

# CRE HiPP BITE

## Brokering Innovation Through Evidence

A bite-sized summary of a piece of research in preconception and pregnancy health, by Dr Bonnie Brammall (PhD)



Brammall B, Hayman M, Harrison C. Publication pending in Women's Health, SageJournals.

### Pregnancy Mobile App Use: A Survey of Health Information Practices and Quality Awareness Among Pregnant Women in Australia

#### BACKGROUND

- Pregnancy apps are widely used for health monitoring, conditions management, and peer support.
- The rise in smartphone use has led to a surge in pregnancy app usage, raising concerns about the quality and accuracy of information.
- Research shows many pregnancy apps have suboptimal quality and accuracy, highlighting the need for better guidelines and regulation.
- Aim: To understand how individuals access, evaluate, and use health information from pregnancy apps, and their perceptions of the safety and quality of this information.

This cross-sectional study used an online questionnaire to collect data from Australian individuals who were currently pregnant or had recently given birth. Participants were recruited via social media and completed an anonymous online survey, which assessed their use of pregnancy apps, risk perception, and health literacy.

## FINDINGS

- **Usage Patterns:** 30.8% used pregnancy apps daily, with 53.8% using them weekly. Most sought information on baby growth (91.1%) and bodily changes (78.2%).
- **Trust Factors:** 62.8% trusted apps recommended by medical practitioners, and 52.9% cross-checked app information with other trusted sources. Privacy and data protection were top considerations for 27.4% of users.
- **Unsafe Information:** 35.5% encountered unsafe or conflicting information in apps, with 48.7% ignoring the questionable content and 36.5% cross-checking it with trusted sources.
- **Concerns and Quality Assurance:** 33.4% were concerned about app information quality, while 48.9% were neutral. Only 4.6% were aware that health apps are not regularly checked for accuracy.

Demographics: 34,896 individuals were reached, with 427 consenting participants; 62% were pregnant, and 37.5% had recently given birth.  
Health Literacy: 80-90% of participants reported high confidence in appraising and finding health information.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study reveals that while pregnancy apps are extensively used, women often overlook the quality of information, focusing instead on design and popularity. Despite recognising potential risks, many users continue to engage with apps even after encountering unsafe information. This underscores the need to educate consumers on assessing app credibility and highlights the necessity for regulatory measures to ensure the dissemination of safe, evidence-based information.

### What is CRE HiPP

The Centre of Research Excellence in Health in Preconception and Pregnancy (CRE HiPP) is an innovative, passionate, multi-disciplinary team of researchers, clinicians, students and consumers.

We aim to refine and implement health promotion, lifestyle improvement and obesity prevention, strategically targeting women preconception and during pregnancy, to improve the health of women and the next generation.

Find out more about CRE HiPP at our website: [hipp.org.au](http://hipp.org.au).

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