support for developing MedTech ventures — even in "niche" markets. The underserved communities of the world need them.

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