

## Tracking Menstrual Cycle Using Smartphone Apps

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In the last issue of Central European Journal of Pediatrics, Gazibara et al. explored the usage and factors associated with smartphone apps to track menstrual cycle (1). This study found that approximately one third of high school girls reported using menstrual cycle tracking apps. The girls who used smartphone apps to track menstrual cycle were more likely to use other Internet platforms such as Wikipedia, health forums, websites run by physicians as well as smartphone apps for fitness. Moreover, high school girls who used menstrual cycle tracking apps were mostly studying humanities-languages program and came from families in which parents had higher education and income levels (1).

Bearing in mind that adolescent girls frequently have irregular and longer menstrual cycles, tracking periods in this population is important in order to get the impression about their hormonal status and a potential need for therapy as well as to prevent unwanted pregnancy (2). Menstrual cycle tracking apps could provide a comprehensive chart of menstrual periods over time and could, therefore, be a suitable and effective method for young girls to get ready for the forthcoming menstruation. Moreover, the data collected by the app could be used by the gynecologists who have adolescent patients (3). Nevertheless, attention to app reliability ought to be paid before its use.

The app can be considered as accurate if:

- The projections of future menstrual cycles take into account the mean length of at least three previous menstrual cycles,
- Ovulation is accurately predicted i.e. around 14 days before the beginning of the next period,
- The app includes information about both conception and contraception, and
- If it is comprehensible and easy to use and does not provide any false information (4).

A technically versatile app should be protected with password, not need Internet connection, have no commercials or endorsements, provide medical and technical support within the app and include scientific literature (4). From the results obtained by Gazibara et al, it is noticed that in Serbia, although the vast majority of adolescent girls use smartphones, only 29.7% of female high school students use apps to track menstrual cycle (1, 5).

Therefore, it seems that more education regarding new technologies is needed to help women optimize their health. Such education could be a part of biology curricula in high schools in Serbia. In fact, it would be especially worthwhile that these educational programs include specifically adolescent girls of lower socioeconomic status and who have parents with lower education level.

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