

Meet Polari Group, breaking taboos and making anorectal intercourse straightforward and spontaneous

As part of our quick founder questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Anna Vybornova and Dr Henry Blest, cofounders of Polari Group about medical science for the LGBTQIA+ community, being a polarising company and all things douche.

Temps de lecture : minute

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What was the catalyst for launching Polari Group?

[Anna] We met at Entrepreneur First one year ago. Henry had previously studied sexually transmitted infection in Oxford (herpes and HIV) and I am a biomedical engineer (EPFL & MIT) who spent 5 years in medtech and biopharma and brought a medical device to the market with Aktiia. Given our backgrounds we became determined that medical science should cater for everyone including the LGBTQIA+ community, despite the fact that anal sex makes some people uncomfortable.

[Henry] We quickly realised we have no problem working on areas that others find taboo. Particularly when it comes to marginalised communities as we are both LGBTQIA+. From customer interviews we realised that for people who have anal sex the preparation required prevents sexual spontaneity. When sex becomes a friction point between partners this causes problems within and can even end relationships, making this a

deeply important issue.

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

[Henry] *Polari* is here for anyone with an anus. We have set up and run the anal sex lab in central London to produce a product that make the preparation for anal sex hassle-free and sex spontaneous. We literally study the science of scat [gay slang for faeces during sex]. We have produced a ball-shaped device designed to be inserted into the rectum before anal sex, to prevent faecal accidents.

[Anna] We now look to swiftly bring this to market and aim to partner with major UK sexual health organisations, as well as London-based sex-positive communities and parties, before the product is available on the shelves of supermarkets and pharmacies.

[Henry] We also work to bring together academics or medics with sex positive communities. You would be surprised to learn how little is known about your rectum and the act of anal sex. Doctors and medical literature can often not provide the answers to even simple questions – “what is the rate at which a person thrusts during sex”, “does peristalsis [movement of rectum] occur during anal sex”, “how do you relax your anus during sex to prevent pain”.

[Anna] Often where doctors cannot answer the questions, the sex positive communities have long known the solution for. *Polari*’s culture is truly inclusive looking to span across these diverse groups while working in a suppurative environment and highly entertaining area.

How has the business evolved since its launch?

[Henry] We started 1 year ago and initially people could not get past the fact we worked not only on anal sex but also faecal accidents. Most of the people who didn't know we were VC-backed scientists with a lab in central London, thought we were just two weirdos making sex toys in a garage. A lot of the struggle has been moving past people laughing and explaining why this is a serious issue. Needless to say since raising \$0.5M, we are now taken seriously as investors clock onto the fact we can make serious returns given that in the UK, USA and Europe there are 2.8 billion acts of anal sex per year.

Tell us about the working culture at Polari Group?

[Anna] Our backgrounds allow us to build bridges between different communities, such as medical doctors, academics, investors and sex-positive communities. As a hardcore immunologist & bioengineer, we take our work very seriously, without taking ourselves too seriously. We want to bring the best (and safest) product to the market, but frankly, it is impossible to not have a bit of fun when you're working on "the science of faecal accident during sex".

[Henry] We're very transparent with each other, our employees and collaborators, and communicate loads. We are also very competitive, ambitious and open-minded, which brings similar people to work with us.

How are you funded?

[Anna] We have an army of Polari angels and VCs (i³ investing, Ada Ventures, Little Green bamboo, Chasing Rainbows, Ventures together). As

you would expect we have massive traction with LGBTQIA+ focused funds - likely because they innately understand the problem and can see how large the market is. The best thing about being a polarising company is when you get investors, they get behind you and get behind you hard.

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

[Anna] Vice clauses and conservative LPs. We started at Entrepreneur First, where we felt very supported to work on sexual health. But you wouldn't imagine how many VC funds in the 'outside world' will give you a 'vice clause', as an answer and pass on a sexual health deal. In the 21st century, taking care of your sexual health and wellness should not be considered a vice, but a virtue. Many VCs will pass on a 'controversial' company for the fear of criticism from their conservative LPs, or fear of not being able to fundraise later on.

How does Polari Group answer an unmet need?

[Henry] Medical bodies widely do not provide guidance on anal douching apart from - "don't do it" or lists of reasons it is bad for you. People who have anal sex will tell you - the motivation to douche is to feel confident during sex that you will not have a faecal accident. Therefore, the community will not stop douching, as it is plain as day, faecal accidents are an incredibly strong motivator. The problem is anal douching is known to cause gut issues. This is likely because the intestinal lining is disrupted during the douching process, by mechanical abrasion. Medical experts are sheepish about offering advice on douching and individuals that do strap - "this is not medical advice" - across their channels for fear of medical liability. Therefore, on this topic there is a vast chasm between patients' practices and medical advice. Our product provides a solution to this

problem - faeces free spontaneous sex without the need for douching.

What's in store for the future?

[Anna] Look out for product launch in September 2025! The day you can ditch your douche.

[Henry] We are also launching our educational hub where you can learn all things douche - how to do avoid injury, which to choose and how to keep your gut bottoming ready.

To keep up to date follow us @PolariGroup ([Linkedin](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)).

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

[Henry] There is massive opportunity in taboo sectors. They are often much more interesting problems to work on especially compared to B2B SAAS. Working on a problem you care deeply about makes it easy to remain motivated.

[Anna] You're not a candy, so don't expect everyone to like you. When you're building a highly polarizing company - be ready to be disliked or frown upon. Be a heretic, find your people (and investors) who are ready to start the next revolution.

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

[Anna] Routine Yoga, cup of coffee and journaling in the morning. Then deep work and meetings in the afternoon. To stay on top of bottom

health. The rule I live by is - peg the patriarchy.

[Henry] As a medical scientist and bottom, I hope to improve the lives of queer people by working to improve LGBTQIA+ sexual health. This is why I have taken a vow to not stop talking about anal douching. I am commonly told “It is not the time or the place” but frankly, these problems persist because it has never been the time or the place. If queer history has taught me anything, it is that no one is more effective than a pissed-off homosexual. My biggest rule is to never let someone stop me taking up space. You can take your homophobia and shove it up your ass.

Anna Vybornova and Dr Henry Blest are the cofounders of *Polari Group*.



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