Perceptions of public convenience sanitaryware design in the UK

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Introduction
Public conveniences play a vital role in helping sustain standards of public health. However, evidence suggests people in the UK are dissatisfied with them.

Aim
The aim was to define the 18 to 65 year old user group’s relationships with toilets, urinals and sanitary towel bins in the UK.

Methodology
Data were gathered through an online questionnaire. The information collected was analysed according to gender and age of the participants.

The Toilet
- 46% of men and 60% of women feel public toilets are generally not at an acceptable level of hygiene
- Over 60% of users are concerned about splash back from toilets
- Over 1/3 of people hover over public toilets
  - 83% of women find it difficult to hover
- Over 25% of people feel cubicles do not provide adequate privacy, including a paruretic male user
- Over 65% of users perceive public toilets as negative
- Over 70% of participants find using public toilets unpleasant
- 21% of men and 17% of women suffer emotional distress from using public toilets
- Vandalism and graffiti are seen as problems by men and women

The Urinal
- 80% of men said urinals are easy to use
- 44% agreed it was difficult not to get splash back
- 56% of men prefer to use a urinal to a toilet
- 29% of men, including three disabled men, prefer to use toilets

The Sanitary Towel Bin
- Only 54% of women feel bins are convenient
- Sanitary towel bins were said to interfere with using the toilet
- Women fear touching and seeing other women’s waste sanitary pads and tampons

Conclusion
- Men and women generally dislike public convenience sanitaryware products
- Public convenience sanitaryware products are seen as unpleasant and undesirable items to use
- Men require greater hygiene and privacy, both audible and visual
- Women require greater space to feel more comfortable
- If products are easy to use, they are more likely to be used correctly; thus making them more inviting to use
- Understanding user needs and product use will aid designing more inclusive and accessible public convenience sanitaryware products for the future