

Working with women who have recently had a baby to inform decision making on a list of apps that support women to do pelvic floor muscle training during and after pregnancy

Rohan May

Acknowledgments: Many thanks to Professor Sarah Dean, Dr Rohini Terry, Dr Victoria Salmon and Dr Christine Addington for their academic support and to the members from musical mummies and toddler group who participated in the sessions

Introduction

- Urinary incontinence (UI), the involuntary loss of urine¹, is highly prevalent in pregnant women²
- 35.6% of women experience UI during pregnancy².
- Incontinence during pregnancy is a significant risk factor for experiencing UI after pregnancy³.
- UI is associated with a lower quality of life; affecting women's participation in social roles and physical activity⁴.

Pelvic floor muscle training (PFMT) is a treatment and prevention method for UI⁴.

- Limitations to completing PFMT include:
- Not knowing the importance of
 - Not knowing how to do it⁴
 - Forgetting⁴

PFMT apps have features that can combat these limitations, including:

- Reminders
- Timers
- Information pages

Our recent project PFMT apps found 4 clinically sound + high scoring PFMT apps available on both iOS and android platform⁵

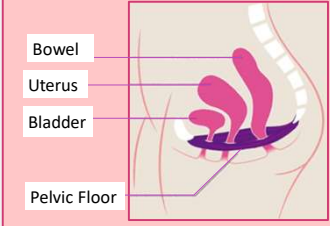


Fig 1. Pelvic floor muscles (Adapted from APPEAL training videos 2023).

Aim

To gather feedback from women on critically appraised PFME apps. Such recommendations could be integrated into signposting resources for self-care, satisfying evidence base and person-centred needs



Fig 2: Woman making a decision on what app would help

Methods

- Two highly scoring apps from the specified app review were used⁵
 - The apps had similar scores but only one could be used in final recommendation list.
 - Held two sessions with women who had recently given birth
- 1st session
- Explained the aims of the research
 - Allocation of App.
- They had two weeks to try out the apps
- 2nd session
- Open and closed questionnaire filled
 - Data collection = notes + questionnaire (mentimeter)

Results

- Five women participated, aged 30-41.
- Four women have had a baby in the last 3 years, 1 women was last pregnant 10 years ago.

Kegel Exercises for Women

Positives:
Consistently received most of the votes for the features:

- Personalised
- Interface
- Customisable
- Motivational/Engaging
- Easy to navigate/ learn

Dislikes

- Advert

Easy Kegel

Positives:

- Visual aspects (e.g., bar chart)
- Very simple design = easy to use
- Manageable exercises

Dislikes:

- Lack of tracking during exercise
- Difficult to change exercise settings

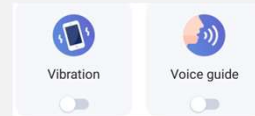
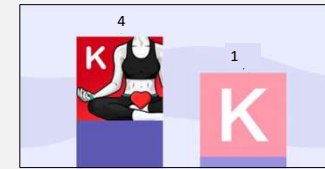


Fig 3. Screenshot from 'Kegel Exercises for Women' app.

Which app did you feel was most targeted to you?



Which app would you be most likely to continue using?



Figure 4a, 4b: Bar charts from mentimeter.

Table 1. Quotes from the women about the strengths and weaknesses of each app.

	Kegel Exercises for Women (‘Kegel exercises Pelvic Floor’ on iOS)	Easy kegel (‘Easy kegel – Pelvic Floor Exer’ = full name on google play)
Strengths	‘daily reminder was useful’ ‘exercises was manageable’ ‘adjust the level of challenge’ ‘simple to use and follow’ ‘information and detail given as soon as you start’ ‘straight away I liked this more’	‘easy and clear to use’ ‘no hidden extras’ ‘visual bar charts’ ‘can change the difficulty’ ‘set reminders’
Weaknesses	‘advert’ ‘the levels are intimidating’ ‘didn’t like... voice giving instructions’	‘no rests’ ‘only set one timer without paying a fee’ ‘not as visually pleasing’ ‘no explanation of how to do them... to read before you start’

Discussion

Strengths

- Provided understanding of what women find important in PFMT apps
- Shared-decision making around what apps to recommend

Limitations

- Only reviewed English language version of apps; can’t recommend to women who speak alternative languages
- Didn’t ask women what platform (iOS or android) they used; not aware of differences this could cause
- Women all from same area; potential lack of diversity.

Next steps

- Work with women from a variety of backgrounds and areas.

Conclusion

- Preferred app for majority of women was Kegel Exercises for Women
- Kegel Exercises For Women will be included in a recommended list of PFMT apps in an antenatal care resource pack.



Figure 5. Selected app, ‘Kegel Exercises for Women’.

References

1. Milsom I, Gyhagen M. The prevalence of urinary incontinence. Vol. 22, Climacteric. Taylor and Francis Ltd; 2019. p. 217–22.
2. Dolan LM, Walsh D, Hamilton S, Marshall K, Thompson K, Ashe RG. A study of quality of life in primigravidae with urinary incontinence. Int Urogynecol J. 2004;15(3):160–4.
3. Wesnes SL, Hunskaar S, Bo K, Rortveit G. The effect of urinary incontinence status during pregnancy and delivery mode on incontinence postpartum. A cohort study. BJOG. 2009 Apr;116(5):700–7.
4. Oliveira LGP, Tavares ATDV, Amorim TV, Paiva ADCPC, Salmeida AMO. Impact of urinary incontinence on women's quality of life: an integrative literature review. Revista Enfermagem. 2020;28.
5. May, R (2023, unpublished) A systematic review of apps available for supporting women to complete pelvic floor muscle training for self-management of urinary incontinence.



University of Exeter

