PHN-PREP

Public Health Nursing Practice, Research & Education Program

Supporting Clients to Assess the Quality of Health Care Apps

It is common for pregnant individuals and new parents to explore websites and download apps to learn more about pregnancy and child health and development milestones! It is important for public health nurses to have the knowledge and skills to support clients with assessing the quality of health care apps. This practice guidance provides a framework that public health nurses can use to support a client develop the skills to independently assess the quality of information they are accessing on their health care apps.

Assessing information quality of the app
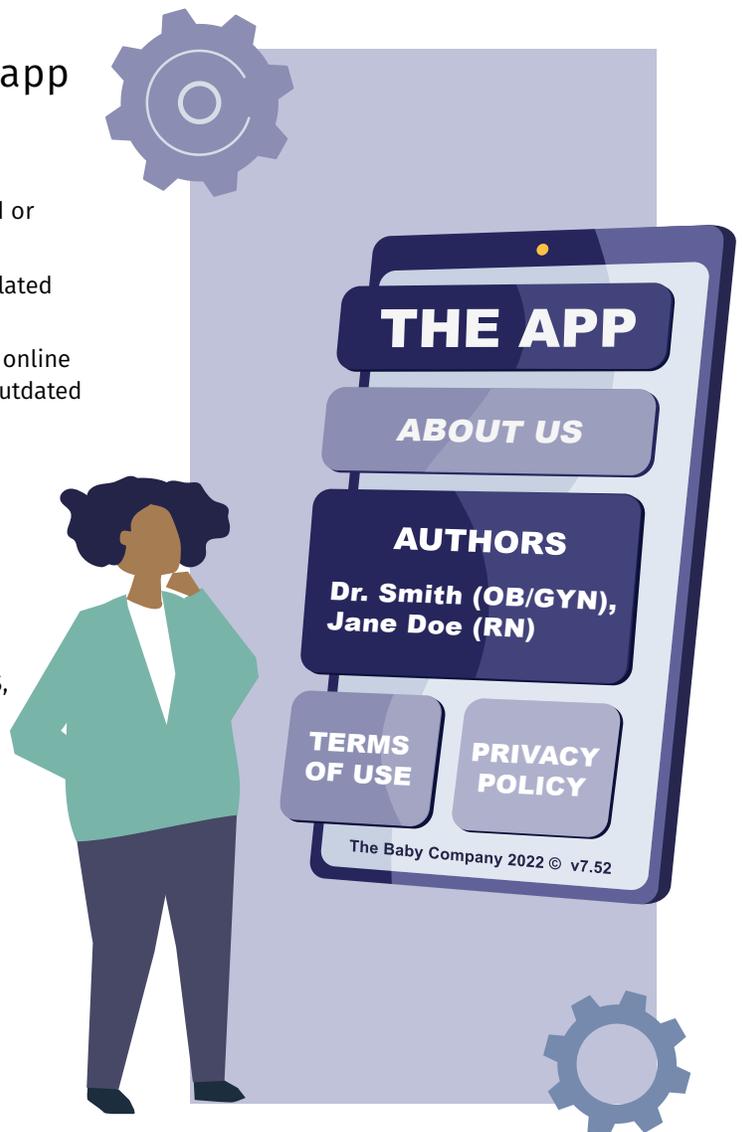
✅ **The information is <u>current</u>**

- When was the most recent version of the app published or updated?
- Are the links (for moving within the app or to external related sites) functional?
- **NOTE**: If errors are identified, apps can be removed from online stores. While this prevents new downloads, recalled or outdated apps can continue to be used by nurses and/or clients.

✅ **The information is <u>relevant</u>**

- Does the information relate to your topic of interest?
- Is the target audience identified?
- Is the information at an appropriate readership level?
- Is the app suitable for your preferred platform (e.g., iOS, Android)?
- In deciding if the app is best suited to your needs, have you compared it to other similar apps?

✅ **The source of the information is <u>credible</u>**

- Is the author/institution/editorial board clearly identified? Is their contact information provided?
- Are the author's qualifications given? Are they qualified to write on the topic?
- Where does funding come from to support the app?

THE APP

ABOUT US

AUTHORS

Dr. Smith (OB/GYN), Jane Doe (RN)

TERMS OF USE

PRIVACY POLICY

The Baby Company 2022 © v7.52

✅ **The information is <u>accurate</u>**

- Where does the information come from? Is it supported by evidence?
- Do experts review the information that is included in the app?
- Can you verify the information in another source?
- Are any disclaimers made about the app's completeness, accuracy, or reliability?

✅ **The <u>purpose</u> of the information is clear**

- What is the purpose of the information? (e.g., is it to teach? sell something? entertain?)
- Is the information presented in an objective, impartial way?
- Are there any identified biases? (e.g., political, religious, institutional, personal)
- Does the app include advertisements? If it does, is there a clear distinction between advertising and editorial content?

✅ **<u>Privacy</u> is maintained**

- Is the privacy policy available and readable at an appropriate readership level?
- Does the app request your personal information? What will the manufacturer do with it? Can you choose to restrict access or sharing of information?

Assessing usability of the app

- ✅ Can you navigate the app easily (e.g., instructions and next steps are intuitive)?
- ✅ Is the information in the app well organized?
- ✅ Is the amount of time involved in using the app suitable to your needs?
- ✅ Do you prefer the aesthetic qualities of the app? (e.g., interface, layout, graphics, visual appeal)
- ✅ Do you prefer the engagement qualities of the app? (e.g., entertainment, customization, interactivity, etc.)
- ✅ Does the app achieve its intended purpose?
- ✅ Is the app a good use of your time?
- ✅ Is there a cost to download or subscribe to the app? If so, did the benefit to using the app outweigh the cost?

Tips to support public health nurses in finding out more about app quality prior to recommending or using an app with a client:

- Review the scientific literature
- Search app Clearinghouses that review apps
- Search app stores
- Review app descriptions, user ratings and reviews
- Conduct social media queries in professional and parent networks
- Pilot apps
- Elicit feedback from clients and colleagues

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