

# Socio-cultural factors in diabetes care in South Korea

and relevant product concepts | Young-ae Hahn, Yonsei University

Factors that adversely affect people’s health and trigger diabetes onset:

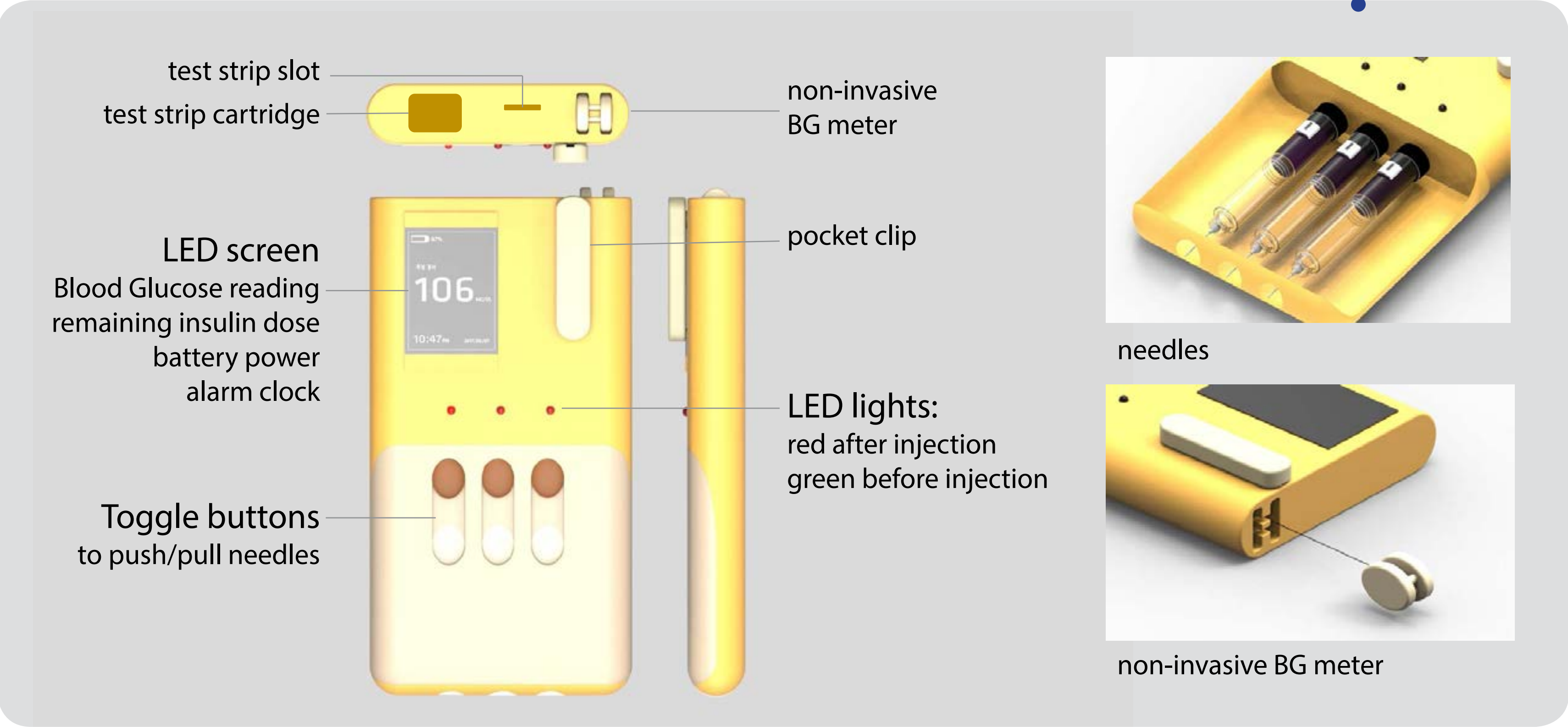
EXCESSIVE WORKING HOURS / DRINKING CULTURE

RELIANCE ON UNVERIFIED INFORMATION FROM ONLINE COMMUNITIES

SOCIAL STIGMA AND PATIENTS’ HIDING BEHAVIOURS

KOREAN FOOD RICH IN FAT, SUGAR AND SODIUM

PATIENTS’ LOW HEALTH LITERACY



Designers: Hyunwook Nam, Jinbaek Lee, Bora Hyun, and Soyeon Jung

## Pocket-sized integrated BG meter and insulin injector device

- Design problems:**
- Patients show strong dissatisfaction with current lancet-and-strip BG monitoring and insulin injection, due to the discomfort caused by needles or blood (Yoo, 2015).
  - BG monitoring and injection are required during outdoor activities (e.g., hiking with others, attending physical education classes), and after every food intake, at various locations and time. Current BG monitoring and injection paraphernalia package does not allow for portability.
  - Patients want more discreet DM care experience in public places, as injection at public places can feel embarrassing, and it can be misunderstood as drug use. While hiding behaviours might endanger the patient’s life, patients’ mental pain of being discriminated and isolated due to the disease also expose them to the risk of economic hardship, psychological morbidity and suicidal attempts (Sarkar & Balhara, 2014).
- Solutions:**
- a design concept of pocket-sized integrated BG meter and insulin injector device that holds an earlobe clip for non-invasive BG monitoring / a storage space that holds three short insulin pens / three toggle buttons that push/pull those pens out.
  - Parents can fill the pens with fixed doses of insulin at home, to prevent over- or underdosing accidents.
  - For BG monitoring, patients just pull out the clip and use while hiding the device in the bag.
  - For insulin injection, patients push the needle side of the device against their skin and hit one of the toggle buttons. As most part of the pen is hidden, injection experience is more discreet.
  - Integrated BG meter and insulin pen is expected to increase frequency of out-of-home BG monitoring and injection, while giving patients more control over their medical safety, privacy, and the range of activities they can participate. The pocket-sized device that is always available can deliver mental relief for patients.

## DANG-RAK: a lunch box for the diabetic

- Design problems:**
- Employed patients often struggle with lunch options when they eat at restaurants, because they do not know exactly how many calories are there, or how balanced the meal is nutrition-wise. Preparing lunch themselves is a safe and economic option, if circumstances permit.
- Solutions:**
- a concept of stackable lunch box, DANG-RAK (“Enjoy Meals with Diabetes”) to assist with patients’ out-of-home meals.
  - four separate containers for different food groups (grain and other carbohydrate sources, meat, fish, vegetables and fruits)
  - a scale, to allow for rough but easier estimation of calorie intake and nutritional balance.
  - The lunch box is used with a DM care app where patients regularly record their meals; DANG-RAK scale sends calculated calories from different containers to the app.

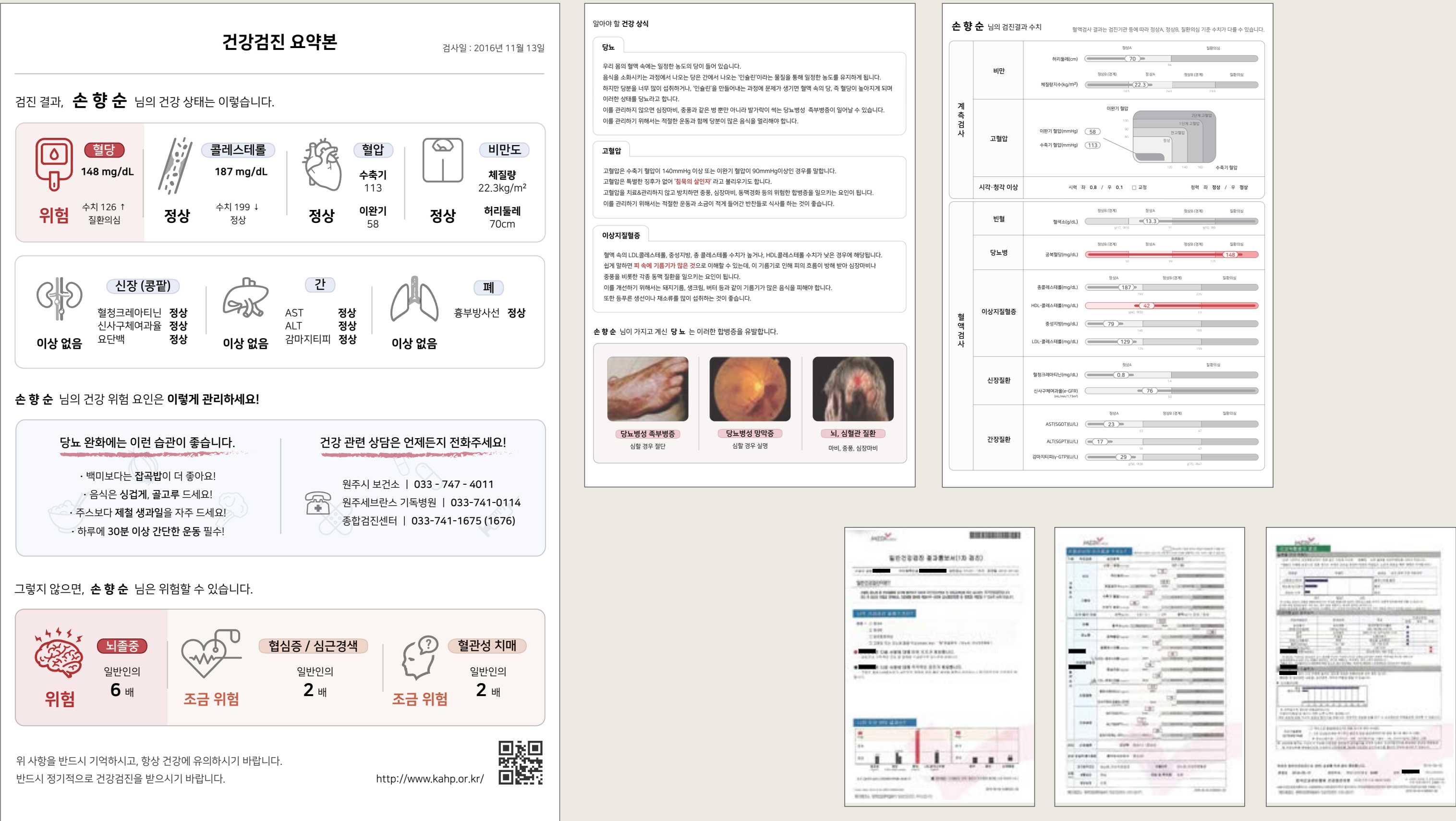
Designers: Kilnam Kim, Jaewhang Jung, Jiyeon Eun, and Jungsuk Oh



## Design renewal of health check-up report for DM patients with low health-literacy

- Design Problems:**
- On online communities, patients with low health literacy rely on other patients to read their health check-up results.
  - Current health check-up report is written in medical terms that lay persons cannot understand. Often patients do not understand where the problem is or how serious it is.
  - The report just shows readings, without clear directions on what to do about them, or who to contact for further actions.
  - Printed health check-up reports are often stored in drawers and the readings are forgotten within a few weeks.
  - The report format is text-heavy, while its readability is low with poor typographic treatment.
- Solutions:**
- Visualize readings (e.g., blood pressure chart) and improve readability with better typographic treatment.
  - Highlight problem areas in red for patients’ immediate attention.
  - Speak in plain language when possible.
  - Provide clear action items and recommendations for problem areas.
  - Allow for detaching the first page summary and recommendations to put it up on the wall, as a constant reminder for his/her health problems.

Designers: Eunkyung Sung, Taeyeon Oh, and Hun Joo



Current health check-up report design