

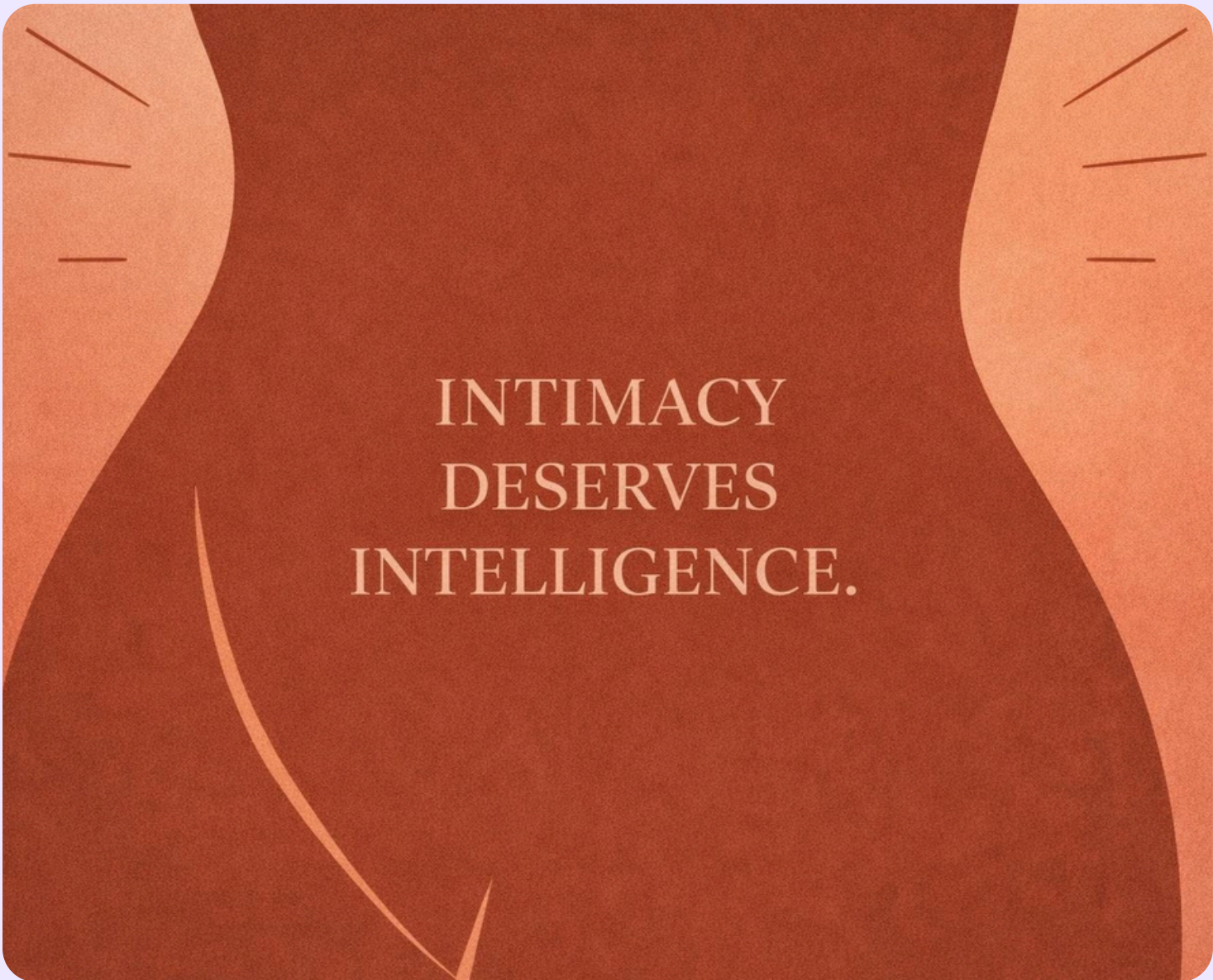
# FEMTECH HAS A TRANSLATION PROBLEM

ADVOCACY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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INTIMACY  
DESERVES  
INTELLIGENCE.



FemTech has expanded how we measure the female body.

But it has not expanded how we perceive it.

We track cycles.

We analyze hormones.

We build technologies that promise optimization and control.

Yet many everyday bodily experiences remain difficult to name, difficult to explain, and often dismissed.

Increasingly, women working across disciplines are beginning to challenge this gap. Not only through technology, but through new ways of seeing and translating the body itself.

# INNOVATION BEYOND DATA

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Much of FemTech innovation operates on two levels.

The biological level, focused on hormones, cycles, and internal processes.

The technological level, focused on apps, diagnostics, and devices.

These advances are important. They have expanded access, visibility, and control.

Innovation is not only about what we build.

It is about how we define and perceive the problem in the first place.

Many aspects of women's health are not only biological.

They are experiential.

They are physical.

They are shaped by interaction with the environment.

Friction.

Pressure.

Movement.

Repetition.

These forces influence irritation, recovery, and long-term skin response.

Many bodily experiences are not happening under ideal conditions. They happen while moving, working, exercising, healing, commuting, and repeating the same mechanical interactions every day.

Yet they are rarely articulated as part of care.

We don't need more conversations about health, at least not the kind that stop at naming the problem.

Because awareness alone cannot be the outcome.



Yes, language matters. Women needed language for experiences that were ignored, minimized, or surrounded by discomfort for decades.

But let's be precise.

We are not fully articulated.

Not fully anatomically.

Not functionally.

Not in how the body behaves under real conditions.

We are mapping the female experience with increased depth: books, podcasts, panels, campaigns, content.

That matters.

But mapping is not movement.

Knowing more about the body does not automatically mean we are supporting it better.

You can understand sensitivity and still expose skin to constant friction.

You can recognize vulnerability and still design nothing to protect it.

You can describe an experience perfectly and still leave the body unsupported in the moments that matter most.



Awareness does not create support.

The body is a system continuously interacting with its environment.  
It responds to mechanics: movement, pressure, shear, repetition.

This is where the gap becomes visible.

We are not fully designing for how the body exists in motion.  
And part of the reason is cultural.

Even now, words like vulva and vagina still carry discomfort, avoidance, or imprecision  
in public conversation.

Many intimate bodily experiences remain normalized before they are understood.  
And if experiences cannot be clearly perceived, articulated, or socially legitimized, they  
rarely become problems systems are built to solve.

This is why cultural translation matters.

# TRANSLATION AS INNOVATION

Artists, writers, educators, creators, and women speaking openly about lived bodily realities are not separate from innovation. In many ways, they make innovation possible.

They expand perception before systems expand solutions.  
Technology without human translation risks becoming abstraction.

If the first phase of FemTech was giving women language, the next phase must be translating that understanding into systems that operate under real conditions.

Not ideal conditions.  
But lived ones.

Moving.  
Working.  
Healing.  
Under stress.

And translation also means accessibility.

Innovation is incomplete if women's lived realities are translated only into conversation, but not into affordable, applicable, and physically supportive solutions women can actually use in everyday life.

We do not need less awareness.  
We need embodiment.

From insight into systems.  
From language into interface.  
From understanding into support.

Because the body does not respond to language alone.  
It responds to what actually touches it.

Awareness was the first step.  
Designing for lived reality is the next one.

# **AUTHOR BIO**

Heidi Keppeler is the founder of PAPAYA GLOW™ and is building a new category at the intersection of skincare, design, and performance. With a background in art and a focus on systems thinking, her work explores friction, movement, and barrier stability, reframing how skin is understood beyond traditional skincare.