Design for the elderly

How to get their needs?
The elderly:

Who are they?

How are they?
A lot ...

9000 hundred years old today in France
250 000 en 2050
Do you think they are like this?
They often are like that ...

« An old parrot does not need to learn where to lay its eggs” (African proverb) .
Disability-free life expectancy

2009 Data

- when 65:
  - Women: 12 years for a life expectancy of 20 years
  - Men: 10 years for a life expectancy of 16 years

- Every year, 10% of the independent population over 75 living at home loses autonomy for one of the daily life activities.
Functional limitations / age

- 1% 5.3% 15-24 yrs
- 2% 7.5% 25-34 yrs
- 3% 13.4% 35-44 yrs
- 6.00% 23.00% 45-54 yrs
- 12% 34.2% 55-64 yrs
- 18.5% 45.4% 65-69 yrs
- 22% 72.5% 70-74 yrs
- 41% 75+ yrs

- Functional Limitation
- Severe Functional Limitation
There is no « mean » senior

• seniors are all different, with various
  - Sensory capacities
  - Physical capacities
  - cognitive capacities
  - Experience and habits
  - Cultural & language characteristics

• They want to stay at home as long as possible and not depend on anybody else.
Design for seniors

- Conditions for a good appropriation of new products:
  - reliability
  - Possible evolution
  - Compatibility
  - user friendly
  - Enjoy using

- The expressed needs are not the real ones: they deny getting older.
  *The old people do not feel old and reject products for elderly*

- No senior-connoted product
  → design for all is interesting
Case study: design of a shower seat and bar

- Customers: everybody, incl. elderly, families, hotels
- Price: low
- Complies with standards for disabled
- Attractive
- Soon essential in any bathroom

Working team: designer + ergonomist
Survey among the elderly: 
the bathroom

• before a fall:  
  no special equipment
• after a fall: seat or/and safety rail, often put up by children
  Fear of falling
• Sometimes shower instead of previous bathtub
• Not pleasant: “that’s stuff for old people”
The bathroom: danger zone

The main place for falls at home:
- In/out of the bathtub
- Getting up again in the bathtub
- In/out of the shower
- Slip in the shower
- Slip on the wet floor
- Alone …
Professional advisers: special equipment
Retailers

No comment!
Better hear the sketch of Michèle Bernier: la baignoire à porte
« The time the bathtub is full, you are already dead! »
The needs

• Autonomy: to wash alone as long as possible
• No fear of falling
• No equipment for old people

• Large shower without step
• Anti-slip floor
• Seat in the shower
• Safety rail which does not look like a safety rail
6 proposals/ 1 patenting

- Foldaway seat for shower: easy to fold/unfold, easy to clean, narrow enough to allow standing in the shower, anti-slip even wet.
- Safety rail looking like a towel bar or/and a shower head support.
Brise line
Bump line
Fresh line
Happy line
Sea line
Liberty line

Still confidential
Available early in 2013
Design for All

is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design.
Brigitte RUEF – sept 2012

1. Making it available for use (Accessibility)

2. Making it easier to use (Usability)

3. Expanding the range of users (User diversity)

- People with no disabilities
- People with special needs (heights, nationalities, etc.)
- Elderly people
- Disabled people (legs/arms, visual/aural, etc.)

Universal design: Making it easier to use for more people.
User friendly
User friendly
Examples

- Tramway in Grenoble
- Battery for hearing aids
Design for all: how to do?

Guide for designers and companies
Take it the right way

available for free in French on:

Design for the elderly: no preconceived ideas

- The expressed needs are not the real ones
- Experiment, observe, interview people, without preconceived ideas
- With real users
- **Design for all**
- Enjoy using the product/service
- No senior-connoted product