

Women’s experience and perceptions of fertility tracking apps for optimising conception

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BACKGROUND

Fertility Tracking Apps (FTAs) are increasingly popular and use a wide range of user-inputted data to try and predict ovulation dates

Women and couples trying to conceive can experience significant psychosocial challenge such as increased anxiety and stress, feelings of loss of control and relationship strain (Griel 1997)

Digital health technology such as FTAs promise to transform healthcare, but we should reflect on the impacts of increasing technology use on human embodiment, society and culture, and relationships (Lupton 2015)

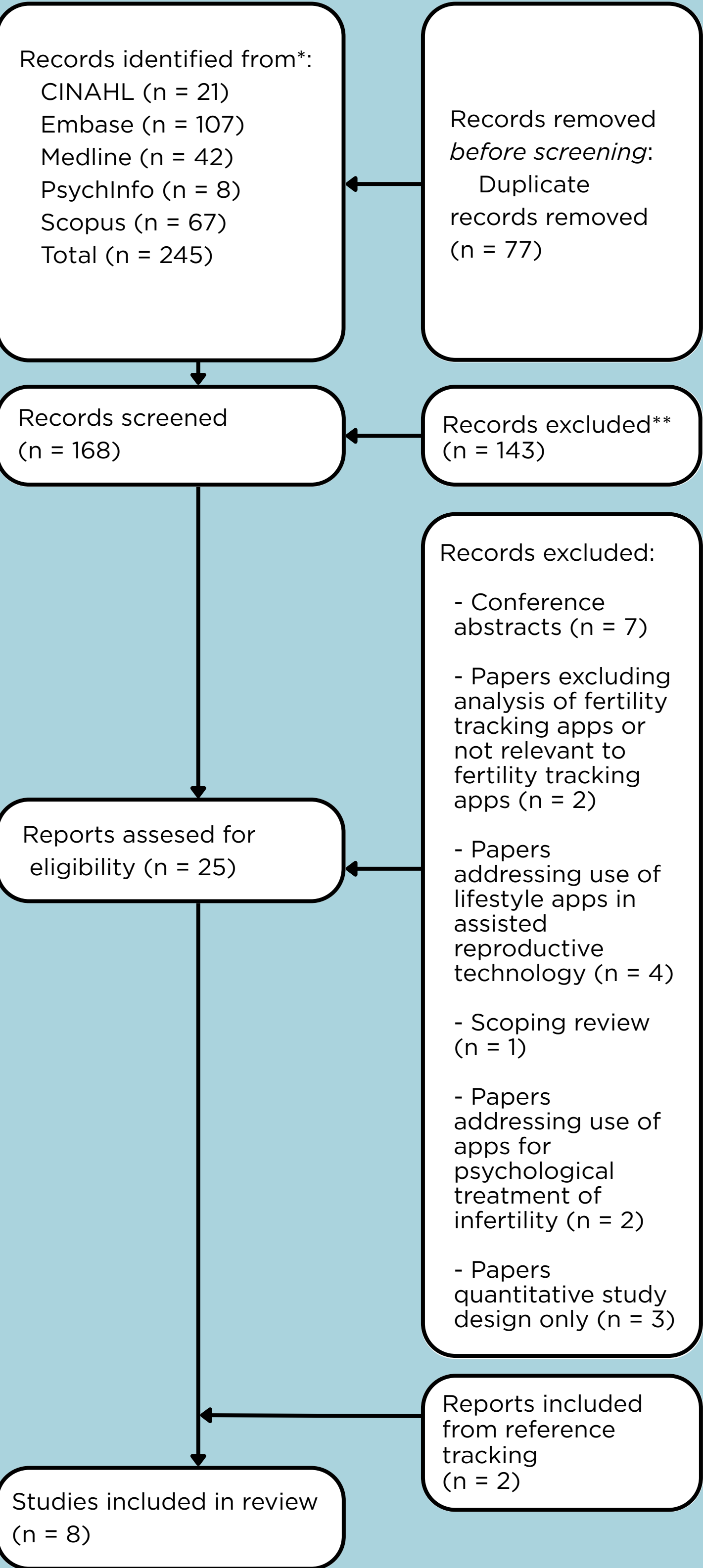
Our research investigated how patients interact with technology and how they feel about using FTAs

Identification of studies via databases and reference tracking

Identification

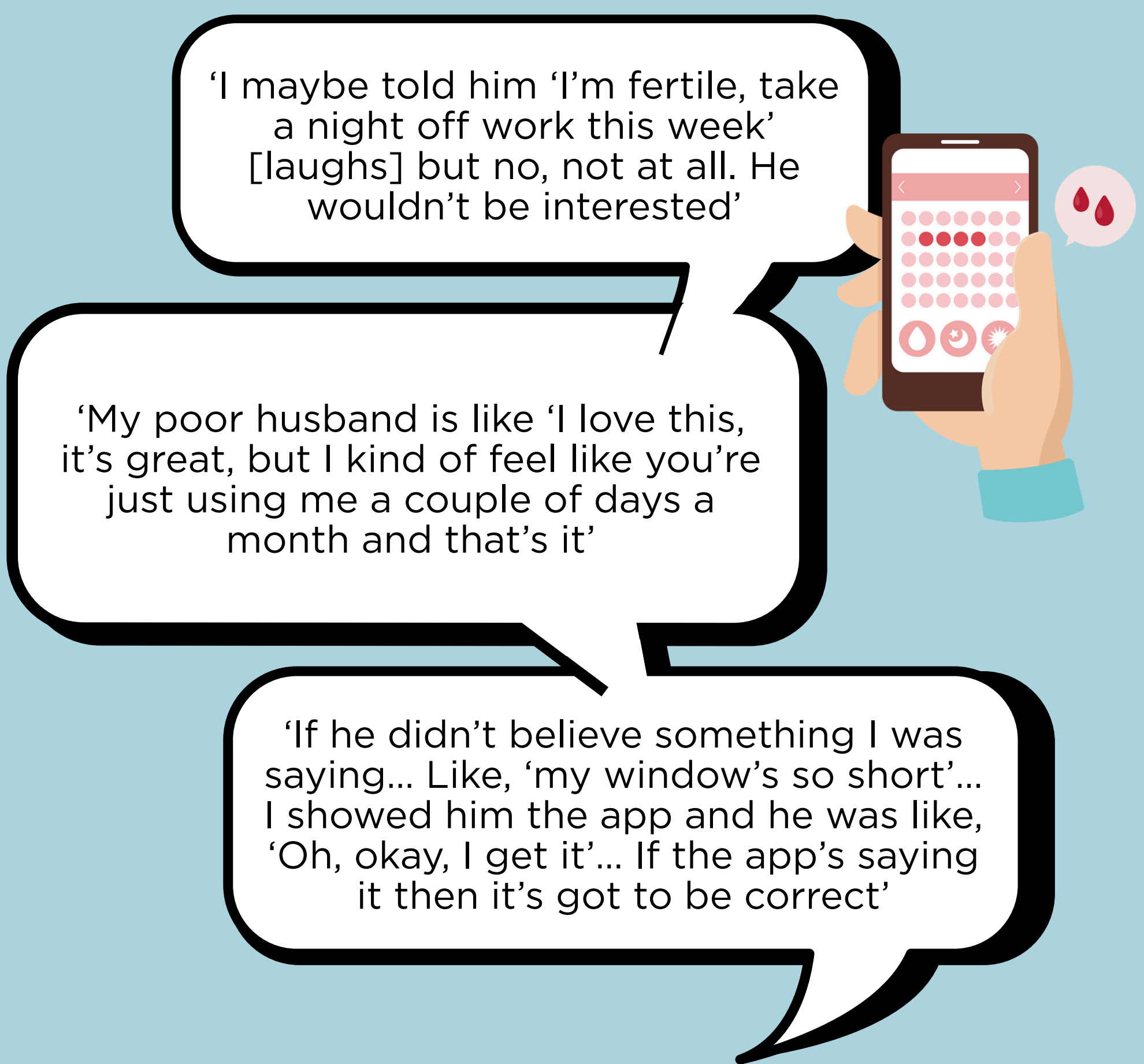
Screening

Inclu.



REPRODUCTION AS WOMEN’S WORK

FTAs are used as part of the broader social context of reproduction as women’s work



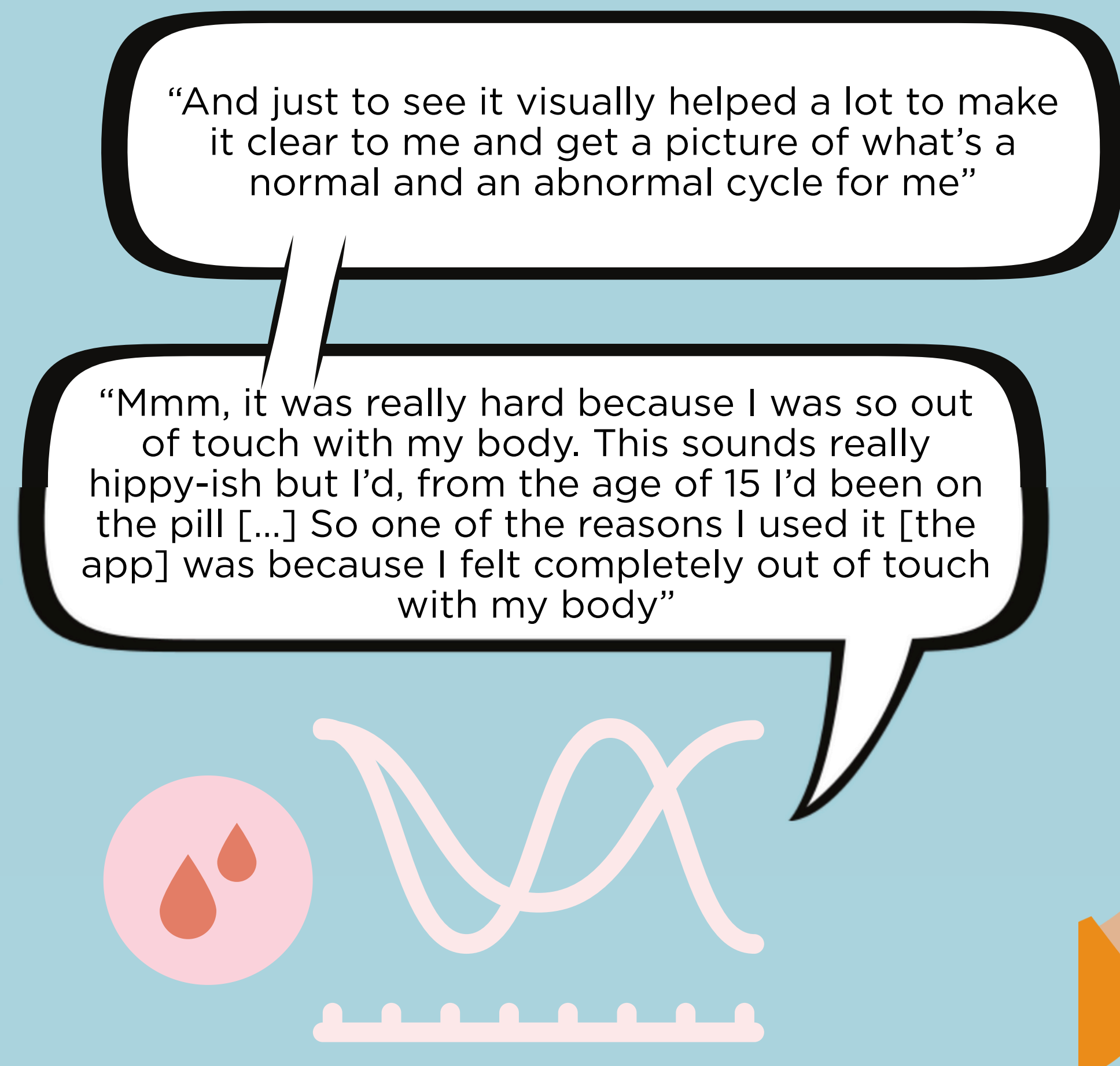
CONTROL AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

*FTAs offered women trying to conceive a sense of control
Participants were of mixed views about whether FTAs were trustworthy*



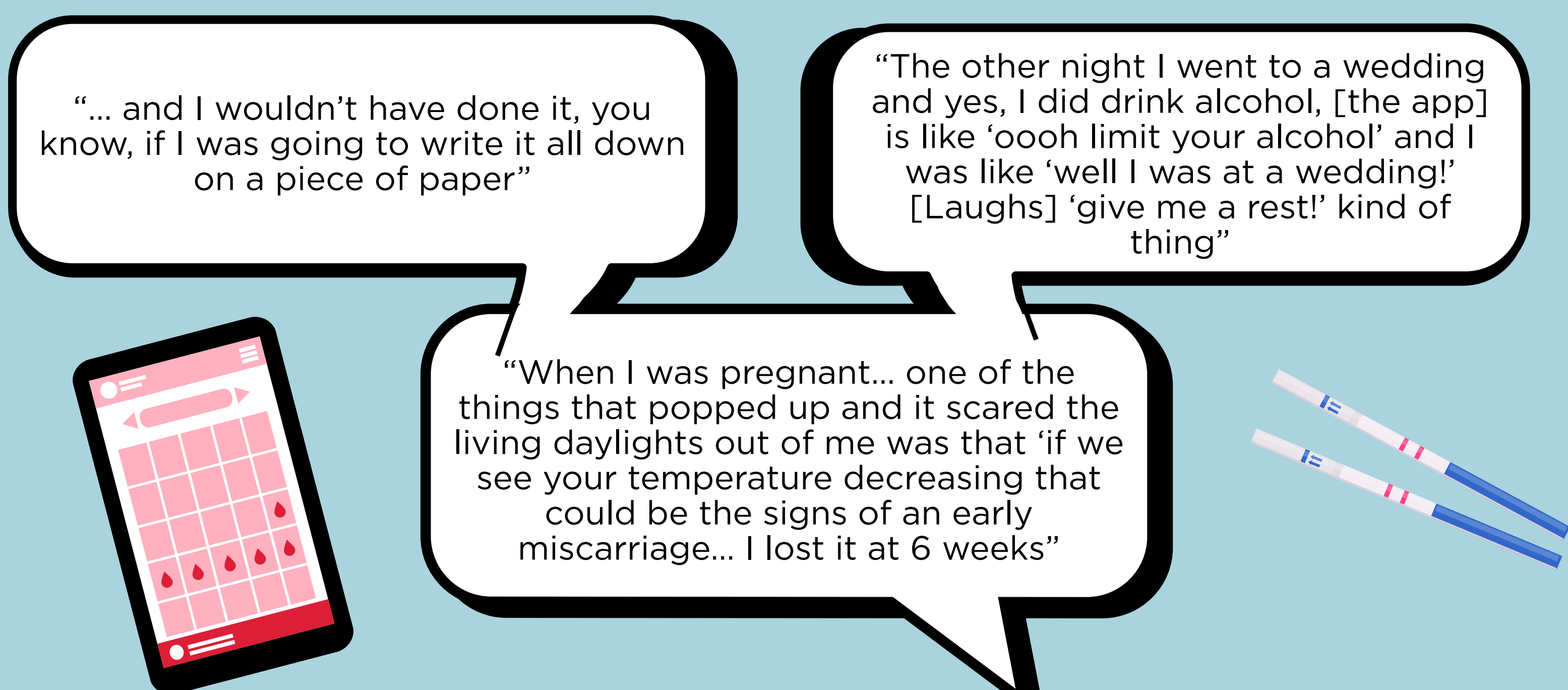
KNOWING THE BODY

FTAs helped women make sense of unseen physiological processes and previously unnoticed patterns



NAVIGATING THE EXPERIENCES OF FTAS

*FTAs are convenient and accessible
FTAs may amplify feelings of inadequacy and failure
Some participants felt FTAs could be judgemental, patronising or overly critical*



METHODS

- Systematic search of MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsychInfo, CINAHL and Scopus in October 2024
- Combination of subject headings and keyword searching of titles and abstracts to maximise sensitivity
- 245 records from database search, screened to include relevant studies.
- Findings and discussion extracted from included studies to Quirkos software (v. 2.5.3 2023)
- Data analysed and synthesised using Braun and Clarkes’ (2006) framework for thematic analysis
- Critically appraised using CASP (2023) tool

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

Whilst women report that they would be interested in FTA functionality that was more inclusive of their partners, they also value their privacy. App developers should consider this functionality carefully.

Digital health technology such as FTAs have a transformative potential for healthcare. New technology should be analysed critically, exploring its relationship with humans. Quantification of the body and an emphasis on personal responsibility may result in stigmatisation.

FTAs have the potential to negatively impact users. The psychosocial impact of FTA usage should be explored in more research. This will help clinicians have confidence in recommending them to patients.

CONCLUSIONS + LIMITATIONS

The studies were largely demographically homogenous (white, educated and from the UK). This limits generalisability.

There is limited rich qualitative evidence of the perceptions and experiences of the use of FTAs. More research is needed to explore this critically.

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