

Masha Strømme from PAACS about NLSDays' Gender Science super session



Speaker
Super Session 4 - NLSDays 2022
Gender Science
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Masha Strømme
Co-Chair & Investor,
PAACS Invest

Dr Masha Strømme is an Advisor and Board member within the health care Industry, and Co-Chair and Investor at PAACS Invest. With a key focus on macro-trends within the health care industry, such as technology platforms with a particular focus on precision health.

Dr Strømme, thank you for accepting being part of the discussions around Gender Science: Reproducing for the other 50%. What is your take on this topic and how does it relate to the work that you do in your various positions?

– It is critical to take sex and gender into consideration when we work on developing new therapeutic modalities. “Incredible but true: Men and women are different in health and disease!” Differentials are seen in genetics, cell biology, development of diseases and response to therapies. At PAACS Invest, we strive to apply precision health standards to our investment companies to all workstreams. For example: for drug development process precision health standards would ensure that the right models are used, sex of the cells and animals for in vitro and in vivo testing is adequately controlled, that endpoints of clinical studies take into consideration the individual differences and finally that patient recruitment reflect the patient population for the disease.

Our ambition in this session is to not only show off the impressive innovation rising from Femtech companies and actors within reproductive medicine but to really change our thinking and perception around women’s health. Women’s health is just as much about how well existing drugs and therapies match with the biology of the 50% of the population made up by women as the innovations specifically targeting women exclusively. Do you agree?

– I agree wholeheartedly and this is precisely what our movement “4 Her Health” is focused on. I was recently going through a book - which I recommend to anyone interested in this topic - entitled “Outrageous Practices”. It was published in the late 90’s. Interestingly enough, over 20 years later, we are discussing the same issues - as if time had stood still. We need more women in leadership positions in the field of healthcare in order for women’s health issues to be in focus.

With an increased awareness about how medical development in the past left out a huge part of patients and customers, what do you believe will be the response from big pharma, medtechs and the life science industry at large?

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– Big data, AI, Machine Learning, DNA sequencing power, multi-omics data-driven models for drug discovery - all this is driving a change in the industry. Big corporates are moving in this direction - we see it in different ways. I think Covid helped everyone see that we all develop diseases differently - and therefore raised the global awareness of this fact/issue. Again. more women in leadership positions within the industry will help reach right focus on gender issues.

If you were to highlight one cool trend to keep an eye on related to the need to rethink for the other 50%, what would that be?

– So many trends today are fascinating to me - not sure I would consider them “cool” as such but certainly game changers for women.

1. Nutrigenomics - who nutrition is so personal - identical twins may not even benefit from the same diet - it is about epigenetics! A diet that works for me, may not work for my sister. And the diet may work at some stage of my life but not every stage.
2. Ministry of Menstruation to fight Period Shame - and Period Poverty.
3. So much of our state of being is linked to hormone fluctuations during the month and throughout life: the triumvirate of Endocrine system - Central nervous system- Immune system needs to be in focus!

