

2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on

# Reproductive Health and Medicine

June 26-27, 2017 London, UK

## A mixed methods exploratory study of women's relationships with and uses of fertility tracking apps

Katie Gambier-Ross, Heather Morgan and Dave McLernon  
University of Aberdeen

Recently, interest in digital self-tracking has increased and, within that, tracking menstrual cycles using fertility tracking apps (FTAs), including as prescribed contraception. However, there is a dearth of literature concerning users' experiences of and relationships with them. This research explored that gap and aimed to: surface issues for future research and inform the development of clinically-integrated tools.

This study employed a mixed methods approach, involving collection and analysis of online survey data (n=241) and follow-up interviews (n=11). Descriptive statistics were applied to closed survey questions. Four main user motivations were identified: to observe cycle (72%); to conceive (34%); to inform fertility treatment (12%); as contraception (4%).

Analysis of open survey questions and interviews using grounded theory methodology highlighted four themes underpinning relationships with tracking: medical grounding; health trackers vs. non-trackers; design; and social and ethical aspects. Qualitative analysis informed hypothesis development. A significant relationship between using health apps and using FTAs ( $p=0.001$ ) and between using birth control and not using FTAs ( $p=0.002$ ) was found. It was also found that as age increases, FTA usage decreases ( $p=0.001$ ). There was no correlation between FTA usage and menstrual status ( $p=0.259$ ).

This research emphasises the importance of FTAs supporting the differing motivations for use. It recommends that developers design for accuracy, individualisation and inclusion. Future research should further explore the diverse relationships between women and FTAs to: inform reproductive health services, regulators and developers; improve experiences for users of various menstrual and/or birth control statuses and; support the integration of FTAs into health care.

katie.gambier-ross.13@aberdeen.ac.uk

### Notes: