

Meet Hormona, enabling women to live in harmony with their hormones

As part of our quick founder questions series - or QFQs - we spoke to Karolina Löfqvist and Jasmine Tagesson of Hormona about hormonal imbalances, empowering women and how only 2% of global medical funding goes towards researching issues specific to women.

Temps de lecture : minute

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[Karolina] I was experiencing depression, hair loss and dramatic weight fluctuations in my mid-20s. Doctors told me it was “stress-related” and recommended antidepressants, with no answers as to what was happening to my mind and body, or why. After four years of suffering and going to countless doctors in both the UK and Sweden, I spoke to a specialist who diagnosed me with a hormonal imbalance - it turned out that after years on the pill, I wasn’t producing enough oestrogen and my thyroid was deregulated. I couldn’t believe that there wasn’t any solution out there that could have helped me to solve my issues more quickly. But there wasn’t - so my best friend Jasmine and I decided to build it.

[Jasmine] Karolina and I have been friends since we were children, and we were living together in London when she was experiencing hormonal issues. Having witnessed her suffering firsthand, and having seen so many women in my life also grappling with confusion when it comes to their hormones, I didn’t doubt for one second when she asked me to start the company with her. We worked with a team of experts specialised in endocrinology, gynaecology, and nutrition to build the app - and we’re

incredibly proud of it.

Tell us about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

[Karolina] *Hormona* is an app empowering women with the tools to track, understand and optimise their hormonal cycles. We have users in more than 185 countries, and our app empowers our users to tackle conditions related to their hormones to gain a deeper understanding of their health. 80% of all women worldwide grapple with hormone issues and are left to navigate these challenges on their own, and our technology is changing that - the app and at-home tests enable women to continuously monitor their hormones, receiving quantified lab-grade results within 15 minutes from the comfort of their homes. The app also provides actionable tips and guides to stabilise and optimise hormone changes.

[Jasmine] By combining a range of tools and options ranging from telehealth appointments to symptom reduction plans, supplements and medication, we have built the first end-to-end solution for women facing hormone-related issues. Since we launched it in 2023, the app has collected over 2M anonymous health data points from women all around the world. We reach female users internationally and are growing that user base extremely quickly, and we are increasingly working with businesses such as *King* (the creator of Candy Crush) to provide their employees with better insights into their hormonal cycles. Employees are provided with free access to the app alongside educational seminars and private consultations.

How has the business evolved since its

launch?

[Karolina] The first thing we did when we launched was build the app - it was entirely free to download (we hadn't yet introduced our premium offering for users who would like to pay for extra features), and enabled women to track their cycles and gain better insight into their hormone fluctuations and inconsistencies, and predict corresponding changes in behaviours and moods. Since then we have evolved the technology significantly - we now have a premium version of the app alongside the free version which provides cycle-specific lifestyle tips, symptom reduction plans, and advice about supplements and medication. Users can also invite their partners to receive phase-specific email updates with insights and tips on how to support them, and we will also be launching our at-home tests very soon.

Tell us about the working culture at Hormona.

[Karolina] I'd say we have a great working culture - it's very friendly and we promote a strong work-life balance; people rarely work late, and never work on weekends. A lot of people on the team have become really close friends - even if they have different backgrounds or skill sets, they really bond on a personal level.

How are you funded?

[Jasmine] We have raised £2.2M/\$2.8M to date as a pre-seed round from Nascent Invest, Techstars, and SFC Capital. We are currently looking to raise our next round of investment, which is incredibly exciting.

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

[Karolina] As two female founders, pitching a female-focused app to what tends to be a room of men has been difficult. We pitched to at least 100 VCs before closing the first round. There aren't enough women in the boardroom sometimes for our product to resonate, and with so many taboos still existing around hormones and menstruation men tend to switch off if they haven't heard women in their lives speaking to them about their struggles firsthand.

How does Hormona answer an unmet need?

[Jasmine] Years of women being blocked from clinical trials, a perception of female hormones as 'messy' and a real lack of gender-based research in the medical field have led to a universal misdiagnosis and undervaluation of hormonal health issues. Women spend a *third* of their lives being impacted by menopause, for example, and the impact of that on their wellbeing costs countries such as the UK millions in lost workforce productivity and healthcare every year.

[Karolina] Research and funding around hormones is insufficient. Only 2% of global medical funding goes towards researching issues specific to women, and tests for detecting hormone-related conditions are typically expensive and focus on fertility, rather than general health. We want to make the full picture of each user's hormones available and accessible, so that they can treat conditions and live in harmony with their cycles without spending thousands or seeing multiple professionals.

What's in store for the future?

[Jasmine] Later this year we will be launching our at-home tests. The

lateral flow urine-based tests will assess three key hormones for measuring menstrual, reproductive, and menopausal health - FSH (Follicle-Stimulating Hormone), progesterone, and oestrogen. Test results will be quantified through Hormona's AI and machine learning prediction model - this technology enables Hormona to accurately detect hormone levels in the sample provided, and produce more precise predictions for bodily symptoms (compared to traditional tabletop readers or at-home finger prick tests).

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

[Karolina] My advice would be that a little naivety is needed in starting a business. You just need to be brave enough to throw yourself into bringing your idea to life. There are highs and lows but it has definitely been worth it. The highs are so powerful and that's what keeps you going.

And finally, a more personal question! What's your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

[Karolina] I'm definitely an early bird, whilst Jasmine is more of a night owl. I love getting up early to work out before work, and I love getting into the office before the rest of the team to catch up on emails and set myself up for the day. I meditate in the mornings and try to stay off of my phone first thing in the morning and last thing at night. I would also say that the biggest problem-solving tool for me is going for a run - it's truly medicinal for me.

[Jasmine] I'm definitely the opposite. I hate early mornings and tend to hit the gym after work to switch off. I also do some of my best work in the evenings so I don't mind an all-nighter provided I haven't had an early

start. I think we complement each other really well in that respect which is nice.

Karolina Löfqvist is the CEO and Jasmine Tagesson is the COO of Hormona.



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