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**A Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis of men's use of a partner-share feature to track their female partner's menstrual cycle**

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## Abstract

Purpose: To analyse the discourses constructing men's use of the sharing feature of the female partner's menstrual tracking app (MTA).

Background: Sharing features are a recent development among MTAs, these enable users to share information about their menstrual cycle with others, including partners. But how this practice is understood and the implications for how men may understand themselves, their intimate partners and the menstrual cycle is poorly understood.

Methods: To address this gap, three data sources that account for men's use of this sharing feature were analysed, these were: 1) Semi-structured interviews with 5 men using an MTA sharing feature (aged 32–45 years, from New Zealand, Australia, United States, and United Kingdom); 2) semi-structured interviews with 2 app developers (male, aged 36 and 59 from Russia and Germany); and 3) app-produced text from the MyFlo MTA sharing feature (first four emails sent to a male users over 1 month). A Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis was performed on each data set separately and then compared to explore the available discourses, subject positions, and rhetorical strategies.

Findings: Two discourses traversed the data sets; 'the hormonal imperative' (a biological essentialist argument in which hormones are the dominant drivers of female behaviour), and 'optimal living' (in which people are encouraged and held responsible to live their best life). Within these discourses, the MTA sharing feature was constructed as a tool to help men generate knowledge about the menstrual cycle, so that they can be better men and partners. However, the hoped-for outcomes were limited by framing of the female partner's behaviour as biological; by concerns that caring behaviour was, in practice, controlling and invasive; and that optimal living discourses created impossible expectations.

Conclusions: This study supports existing literature that men want more knowledge to be better partners, and that MTA's frame the female menstrual cycle through biologically essentialist discourses. It develops the literature by showing how the sharing feature reproduces historical, sexist notions of mad women and rational men, positioning male users in a double bind, since they describe using the apps to enhance egalitarian relationships. Developers of these technologies minimized these and other concerns related to data privacy and app misuse by controlling men. The implications are that male users (and their partners) are currently left to contend with problematic issues created from using these technologies and that the future research and app development needs to focus on how to create affirmative outcomes for partners.

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## Contents

Title Page.....	1
Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	3
Contents.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1: Theoretical framework, understanding masculinity.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature review.....	13
Method.....	29
Analysis.....	44
Study 1 – MyFlo Emails.....	45
Study 2 – Developers .....	62
Study 3 – Male Users .....	72
Discussion.....	84
References.....	98
Appendices.....	106
i. Ethics Committee Approval.....	107
ii. Consent Form - Partners.....	108
iii. Consent Form – Developers.....	109
iv. Information Sheet - Partners.....	110
v. Information Sheet – Developers.....	115
vi. Timeline .....	118
vii. Interview Guide – Partners .....	119
viii. Interview Guide – Developers .....	121
ix. Social Media Advertisements.....	122
x. Transcript Analysis – Male Partners.....	123
xi. Transcript Analysis – Developers.....	168
xii. Transcript Analysis – MyFlo Emails.....	183

## Introduction

Menstrual tracking apps are relatively new technologies that have seen exponential user growth rate since their launch within the last decade. Recently these technologies developed a new feature enabling users to share information about their menstrual cycle with others, such as friends, family, or partners. Currently, there is a gap in literature around how men who use this feature navigate such apps in their heterosexual relationships, especially in today's complex world of gender relations and multiple masculinities. Nor, has there been significant analysis on how this sharing feature is framed by the app developers themselves. For the purpose of addressing this gap, this study first reviews existing literature in a two-chapter format; the first chapter starts with a discussion of theoretical framing on men and masculinity to contextualise how masculinity may be theorised in our current gendered context and the available discourses around masculinity that may be circulating within constructs of this app. It introduces three masculinity theories starting with hegemonic masculinity, next discussing inclusive masculinity, and followed by poststructuralist-informed inclusive masculinity theory, which has been chosen as a theoretical framework for understanding contemporary masculinity and gender relations. The second chapter reviews existing literature; covering historical and current understandings of the female menstrual cycle, next moving onto an overview of menstrual tracking technologies and their sharing functionality, and finishing off with a review of what we know so far about men's engagement with these apps. Combined, this provides a rich understanding of the socio-historical context within which the sharing feature of these apps operates.

## Chapter 1: Theoretical framework, understanding masculinity

### Theory of Masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity theory has been used by many scholars as a theoretical framework for their research on masculinities. However overtime, this theory became insufficient to explain the changing face of masculinities, and on this basis the theory of inclusive masculinity was proposed. While inclusive masculinity theory is a useful framework for thinking about masculinities, because of its focus on relations between men, it has been criticised for a lack of engagement with and consideration of gender relations. With this in mind, given that the present study is concerned with how men engage with their female partners through menstrual tracking technologies, the issue of gender relations must not be overlooked. As such, this study chose to use a novel theoretical framework called poststructuralist-informed inclusive masculinity theory; this theoretical framework accounts for some of the gaps in inclusive masculinity theory, and in doing so, uses poststructuralist-informed concepts of discourse, subject positions, and technologies of self. These debates are elaborated on in more detail below.

### *Hegemonic masculinity*

As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explain, the origins of the term hegemonic masculinity come from Gramsci's theorising about class settings and hegemony within them. Gramsci studied hegemony in order to understand the way that dominant classes legitimate their rule within societies where class inequalities exist (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Borrowing Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Raewyn Connell formulated and introduced the concept of hegemonic masculinity in the 1980's in her book *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*. Connell (1987) used this term to show how men sustain their dominance over women and over other men through propagating a hegemonic form of masculinity.

Connell's (1987) original theory of hegemonic masculinity (HMT) proposes certain characteristics. Firstly, HMT recognizes a hierarchy of men, who are distinguished against being not women, therefore part of the hierarchy involves distancing from anything considered feminine including gay, or effeminate men, who, within this logic are understood

to be more feminine. At the top of the hierarchy of masculinity are signifiers of power and privilege, such as whiteness, wealth, heterosexuality, and physique (Connell, 1987). Other masculine characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity are violent behaviour, misogyny, stoicism, and excessive risk taking (Anderson, 2009). However, hegemonic masculinity is actually not truly attainable in real life for most men, it is rather an ideal to strive towards. Some of the best representations of hegemonic masculinity are fantasy figures such as Rambo or Rocky, who embody strength, violence and risky behaviours (Connell, 1987). Despite their unattainability, these ideals are still normative and ideologically legitimise the global dominance by men over women, as well as the dominance hierarchy between men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

In the hierarchy of HMT, women and gay or effeminate men are subordinate to those men who enact hegemonic masculinity. As Connell (1987) explains, the idealized hegemonic masculinities are socially deemed as the most authorized form of masculinity, which despite their unattainability support men in positions of power and in the oppression of women (Connell, 1987). Further, Connell (2005) explains, homosexuality is conceptualised within hegemonic masculinity as at the bottom of the gender hierarchy, and any behaviour deemed gay is too close to femininity and therefore is expelled from the masculine hegemony. The dominance of hegemonic masculinity over homosexuality involves direct oppression, in that gay men experience political and cultural exclusion, legal violence, street violence from intimidation to murder, and economic discrimination (Connell, 2005). The positioning of hegemonic masculinity as superordinate over other men and women, is perpetuated not only by force, but also through channels such as embedded welfare and taxation policies, wage structures, mass media content, religious doctrine, and so on (Connell, 1987).

Since Connell first proposed HMT there have been significant social and cultural changes. Many of these changes have challenged powerful institutions, which is important because as McLaughlin and Muncie (2006) explain, it is powerful institutions such as the state or the church, that impose norms taken up by most of society. One of such norms imposed by these institutions is heterosexuality, and recent societal changes such as gay marriages or greater visibility of homosexual parenting are good examples of 'subordinate masculinities' challenging the doctrine of heterosexuality as the key domain of hegemonic masculinity (McLaughlin and Muncie, 2006). Further examples of social and cultural changes

can be seen in young men in Germany, who increasingly reject the patriarchal social relations and adopt a pragmatic egalitarianism between men and women, or among middle-class men in Japan who tend to escape the role of the 'salaryman' and appear more in domestic partnerships with women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). As such, HMT is now outdated. However, Connell rejected this argument, maintaining that masculinities are hierarchical, and that these hierarchies always involve a pattern in which non-homogenic masculinities are subordinate (Connell, 2005). And it is this emphasis on hierarchical masculinities that was challenged by inclusive masculinity theory.

### *Inclusive masculinity*

Theorised by Eric Anderson, inclusive masculinity as originally set out in his book *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities* emerged in reaction to the changing nature of homogenic masculinity. In his research in the UK and US on men and masculinities, Anderson (2009) noticed that HMT no longer fitted with the observed behaviour and masculine characteristics in men and boys. In particular, he observed decreased levels of homophobia and homophobia, which is a term Anderson coined to describe the fear of being socially perceived as gay. As such, he began formulating the inclusive masculinity theory (IMT) as an archetype that better represents contemporary men and masculinities and reflects the decline of homophobia (Anderson, 2009).

In defining IMT, the cultural decline of homophobia as facilitated by declining homophobia, is the key tenant of IMT (Anderson, 2009). Within IMT, there is an acceptance that straight men may show artefacts of 'feminine' behaviours or activities (Anderson & McCormack, 2018). As such, men are allowed to develop a softer, more expressive and tactile forms of masculinity without fear of redress (O'Neill, 2015). This includes greater emotional closeness within men's friendships, whilst rejecting the masculine characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, including, bullying, violence, homophobic policing of 'gay behaviour' among men, etc (Anderson & McCormack, 2018). In comparison with HMT, in which masculinities are understood as hierarchical with hegemonic masculinity at the top of the hierarchy, IMT proposes a less hierarchical order of masculinities, where various masculinities are positioned more evenly and can even coexist (Anderson, 2009).

While IMT has been used as framework in much scholarly work on men and masculinities, Anderson's theory has also received considerable criticism. Of particular

interest to this study is the criticism by O'Neill (2015), who suggested that IMT fails to pay attention to sexual politics, and that it reproduces the logic of postfeminism. Postfeminism emerged as backlash to feminism, as well as a new discursive phenomenon tied to neoliberalism, centred around the language of individualism, choice, and personal responsibility; within postfeminism, sexual equality is viewed as having been achieved and feminist values no longer needed (Gill, 2007). O'Neill (2015) argues that much like postfeminism, IMT evokes a sense that sexual politics is irrelevant; "there is something altogether too convenient about the way Anderson invokes a discourse of vague 'social change' in order to dismiss scholarship that runs counter to his own" (p.111). This presumed 'uncomplicated narrative of progressive social change' (p.111) compounds the logic of postfeminism and erases the issue of sexual politics. O'Neill further criticizes Anderson for being highly selective in his engagement with feminist work, with emphasis on the burdens of masculinity when it comes to explaining the social reproduction of gender inequality. When he does draw on feminist literature, Anderson inappropriately associates femininity and lesbianism with male homosexuality. In studies on men and masculinities, as O'Neill (2015) argues, analysis of postfeminism is essential. With this in mind, this study turns to the theoretical framework of poststructuralist-informed IMT.

#### *Poststructuralist-informed inclusive masculinity theory*

Bringing together IMT and poststructuralism, the poststructuralist-informed inclusive masculinity theory (PS-IMT) is a new theoretical framework elegantly proposed by Owen and Riley (2019) in response to the gaps in IMT. Poststructuralism is an intellectual movement exploring the dynamics between language, power and truth (Riley & Evans, 2017). Drawing on the work of Foucault, a central figure of poststructuralist thinking, and work on postfeminist subjectivities, Owen and Riley (2019) build the framework of PS-IMT using the concepts of discourse, subject positions, and technologies of self. The use of these concepts helps capture the complexities of how men engage with and shift between orthodox and inclusive masculinities, which are contrasting yet entangled in some way (Owen & Riley, 2019). Each of the key concepts used in PS-IMT is discussed in more detail below.

## Discourse

Discourse is one of the key concepts in PS-IMT. Foucault (1972) defines discourses as “practices which form the objects of which they speak” (p.49). For example, discourses conceptualize gender through commonly associating femininity with emotion, and masculinity with rationality (Riley & Evans, 2017). Discourses are thus mechanisms of power and truth, governing the way that people understand themselves and objects around them; it is powerful institutions, Riley and colleagues (2021) explain, such as the government, medicine, the church, schools, etc., that dictate and establish the distinction between normal and abnormal, constituting the discourses of ‘institutional truths’, which are accepted by wider society and learned as the ‘common-sense truths’. By desiring to be normal, people adopt those discourses which are associated with normalcy, and potentially even develop negative emotions towards those who transgress the boundaries of the norm (Riley et al., 2021). This phenomenon is referred to by poststructuralists as normalization (Gutting & Oksala, 2021). Through the power of discourse and one’s desire to adhere to the norm, the ordinary person is manipulated to make the ‘right choices’; as such people’s choices are considered far from innate or autonomous, but governed through the discourses circulated by powerful institutions, which is a principle known as governmentality (Riley et al., 2021).

Using the poststructuralist-informed definition of discourse, PS-IMT proposes that the way men think, feel, and what they can do is structured by the discourses associated with different masculinities; discourses structure, or shape the possibilities, for how men can think about masculinity, and in any culture, there is always multiple discourses. As such, men can enact agency as they shift between discourses (Owen & Riley, 2019). When taken up by people, different discourses produce subject positions.

## Subject positions

Subject positions are the next key tenet of PS-IMT. Davies and Harre (1990) developed the concept of positioning to better understand the notion of personhood. They explain that the process of developing a sense of self begins with the learning of categories which include some people and exclude others, such as being male and not female. For example, in creating a sense of self as a male, one participates in the discursive practices assigned to this category, such as assigning meaning or producing story lines about being a man.

Through this discursive practice, such a categorized person comes to position themselves as belonging to the male category and has available the subject position of a man. Over time, through engaging in various discursive practices, one develops a multiplicity of selves, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, despite potentially seeming radically different. As such, it is possible to inhabit multiple subject positions either momentarily or long term, depending on the discursive situation. Davies and Harre (1990) thus point to the power of discourse, as it constitutes the conceptual structures as well as the rights and responsibilities of the subject positions taken up by people; “Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, story lines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned” (Davies & Harre, 1990, p. 46).

In their work on developing PS-IMT, Owen and Riley (2019) used an example of men learning Latin and ballroom dancing to illustrate the way that men can shift between subject positions representing different masculinities. For example, they identified the subject position of a ‘mincer’, which was someone who associated effeminate hip movements with homosexuality, signaling orientation to orthodox masculinity. Another subject position found was the ‘competition level dancer’, who shifted away from orthodox masculinity and immersed himself in inclusive masculinity, as he practiced sinuous hip movement in front of the mirror without any concern of being perceived as gay or feminine. In negotiating the subject positions of the macho man and the effeminate man, the effeminate hip movements were reframed as a form of orthodox masculinity by association with skill, mastery, fighting and heterosexual pursuit of women. As illustrated on this example, the use of subject positions as part of PS-IMT offers a good framework for understanding the complex entanglement of masculinities.

### Technologies of self

Technologies of self is the third tenet of PS-IMT. Owen and Riley (2019) explain Foucault’s concept of technologies of self as the work that people do to better themselves and increase their understanding of self and others. People are motivated to engage with technologies of self, as the envisioned result is in locating themselves within culturally valued subject positions and the discourses that construct them; people can work on their

bodies or minds with the vision of attaining happiness, health, wisdom, etc. (Owen & Riley, 2019). The concept of technologies of self intersects with governmentality, in that it is perceived as agentic practice yet it is culturally and socially imposed; Khan & MacEachen, (2021) point out that governmentality and power is often disguised through seemingly agentic practices such as self-monitoring. For example, those who engage in the practice of monitoring their health are perceived as 'good citizens' (Khan & MacEachen, 2021). In another example, Owen and Riley (2019) demonstrate how technologies of self can serve to attain particular subject positions, such as when a man takes on a fitness regime as technologies of self, as the 'guy who takes care of himself', embodying simultaneously orthodox masculinity (valuing strength and muscularity), and inclusive masculinity (that does not problematize working on one's appearance as feminine) (Owen & Riley, 2019).

Given that the present study is concerned with the topic of gender relations, HMT and IMT seem lacking as theoretical frameworks. In contrast, PS-IMT accounts for the complexities in contemporary understanding of masculinities. As such, this study turns to PS-IMT as a theoretical framework to support the analysis of the accounts of men who use the menstrual tracking app sharing feature.

## Chapter 2: Literature review

It is important to outline the historical context of positioning the female menstruating body in society because these historical discourses structure contemporary understandings. The historical understandings of the female menstrual cycle position the menstruating woman as mad, bad, and monstrous (Ussher, 2005), and these discourses can still be seen in men's understandings of the female menstrual cycle today, as shown in the literature review below. However, studies also show that men in heterosexual relationships report wanting to know more to overcome these negative discourses, and when they do, it changes their attitudes and can be beneficial for their relationship. This is outlined below by reviewing literature on men's historical understandings of the female menstruating body, men's current perceptions, followed by a review of literature surrounding health and menstrual tracking apps, what we know so far about the partner sharing feature and the ways it may frame men's current understandings.

### Historical understanding of the female menstruating body, monstrous feminine

Throughout history, the female menstruating body has been positioned as monstrous. As Ussher (2005) explains, historically and across cultures, the female body and its reproductive functions have evoked a sense of mystery and admiration, yet at the same time fear, dread, and disgust. The menstruating woman, a young girl's first menarche, the womb, or menstrual blood, were all images or concepts commonly depicted in mythology, art, literature and religion across time, most commonly depicting the menstruating woman as dangerous, mad, seepy, leaky, and monstrous. Particularly at the time of a woman's first menstruation is she considered as dangerous, as her curving hips, thighs, and growing breasts evoke a desire in men that gets reframed as a problem of the woman; she is 'a deadly man-eater'. Science and medicine too pathologized women as mad and bad, due to the proposed ill effects of the womb on the brain, such as inability for rational and coherent thought (Ussher, 2005).

These monstrous portrayals of the feminine, as Ussher (2005) writes, served as a rationale for the need of women's control and containment. It is especially the female powers to give and preserve life that are at the centre of male envy; and the need for control and containment that pertains especially to her fertility, for example, in the

practices of female genital mutilation. Male doctors positioned the female body as in need of surveillance and regulation; due to the ill effects of the womb on the brain, women were excluded from education, science and medicine, or any positions in the workplace that may equal up to the one of the men (Ussher, 2020). According to Lupton (2012), while in the past, the rationale for surveillance and control of the women's body was based on the scientific discourses Ussher describes, today the same surveillance and control takes place in the name of care (Lupton, 2012). For example, the body diseased by premenstrual tensions is to be addressed by medical experts or through constant self-surveillance, in the interest of eliminating the ill effects and in the name of care and support (Lupton, 2013).

From a Foucauldian perspective, within any society, there are multiple discourses circulating, and the work of scholars, such as Ussher and Lupton show how these discourses of fear, disgust and control around the female menstruating body continue to circulate today. As such, there is a potential for these discourses being reproduced via the administration of tracking apps and the partner-sharing features, shaping men's accounts of their partners and their menstruating body.

#### Men's current perceptions of menstruation

The majority of available literature on men's current perceptions of menstruation shows that men's attitudes are shaped, by the stigmatising/negative discourses outlined above. In her systemic review, Erchull (2020) compiled the literature covering men's attitudes towards the female menstrual cycle, and found that most men believe that women should keep menstruation secret because they feel discomfort and embarrassment about the topic, and have fairly clear ideas about what women should or should not do during menstruation. As such, the female menstrual cycle continues to be encapsulated by discourses of shame, taboos, and disparities in the way that women and men speak or are allowed to speak about periods; women are taught to silence, conceal, and feel ashamed, while men on the other hand are permitted to speak about menstruation more freely and in a negative way, using language such as "on the rag, in season, really slick, dirt red, manhole covers" etc. (Ussher, 2005, p.20). Erchull (2020) found this kind of talk already in young boys, who tease and ridicule girls about menstruation, using language which implies that menstruating women are unclean and disgusting. She also found that most men believe that menstruation is debilitating to women, which reinforces stereotypes about women as

debilitated, incapable or less competent than men. Silencing of the topic and the disparities in talk continue to have a negative impact on women in that it maintains the status quo, including objectifications of the women's body, and positioning women as subordinate to men physically, morally and emotionally (Rajak, 2015).

Erchull (2020) points out that the literature on men and the menstrual cycle is scant at best, compared to the vast literature focusing on men's experiences of the premenstrual syndrome (PMS). By definition, PMS is a manifestation of somatic (breast tenderness, constipation, nausea, back pain, headache, etc) and psychological (anxiety, irritability, mood swings, fatigue, etc.) symptoms of unwell in the days leading up to menses and ending after its onset, affecting up to 47.8% of menstruating women world-wide (Gudipally & Sharma, 2021). As Erchull (2020) notes, the medicalisation of women's menstrual cycle with premenstrual changes framed as a being a health issue is deeply engrained in most of the Western world, making it the central component of how men understand menstruation today. This is supported by the King and colleagues' (2014) study aiming to understand men's perceptions of PMS based on a total of 126 forum posts posted between September 2008, and February 2009. They found that men understand PMS as a hormonal issue, which should be intervened with through medication, and that hormones serve women as excuses for bad behaviour such as emotionality and exploitation of men. They also recognized ways that men position themselves as victims to their partner's premenstrual wrath and mistreatment, to the point where they considered leaving their partner. They also found men to position themselves as 'good husbands', who provide love and care by being a financial provider, good father, or a good husband, despite the injustice of women's poor behaviour (King et al, 2014).

There is an interesting contrasting literature on lesbian relationships and PMS. Usher and Perz (2008) maintain that it is the context in which a woman expresses distress related to her premenstrual change, which has significant impact on its construction. They note, that the most common description of PMS by women in heterosexual relationships is intolerable distress experiences in situations placing overwhelming demands from a partner. In their interview with 15 lesbian women experiencing PMS and 10 partners, their experiences of PMS were notably different from those experienced by women in heterosexual relationships. The interviewees reported awareness and recognition of the premenstrual change, open communication, responsiveness to needs, and responsibility

sharing. As such, the experiences of these women were free from being pathologized or rejected (Usher & Perz, 2008).

*Men report wanting to know more and connect with their partner to overcome these negative discourses*

Despite vast majority of literature showing that men's understandings of the menstrual cycle are shaped by stigmatising discourses, literature shows that men's involvement can help overcome these negative discourses; we have known since the early 90's, that being involved with charting cycles, and understanding the partner's body through this knowledge, has been helpful. In their study, Frank and colleagues (1993) examined the effects of men being involved in charting their partner's cycle to identify PMS symptoms on marital satisfaction. Their study involved thirty couples with self-diagnosed PMS in the state of Indiana, USA, who were randomly assigned to either a group where monitoring was carried out by the women only, or the other group in which both the husband and wife charted the cyclical symptoms of PMS for three consecutive months. The results of this study have indicated that those couples, where the husband was involved in the tracking of PMS symptoms, have seen significant improvements in marital satisfaction over the three months. The improvements were notable in the areas of general distress, affective communication, problem-solving, finances, and sexual satisfaction. Based on the study's results, the researchers concluded that conjoint tracking evoked deeper empathy, understanding, awareness, and consideration of the other partner's perspective. These couples conversed more openly and productively about their individual needs, and strategies in how to approach potential issues before they arise (Frank et al, 1993).

Scholars suggest that many of men's problematic attitudes towards menstruation are caused by insufficient knowledge about the topic, and contemporary literature shows that there is a desire to do things differently. The first point at which men have the opportunity to learn about the female menstrual cycle is at school, but the information provided is retrospectively evaluated by most men as lacking, leaving them to figure it out for themselves (Rajak, 2015; Allen et al, 2010; Diorio & Munro, 2010), or it came too early for them to understand it (Rajak, 2015). Another point at which men come into contact with information about the menstrual cycle is within the primary family context, such as finding out about menstruation through female sibling's menarche (Allen et al, 2010), although

most men recall a sense of separation from their mothers and sisters on the topic, leaving their questions about periods unanswered (Allen et al, 2010; Rajak, 2015). For men, the most extensive knowledge about the female menstrual cycle comes predominantly from their romantic partners/spouses (King et al, 2014; Rabiepoor & Yas, 2014; Rajak, 2015; Reberte et al, 2014; Rezaee et al, 2016), which points to the importance of men and women engaging in dialogues about menstruation, as it shows to be empowering for both genders (Rajak, 2015).

Studies emerged in the recent years highlighting new, affirmative attitudes in men who learn about the menstrual cycle from their female partners. For example, in a study by Lete and colleague's (2017), which involved online surveys across 13 European countries with 5044 men aged 18-45 years who have been in a relationship for at least 6 months, more than half of the respondents perceived a monthly period as a natural process and a sign of good health. In another study by Peranovic and Bentley (2017) analysing written accounts of 48 Australian men aged 18-69, more than half of the participants acknowledged the ongoing stigma surrounding menstruation, yet felt that this stigma is lifting and that men have come a long way from what it used to be. Many participants emphasised that having knowledge about menstruation is important since half of the population is affected by it, and explicitly condemned those men, who cannot accommodate to it. Some men also spoke about menstruation in the context of a socio-economic issue and expressed their disagreement regarding taxes on period products. Others recognized the media as problematic, as it either silences the conversations about menstruation, or shames it (Peranovic & Bentley, 2017). In the study of King and colleagues (2014) 7% of participant's accounts reflected discourses of support, care, empathy and understanding for their partner's premenstrual distress.

Overall, much of the current literature points to men wanting to provide support to women, but frequently reporting a sense of frustration, confusion and helplessness due to not knowing what to do to help (Hoga et al, 2010; Rabiepoor & Yas, 2018; Rezaee et al, 2016). Men's wishes to know more about the female menstrual cycle are increasingly common, particularly in relation to the long-term relationships with female partners.

*Men's involvement can change their behaviour/attitudes, and can be beneficial for the woman/ relationship*

Men's attitudes towards the menstrual cycle improves most notably through their relationships, by talking to their respective female partners and acquiring better awareness. Early in the relationship, men report feeling apprehensive or confused about their partner's changes in mood and behaviour, which is retrospectively often linked to a lack of knowledge about the menstrual cycle (Reberte et al, 2014). Through long-term relationships, men are able to acquire enough knowledge about the female cycle, to accept and adapt to the changes that their partner goes through during the month. A study by Rabiepoor and Yas (2014) involving 150 men from Urmia, explored men's awareness of PMS, and showed that those men whose wives had a diagnosable PMS had higher awareness about the menstrual cycle, compared to those men whose wives did not experience premenstrual distress. It is mainly through communication with their partners, but also through personal efforts to learn more about the menstrual cycle via the internet or close female friends, that makes men view menstruation as something valuable, positive, and that makes men express more positive attitudes towards the topic (Allen et al, 2011; Rajak 2015). Men describe conversations with their partners about the menstrual cycle as empathetic, and deeply transformative in that it added to their sense of closeness with their partners (Allen et al, 2011), and a sense of maturity in that they have grown to recognize their partner's feelings and react in a sensitive way (Reberte et al, 2014).

Research also shows that men's involvement leads to increased partner support and symptom alleviation. Those men, who become more engaged in conversations about the menstrual cycle with their partners take on active roles in providing emotional support to their partners, show increased sense of duty to care for their partners, and provide practical support, such as buying sanitary products or filling hot water bottles, preparing hot or herbal drinks, expression of affections, refraining from arguments and fights, and overall taking care of the woman (Peranovic & Bentley, 2017; Rabiepoor & Yas, 2014). Many studies now support similar findings that men's involvement and support can help ameliorate mental and physical discomfort associated with the menstrual cycle. For example, a study by Rezaee and colleagues (2016), conducted in Iran with the partners of 100 married menstruating women who experience PMS, aged 20-45, showed that the women of male spouses who received educational training on the menstrual cycle had significant decrease

in physical and mental PMS symptoms at a three month follow-up. The positive implications of spousal involvement are now also evidenced in cognitive-behavioural couples therapy (CBCT), as an effective non-medical way of approaching the treatment of PMS which focuses on working with the cognitions and behavioural aspects of both partners, leading to significant reductions in PMS symptoms, increased partner understanding and improved relationship (Ussher & Perz, 2017). As such spouses can be the key persons in moderating their partner's psychological distress by providing support and understanding, or in exacerbating distress (Rezaee et al, 2016). Men's support linked to alleviation of symptoms mirrors the dynamic identified by Usher and Perz (2008) happening in lesbian relationships, as discussed earlier.

In conclusion, most of the current literature on men's perceptions of the menstrual cycle depicts predominantly negative constructions and derogatory perceptions of menstruating women and PMS, so we know that these discourses pertain our society. However, many men are learning, or wanting to learn about the female menstrual cycle, and their increased awareness is linked to changes in men's perceptions and attitudes. And, as I discuss below, a new way in which men can get involved in their partners' menstrual cycle and PMS management is the sharing features in menstrual tracking apps.

### Health and Menstrual Apps

Health monitoring apps have become a popular technology. As Lupton (2014) explains, these technologies are designed for the tracking of one's bodily functions, with the ideological promise of 'taking control' over one's health. Today, these apps range across variety of specialisations, from helping to establish a diagnoses, provide information about health conditions and treatments, help identify health risks, or provide a platform for fitness tracking (Lupton, 2014). A large proportion of these apps targets women, with these technologies also referred to as Femtech. As Worsfold et al (2021) explain, Femtech represents apps such as fertility, pregnancy, and menstrual tracking apps, developed to help women improve their health or to address their health-related concerns. In the next few years, Femtech is estimated to become a US\$50 billion industry (Worsfold et al, 2021), with menstrual tracking apps being the most popular mHealth applications (Riley & Paskova, 2022). Menstrual tracking apps (MTAs) are a large market of its own; first emerged in 2013,

and their popularity has been growing exponentially since its launch (Worsfold et al, 2021), with projections to reach a revenue of US\$265.40M in 2023 (Statista, 2023). MTAs are widely used globally, with at least 220 available English-language apps on Google Play Store, and 250 on Apple App store, recording more than 2.28M downloads per month, with Flo (2 M) and Clue (200 k) seeing the highest download rate (Riley & Paskova, 2022).

Most research on menstruation tracking apps have focused on analysing the app, the experiences of its users, as well as concerns around accuracy. A body of critical feminist research has focused on the way apps frame menstruation through a combination of biological essentialism and healthism, that are likely to have an impact on how the sharing feature is also understood, as discussed below.

### Menstrual tracking apps

MTA technologies are developed on the basis of an ideological promise to its users of predictability, control and empowerment. As Fox and Epstein (2020) explain, MTA's aid the recording, monitoring, and quantifying the menstrual cycle, requiring the user to input the start and the end date of bleeding, consistency and colour of menstruation, ovulation, PMS related symptoms, emotional and physical symptoms throughout the cycle, sexual behaviour, and so on. Based on this user data input, the app provides predictions about the next premenstrual phase, menstruation, and ovulation, with the possibility of receiving notifications ahead of any of these phases, as well as informational articles pertaining to self-care during the premenstrual and menstrual phase, articles about ovulation, fertility, and much more (Fox & Epstein, 2020). Riley and Paskova (2022) explain, the promise of MTA's involves health management, control, and empowerment through the self-management of the body based on information and more empowered health choices, as well as control and management of the aspects of life such as conception, avoiding pregnancy, communication with doctors, planning holidays, work, social events, etc. Reviewing research on the experiences of using the menstrual tracking app to manage PMS, Riley and Paskova (2022) note that users' hopes and motivations for using the app align with these promised outcomes, and that these hopes are met when the app enables them to map onto normative discourses. However, when there is a mismatch between user's own and the app's interpretations, the app can be a source of anxiety and disappointment,

undermining their affirmative feelings towards their bodies in a stigmatizing context (Riley & Paskova, 2022).

Scholars raise various other concerns over the use of MTA's, particularly over the fact that these technologies draw on the biomedical model of health that serve as a framework for understanding the female menstrual cycle. According to Russell's (2014) definition, the biomedical model is "an approach to health and illness which defines illness as the absence of disease, portraying the human organism as either functioning 'normally' or else dysfunctional and therefore diseased" (p.7). Biomedicine perceives the human body as if it were a machine, and illness as having a single, identifiable cause. Thinking of the human body as a machine maps onto biological essentialism, which depicts a process in which biological influences precede cultural influences and set predetermined limits to the effects of culture, reducing this very complex process into mechanical biology (Russell, 2014). Within this framework, the female menstrual cycle and women's experiences of it are reduced to biological processes, and this way of thinking about the menstrual cycle is being reproduced in/dominates MTAs (Kressbach, 2021).

Further, Kressbach (2021) argues that MTAs medicalize menstruation. Medicalization can be thought of as a shift away from the original doctor – patient dynamic, where a doctor bears the main responsibility for carrying out medically related procedures to eliminate illness. Rather, medicalization is somewhat of 'a medical jurisdiction', or an institution for social control, expanding its focus into numerous aspects of life and the various 'deviant behaviors' which were formerly not deemed as medical issues (Turrini, 2016). The concern is in that MTA's draw on and reproduce this way of understanding of the menstrual cycle, in that the menstrual cycle is thought of as a medical issue, mandating the norms and responsibilities which are in line with the medical context (Kressbach, 2021).

In MTA's, the body and the menstrual cycle is medicalised through the emphasis on hormones. As Kressbach (2021) explains, 'the hormonal imperative' positions the body as an unruly entity driven by hormones. For example, PMS and the associated feelings, physiology and behaviours are linked to the sharp rise and fall in estrogen and progesterone, or MTA's might frame stress as a product of hormonal changes during ovulation, and so on. As such, MTA's reduce user's feelings, physiological conditions, and behaviours to unseen hormonal processes. Simultaneously, MTA's offer the promise of self-knowledge, where if the user engages with the app for long enough, she might eventually be able to explain or anticipate

her feelings and behaviours. But ultimately, within the hormonal imperative the body and its processes remain outside of her control, as the unruly, uncontrollable hormones are positioned as in charge, leading to bodily alienation of the user (Kressbach, 2021). Since MTA's are informed by this biomedical model of health, the concern is also over the lack of health professional involvement in design and development of these technologies (Riley & Paskova, 2022).

Furthermore, various studies raise concerns over MTA data privacy and security. Lu (2019) points out that it is often unclear what happens with the data that MTA's collect, how it is used and by whom. Records exist of MTA's deliberately using ambiguous language in the data privacy acknowledgements, and sharing data without user's knowledge with third parties, such as market researchers and advertising companies (Lu, 2019).

### *Healthism*

Menstrual tracking apps are part of a wider shift to healthism. Crawford (1980) proposed the concept of healthism in response to the observed explosion in the practice of health and health consciousness in the 1970's. Those who could afford to join this popular health movement (middle and upper class) have become preoccupied with the topic of personal health, adopting new health behaviours such as running and exercise, consuming vitamins and food supplements while avoiding other food items not deemed as healthy, and so on. Thus he defined healthism as "the preoccupation with personal health as primary- often the primary- focus for the definition and achievement of well-being; a goal which is to be attained primarily through the modification of life styles, with or without therapeutic help" (p.368). Healthism practice emphasises personal responsibility for one's own health; the individual is responsible for resisting advertisements for unhealthy food or habits, overcoming poor personal habits, and avoiding disease agents. Healthism became a dominant framework for understanding health in subsequent years, particularly in countries with free market economies.

Existing literature shows the ways in which healthism is being taken up in relationships as a coupled endeavour and with what effects. In their study, Robson and colleagues (2022) used discourse analysis to explore the way that healthism is practiced in relationships in which one partner had received a diagnosis of coronary heart disease. The 22 heterosexual British couples that participated in the study understood their health as a

shared practice, constructing a form of 'relational healthism'. In this coupled endeavour, the couples struggled with the contradictory nature of relational healthism; the participants' attempts to promote healthier behaviour in their partners (in line with suggestions of health professionals) involved surveillance, control, and discipline, which clashed with the relationship norms of support, acceptance, respect and autonomy. To resolve these tensions, the participants dynamically moved between discourses, adopting, resisting and at times transforming them in order to engage in their contradicting roles (Robson et al, 2022).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the practice of healthism connected with the development of digital health applications (Crawford, 1980), and the quantified self-movement. The quantified self movement further enabled the practice of healthism by positioning technology as a tool to better body-knowing and thus better self-management for health. One of the ways to realize the quantified self is through self-tracking, which Lupton (2013) defines as a practice of tracking one's bodily functions, which is possible today with the aid of digital technologies. As such, the digitally engaged and empowered patient and citizen can become actively involved in their health care by collecting quantifiable and measurable data. The utopia behind the quantified self and healthism movements is a vision of managing or improving one's life; the obtained visual and numerical data offers a better understanding of the body and mind, and as a result of that one will become healthier, wealthier, more successful, more productive, and so on (Lupton, 2013). This work on the self maps onto the idea of optimal living, which is a contemporary discourse circulating that envisions the possibility, expectation and responsibility for people to live their life to the fullest in every aspect; the optimal human being is to become their best self through the pleasurable mode self-surveillance (Lupton, 2014). Digital technologies, such as menstrual tracking apps, enable the advanced practices of such self-surveillance, aiding women in the practices of postfeminist healthism to meet the expectations of working on themselves to be 'better' in ways that produce subject positions related to cultural ideals of femininity and good womanhood (Riley et al, 2019).

#### *MTA sharing feature*

Some menstrual tracking apps now offer a feature through which users can share information about their cycle with other people. There is currently 9 apps that at least mention a sharing functionality in their description and/or website, which makes this

sharing feature not as common in comparison to the number of MTA's available. The nine apps offering this functionality are MyFlo, Clue, WomanLog, LadyTimer, My Period Tracker, My Days X, Femm Period Ovulation Tracker, Cycles Period Tracker, and Easy Period. In this nine, the main players are Clue and MyFlo. Clue explains this feature in terms of opening up conversations about periods, or connecting with loved ones over important life aspects such as health, family planning, etc. The CEO of Clue says, that "there hasn't always been an easy and open dialogue around periods, but to actually understand and take care of our bodies we need to talk about menstrual health. Clue Connect makes this easier by bringing people closer, connecting them through this important part of life" (*How to Use Clue*, 2016). On their website, Clue explains that the sharing feature can help users share their information with friends and family, as well as with their partner to help them talk about periods, mood swings, plan the small as well as the big and important life decisions, including pregnancy. As they suggest, this sharing feature is designed to help couples be closer and feel more connected (*How to Use Clue*, 2016).

The sharing feature usually comes in the form of a link, which is shared with the invitee allowing them access to information about the primary user's menstrual cycle via the app. The link allows partners, friends, or family to see the user's menstrual calendar, showing information about their bleeding days, ovulation, and PMS. Some apps also share informative articles about the female cycle or articles pertaining specifically to the phase that the user is in. In contrast, the menstrual tracking app MyFlo offers a more developed feature and information using an email format; rather than sharing a link to the woman's menstrual calendar, MyFLO sharing feature sends emails to the partner as the woman moves through the four phases of the cycle - the follicular, ovulation, luteal, or menstrual phase. These emails give the partner tips and coaching on how to best support their female partners emotionally and physically, including the types of dates to go on, foods to cook, or the best kind of sex to have and when (MyFLO, 2022).

#### Men's engagement with MTA's

The existence of the sharing feature means that app developers have done research and evaluation, leading them to think that there is a market for these functionalities. More broadly, there is research as outlined above, which suggests that men in long-term relationships with women are looking for this kind of information to be better partners.

Currently, there is limited research on users' thoughts and feelings about this sharing feature, with only one study inquiring into this technology from men's point of view.

An important piece of research on men's engagement with MTA sharing features was conducted by Xu (2020) in China. She explored men's experiences of tracking their partner's cycle through an MTA named Easy Period. Xu conducted her research using semi-structured interviews with 2 male participants who tracked their partner's menstrual cycle. One of the participants described that once he started tracking his wife's period, he realised that menstruation is much more complex than he initially thought. Before tracking, his only knowledge about periods was that it occurs once per month. As he began using the sharing feature, he learned that menstruation involves pain, stress, varying bleeding times, various stages of the cycle, and so on. He also perceived his involvement as helping his wife with the labour involved in tracking. Xu's second male participant, who discontinued tracking after breaking up with his partner, retrospectively recalls that through using the app, he helped his girlfriend keep track of her periods, and also helped her analyse the data. He himself was a health tracking enthusiast and tracked his own health and fitness through Apple Health and Strong. As such, he also viewed his involvement in menstrual tracking as helping his girlfriend track for her health benefits, and wished to make health improvements together with her (Xu, 2020), mapping onto the practices of relational healthism.

Given the limited research available on the topic, Xu's study is an important contribution to understanding men's engagement with MTAs, and provides support for the chosen theoretical framework of PS-IMT for the present study; the participant's use of the sharing feature demonstrated elements of healthism behaviour, and depicted men as performing inclusive and hegemonic masculinities producing various subjects positions. For example, the shifting between inclusive and hegemonic masculinity can be seen in Xu's finding that both male participants thought of bleeding women as weak and in need of male care and protection. One of the participants said that "After all, when girls are bleeding, they are a bit weak, both physically and emotionally, I think a good boyfriend should show more care during this period" (Xu, 2020, p. 56). The participant framed his involvement in tracking as help, expression of love and care, mapping onto inclusive masculinity and producing the subject position of a good boyfriend/husband. At the same time, the participant shows elements of hegemonic masculinity, when he positioned himself as a strong man against his frail partner. This narrative is in line with the story behind the

development of the app; on the Apple App Store, the app developer Ghonzan Han says that he developed this app because his wife “couldn’t find a simple and easy-to-use period record App [...] so I developed this ‘Easy Period’ by myself [...] to meet my wife’s needs” (Ghonzan, 2022). So while the app is a feminine app, rather than causing emasculation, using it may be interpreted by men as performing and reassuring their masculinity (Xu, 2020). The limitations of Xu’s study on men’s use of the sharing feature are that it was not theorised through a masculinity theory, and only involved two participants, making the present study an important development in the field.

In contrast to Xu’s study, in which participants drew on discourses of both, hegemonic and inclusive masculinities, other research suggests that period tracking apps are used in ways that orientate to explicitly controlling women and reproducing hegemonic masculinity. For example, King and colleagues (2014) studied the app PMSBuddy, which was developed to help men keep track of their partner’s PMS. The app would send men notifications to warn that their partner’s PMS is coming up, with tips on how to cope with the women’s cycle and pointers for dating websites accompanied by an encouraging slogan “it never hurts to look”. The website had 150,000 registered users within a year of its launch (King et al, 2014). Various other sites or apps, similar to that of PMSBuddy have emerged, such as Code Red, whose inventor maintains that apps of this kind are not sexist; he claims “I just think a lot of people take themselves too serious in this world today [...] if we can have fun and help some dude avoid the wrath at the same time, then that’s great. It’s just, you know, it’s just an iPhone app” (Woods, 2010). A feminist blog called Feministing.com noted the emergence of other apps of such kind, such as the TrackMyBitch app, helping men gauge when their partner is ovulating, PMS-ing, or being ‘extra horny’, or the iAmAMan app, which additionally features the function to track multiple partners and keeps each one of them password protected, so that the women cannot find out about one another. The app accounts for this need in relation to hegemonic masculinity associated with the sexual conquest of women: “Because if you are a man, you are obviously juggling multiple relationships that you are hiding from each one of them. [...The app allows to] know about your girlfriend’s period and her mood. You can plan your dates, evening and save some money” (Eisley, 2011). What these apps have in common are the hegemonic narratives about men and masculinity. They also perpetuate the stereotypical image of the menstrual woman as ‘bad and mad’, and encourage men to not waste their time and money on them.

After a thorough internet and Apple App Store search, these apps were not found to be available for download anymore. However, their previous existence points to a need to better understand how the sharing features on existing apps are being accounted for, especially given how little research there is on them.

### The purpose of this study

MTAs are a relatively new yet already normative technology used regularly by millions of women across the globe. With research reporting that the technology presents itself as a tool for empowerment through understanding the menstruating body that aligns with notions of optimal living, and that users report experiencing a sense of empowerment as long as the technology meet their needs in terms of, for example, accurate predictions. Jostling for market share, seven of these apps, several of which dominate the field, have recently introduced a sharing feature. This sharing feature allows sharing between family, friends, and partners. For male partners who use the sharing feature, their engagement with this technology occurs against a backdrop in which menstruation has a long history of being highly stigmatised, although some research points to a shift in this with long-term male partners, in particular, wanting to know more about menstruation in order to support their intimate partner. This desire in men can be theorised within contemporary theories of masculinity as part of a relatively recent shift towards inclusive masculinities, in which men maintain a gendered identity without distancing themselves from women and anything associated with femininity. The sharing feature thus holds significant affirmative potential to enable men to take up subject positions related to inclusive masculinities and new, affirmative gender relations between heterosexual couples in relation to menstruation. However, the very limited research on men's accounts of the sharing feature suggests significant complexity in use occurring at the intersections of both hegemonic and inclusive masculinities, that may be orientated to patriarchal care (Xu, 2020; Lupton, 2012) or control (King et al, 2014; Lupton, 2013). It is therefore timely and important to examine the discourses used to construct men's use of the sharing feature by the actors who use or produce this app to identify how the sharing feature is accounted for, and how, within these discourses men may understand themselves, their intimate partners and the menstrual cycle.

To address these aims, this study asks: how is men's use of the sharing feature constructed by men using or creating the sharing feature for men's use? What discourses and subject positions are evident in these accounts? And what are the implications for how women's menstrual cycle is understood by their male partners when mediated through technology?

## Method

### Design

A three-phased multimethod design was implemented in this study to understand the discourses within which men's use of the sharing feature of their partner's cycle is framed. Firstly, this study held interviews with five men who use the sharing feature to explore the discourses used in their talk of using this technology. Next, two app developers were interviewed to access some of the discourses that frame the understandings of those who create these technologies, including the reasoning behind developing this feature. And lastly, this study analyzed textual material of four emails that are shared with male partners via MyFlo MTA sharing feature which provided an example of how the apps frame this sharing feature to their users. MyFlo was chosen over other apps offering a sharing feature, because it offers the most detailed data, giving best insights into how app developers construct this feature to their user.

As Yardley (2017) explains, people's psychological processes are shaped by the ever-changing contexts that they find themselves in, and as such, one of the criteria for a good qualitative study employs sensitivity to context. With this in mind, this study explored the various contexts in which men's understandings of the female menstrual cycle are constructed, including context of the feature's development, its content, as well as the context of men's own interaction with it. This required engaging with different data sources, and as such, a multi-method approach was necessary to cater for the different nature of data. The study combined the methods of semi-structured interviews with male users and developers, and an analysis of pre-existing internet data of the MyFLo sharing feature. A multimethod approach can be helpful in various ways. As Schutz and colleagues (2003) explain, using two or more methods opens the possibility to study different aspects of the same phenomenon, to which one single method is not suitable. As such, this method allows for a wider data set, offering different perspectives and thereby allowing more depth in understanding of the issue. The findings across different data sets can also be compared for similarities, differences, and paradoxes (Schutz et al, 2003). Overall, a multimethod approach increases the likelihood of accessing the dominant discourses which shape the construction of these sharing features, which supports meeting the aims of this study.

## Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used as a method of data collection among male user participants and developers. As Hugh-Jones and Gibson (2012) explain, semi-structured interviews are defined by having a partially pre-determined direction for the interview that takes place between the participant and the researcher. The interview is guided by a set of questions planned out in a document often referred to as an interview schedule, or interview guide. As they point out, the interview guide is useful in that it serves as an anchor for the research agenda, while at the same time, the researcher can ask questions outside of the interview guide to further explore the subjective experience of the participant. As such, a semi-structured interview maintains its focus on the study's agenda, while simultaneously offering space for the participant to speak freely about issues important to them and unanticipated by the researcher. The interview guide can also be made available to the participant prior to the interview (Hugh-Jones & Gibson, 2012), which was an option taken up by this study to facilitate egalitarian relationship with participants and deeper reflection.

Semi-structured interviews as a method for data collection aligns with the aims of this study, which is to access the discourses that people draw on in their talk related to the sharing feature. As Riley and colleagues (2021) explain, semi-structured interviews represent a natural way of interaction, one in which ideas can be communicated similarly to an everyday social exchange, as it employs everyday conversational skills in the process. The assumption is that using a familiar form of interaction, such as semi-structured interviews, those discourses which pertain to society get articulated during talk, as the participants draw on the discourses available to them (Riley et al., 2021). As such, semi-structured interviews were used with the aim of accessing the discourses available to men and developers when talking about the MTA sharing feature. In addition, the male user participants interview was organized around a timeline.

A timeline was used as a tool to aid the semi-structured interviews with male user participants. As Sheridan and colleagues (2011) explain, timelining is a method of graphic elicitation of the stories told by participants. A timeline can be drawn on a piece of paper as a horizontal axis representing time, onto which participants mark events which are significant in some way and in the temporal order as they went in time. The timeline can also have a vertical axis, which may represent factors related to the phenomena studied, for example intensity of emotion. Participants fill the timeline prior to the interview, which

elicits reflection and contemplation on the past, the present and the future. The process of timelining can help the participants recall the sequence of events as they occurred, and resurface the emotions associated with it (Sheridan et al, 2011).

Timelining brings many benefits to the interview process. Sheridan and colleagues (2011) argue that time is an important feature of life stories, as narratives are interwoven with time, and in that narratives always have a temporal characteristic. As such, temporality gives stories meaning, and thus timeline as a tool during an interview can facilitate the storytelling and highlight the turning points in people's lives. Furthermore, using a timeline during interviews has also been found to build rapport between the researcher and the participant, and can make it easier for participants to talk about uncomfortable or sensitive topics (Sheridan et al., 2011). The use of a timeline was successfully implemented in a study by Riley and Paskova (2022), showing that it can be helpful in thinking about people's use of MTA, as it tends to have different phases of use from the time they first engage with the technology, until a point at which they are familiar with it. Also, for men, using a sharing feature in a menstrual app to track their partner's cycle is an experience which may have been uncomfortable for men to speak about (Erchull, 2020), and importantly, one which develops over time. As such, a timeline was implemented in the interviews with male partners. (See appendix VI. for a timeline).

#### Pre-existing internet data

The pre-existing internet dataset was sourced from four emails that are shared with male participants via MyFlo sharing feature. The purpose of this was to recognize and understand better the content and the discourses present and available to the app users that are produced by the app. As Hugh-Jones and Gibson (2012) explain, the collection of such pre-existing material and unsolicited data is a rich source of material, which shows 'psychology' in action, the way that people create and manage identities. Since the internet is a pervasive technology, the source of internet data allows researchers to explore issues of local, national, and global issues. As the authors further point out, it is important to establish a sampling method, including setting out the criteria for what type and how much of data is to be collected (Hugh-Jones & Gibson, 2012). With this in mind, this study chose to include the textual material from the first four emails sent by MyFlo sharing feature to its

users, covering the length of one menstrual cycle and comprised of four different phases (as per MyFlo).

One of the considerations in using pre-existing internet data is to ensure the eligibility to access and work with the chosen data; as Hugh-Jones and Gibson (2012) point out, the responsibility that rests with the researcher is to distinguish carefully between public and private domains. The British Psychological Society (2007) thinks of public domains as data which is readily accessible by anyone, and in establishing whether valid consent needs obtaining, the researcher is to consider the extent to which the use of that data carries potentially damaging effects for participants. Accessing the data in the MyFlo sharing feature involved what is referred to as the 'walkthrough method', which means that the researcher registers and logs into the app and mimics an everyday use in order to access the app's content, making it available for critical analysis (Light et al, 2018). Given that the emails by MyFlo can be readily accessed by anyone who signs up for the sharing feature, the data was considered as appearing in a public domain. The other consideration was copyright issues, and for this I turned to the Copyright Act 1994, section 43/1, which states that a fair dealing with a work for the purposes of criticism or review does not infringe the copyright (NZ Legislation, 2022).

### Three studies: recruitment, participants/data, & interview procedure/data collection

As this study is comprised of three different sources of data, the next section is divided into three sections providing information on the data sets, recruitment procedure, and data collection relevant to those categories, which were study 1) interviews with men who track their partner's cycle using a sharing feature, study 2) interviews with developers, and study 3) the textual contents of first four emails by MyFlo sharing feature.

#### Study 1: Men who track their partner's cycle

##### *Recruitment procedure*

The criteria for recruitment were that the participants could conduct the interview in English language and were older than 18. The participants were recruited through multiple channels. Recruitment advertisements were posted on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, and LinkedIn; see appendix IX. for social media advertisements). The researcher

used accounts created specifically for this research project. The researcher also approached developers of menstrual tracking apps offering a sharing feature, to share the recruitment advertisement on their social media page, out of which only one agreed to post.

Participants self-identified by expressing their interest in response to recruitment. The participants reached out to the researcher based on their interest, responding to an email address created specifically for the purposes of this study. The participant criteria were that they must be male, 18 years of age, and must use or have used in the past the sharing feature of an MTA to track their partner's menstrual cycle.

### *Participants*

This study involved five male participants. The minimum of five participants was selected in order to collect meaningful data for the study, and satisfy the requirements within the scope of a Master's thesis. Deciding to include no more than five participants was in an aim to gather more detail in participants' accounts, rather than focusing on quantity, as well as to allow room for studying the other two contexts in which men's understandings are negotiated (Study 2 and 3).

The five participants were of different sociodemographic backgrounds. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity. Tom was a 45-year-old businessmen from New Zealand, who has been in a relationship with his partner for 6 years and tracked her cycle for up to one year, with his engagement with the app gradually declining over time. Matt, a 40-year-old therapist also from New Zealand has been with his partner for over two years and had been tracking her cycle for nearly the entirety of their relationship. Shane, a 32-year old tradesman living in Australia had been with his partner for six months and has been using the feature for about three months. Jared, a 48-year-old university professor, with mixed background of USA, Ireland, and Germany, but living for majority of his life in the Sultanate of Oman, had been with his wife for 13 years. He started using the app in the last year and engaged with it for about two months. Lastly, Kyle, a 41-year-old yoga teacher from the UK has been with his partner for about 1.5 years and has been using the feature for the past year.

### *Interview procedure*

After the participants expressed their interest to the researcher, they were sent an information sheet and a consent form (see appendix IV. for information sheet, and appendix II. for a consent form). Once the participants read over these documents carefully, they returned them to the researcher with a signature. Next, the participants were sent a timeline and the possible interview questions in an interview guide document (please see appendix VII. for an interview guide and appendix VI. for a timeline). They were asked to fill out the timeline prior to the interview and encouraged to use the list of possible questions as prompts for this activity to help them with the timelining. The participants were asked to allow approximately 15 minutes for preparing the timeline, and to send the filled timeline back to the researcher once completed before the interview. They also had the choice to keep the timeline document to themselves, should they feel uncomfortable sharing it.

The interviews were scheduled based on the participant's availability and convenience. The online platform Zoom was used to conduct the interviews. At the start of the meeting, participants were greeted and reminded of their rights to withdraw from the interview at any point, and to only answer those questions which are comfortable for them to speak to. The participants were also reminded that the audio of the interview is to be recorded. With the participant's consent, the recording function was switched on, and the interview proceeded with the aid of the interview guide and timeline, while also exploring topics brought by the participant that were relevant to the study. The interview had an approximate timeframe of 45 minutes, and towards its end, participants were asked for last thoughts or comments. Once the interview ended, the researcher switched off the recording function and asked the participants if they had any questions. The researcher then used Descript software to transcribe the interview audio files to text. Once completed and checked for accuracy, the researcher sent the transcript to the participants, prompting them to read over it, and to make any changes if they wanted to. The participants were invited to elaborate on what they had said, or redact information they no longer wanted to be part of the project. Having received an approved copy back from the participant, I proceeded to analysis.

## Study 2: Developers

### *Recruitment procedure*

The app developers of the menstrual tracking apps which offer a sharing functionality were recruited via social media (LinkedIn, Reddit, and Facebook; please see appendix IX. for social media advertisements), and by contacting them directly, using their email addresses provided on the app websites or the relevant app store page. Two developers self-selected themselves by responding to the researcher's email.

### *Participants*

Two developers responded to participate in the study. Pseudonyms are used to protect their anonymity. Greg, a 59-year old developer from Germany used to be a programmer and started developing apps when smartphones emerged. Eventually he created a menstrual tracking app, which he further developed to include a sharing feature. Liam, a 36-year-old from Russia living in the United States was one of two developers working at creating a menstrual sharing app for couples as part of their Master's degree. Although this app never launched due to unknown reasons, the app reached the stage of a fully functioning prototype.

### *Interview procedure*

The same interview process was followed as with the male user participants, except for the use of a timeline; a timeline was not used in interviews with developers (see appendix III. for developer's consent form, and appendix V. for developer's information sheet). Interviews with developers were also guided by a different set of questions as outlined in the interview guide (please see appendix VIII. for developer's interview guide).

## Study 3: MyFlo emails

### *Data*

Study three involved the textual content included in emails that are shared with male users of the MyFlo sharing feature. The MyFlo sharing feature categorizes the menstrual cycle into four distinct phases, each marked by specific hormonal processes in the female body. The four menstrual cycle phases are distinguished as the menstruation,

follicular, ovulation and luteal phase. Each phase is detailed in an email ranging between 1-2 pages long, totaling four emails of 7 pages (total = 3145 words). The relevant letter is sent to the male partner as soon as the woman progresses into a new phase in her cycle, which is calculated by the app based on her tracking. The criteria for inclusion of textual material were set to include all textual content in the first four emails, in order to cover the lengths of one full menstrual cycle.

#### *Data collection procedure*

To access these emails, the researcher created a MyFlo dummy account. The app offers an option to provide an email address, to which shared information about the user's menstrual cycle would be sent to in the form of emails. The researcher registered the email address designated for this study. The researcher engaged with the menstrual tracking app daily for one month, logging data following 1 menstrual cycle, starting with 5 days of logging menstrual bleeding, and then visiting the app to randomly log at least one symptom a day, such as mood, energy levels, sex drive, physical sensations, and also symptoms suggesting PMS in week three, such as breast tenderness, low mood, fatigue, cramping, and so on. About every seven days, an email was received by MyFlo, totaling four emails over 1 month of using the app. The textual content of those emails was gathered in a Word document, before proceeding to analysis.

#### *Method of Analysis*

Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis (FiDA) was used as a method of analysis across the three studies. As Riley and colleagues (2021) explain, FiDA, also known as poststructuralist discourse analysis, is a methodological approach which aims to identify the ideas through which people make sense of themselves and the world around them, and what consequences these ideas may have on the way that people talk, think, feel or behave. As its name suggests, this approach draws predominantly on the ideas of Michael Foucault, but has been progressively developed by other scholars. Given the broad body of work, FiDA has no set methodological procedure for analysis. Nevertheless, FiDA is characterized by several key principles, such as an inquiry into the way that discourses construct ways of knowing (the truth), the way that people take up these truths to make sense of themselves

and others (subject positions), and the implications for practice including their rights and responsibilities (Riley et al., 2021).

In FiDA, the inquiry into the discursive truths requires looking at the wider discourses that surround people's accounts. As Wiggins and Riley (2010) explain, wider discourses that permeate society usually originate in and are circulated by powerful institutions or people with particular expertise, such as psychology, medicine, education, religion, and so on. These wider discourses compete to be taken up by people to frame their understandings of an issue, and to prescribe the practices of what certain people can or should do, which are associated with these wider discourses. The different kinds of people and their rights and responsibilities construct different subject positions (Davies & Harre, 1990; Wiggins & Riley, 2010). As such, FiDA aligns with this study's theoretical framework of PS-IMT, in identifying discourses and the constructions of masculinities and subject positions within them, and the vantage points offered by those subject positions.

Besides the concept of subject positions, FiDA and PS-IMT share many other key principles, as they both draw on poststructuralism. For example, the discourses that construct the various subject positions can be explored through the principle of normalization, which describes how some discourses are associated with normalcy, offering subject positions that people might embody, or aspire to embody, in order to adhere to those norms (Gutting & Oksala, 2021). People manage their behaviour in line with these norms, such as through the practice of self-monitoring through digital technology; doing so feels like a choice or an act of freedom, but from a Foucauldian perspective, it's actually a form of power operating on them, a principle mentioned earlier, called governmentality (Riley et al., 2021). FiDA is also concerned with Foucault's principle of problematization, which considers how problems come to matter for people, and how these concerns lead to conduct in people's lives (Warner, 2002), for example the problematization of PMS within the biomedical discourse, and how people might engage in practices aimed at eliminating PMS through medical rather than psycho-social interventions.

While not a central feature of FiDA, the researcher can also scan for rhetorical technicalities to help interpret participant's speech. Rhetorical technicalities may orient the researcher to important aspects of talk, such as where problematization may be occurring, or where subject positions are being constructed. For example, the rhetorical technicality of hedging helps the speaker manage their accountability by avoiding making specific claims,

much like disclaimers may help the speaker mitigate a stance on a particular issue, such as saying “I am not sexist, but ...” (Wiggins, 2017). Other rhetorical technicalities include but are not limited to aspects of talk such as repetition, usually used by the speaker to emphasize a point, or emphasis on a particular issue in order to draw attention to it, sentences left unfinished implying that what was to be said was unsayable (Riley et al., 2021), the use of metaphors or pronouns to avoid labelling a subject by its actual name/noun, extreme case formulations (ECF) exaggerating things, or minimizations which in contrast to ECFs downplay the importance of what is being talked about (Wiggins, 2017).

### Procedure for data analysis.

All three studies, interviews with male user participants, MyFlo emails, and interviews with developers followed the same procedure for analysis, using the methodological approach of FiDA. I worked through the data categorically, meaning that I completed the analysis of one study before moving onto the next one. Following recommended guidelines as per Riley and colleagues (2021) I engaged with a process of familiarization with the transcripts. The process of familiarization began already during the process of transcribing the interviews with male partners and developers from audio files into texts, as I listened to the recordings and worked on the written format. Knowing the texts in detail helped develop an understanding of the content and tone of participants’ accounts (Riley et al, 2021). Once I completed the interview transcripts, I read and reread them to familiarize myself further with the texts. MyFlo emails did not require transcribing, so I spent some extra time on reading and rereading these emails to get familiar with them. During this phase, I also highlighted aspects of talk that seemed of interest.

The next step in the analysis was keyword coding. As Wiggins and Riley (2010) advise, a good procedure during this phase is to create a margin on the lefthand side of the transcript, in which the researcher makes a 1- or 2-word notes when the topic in the research question is being talked about, or when any other key issues are being recognized. It is important to be as inclusive as possible, as at this point, the researcher does not know what the key issues might be (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). I went through the transcripts several times, making notes in the lefthand margin that I thought were relevant, important and repetitive. With every read, new keywords and ideas emerged, some of which were similar terms titled differently, and so in the final step I grouped these similar terms together.

The next step in FiDA analysis involved more coding, using ‘what, how, why’ questions. Wiggins and Riley (2010) refer to these questions as a discursive lens, which helps the researcher break into the data. For this procedure, I created three margins on the righthand side of the transcript, titled ‘what’, ‘how’, and ‘why’ from left to right. I began with answering the ‘what’ question, which asks ‘what is being said and what are the issues’ (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). In doing so, I succinctly wrote what the text was saying with trying to use as much of the exact words from the transcript as possible to stay close to the data. Next, the ‘how’ question asks ‘how something is said so that it sounds plausible’ (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). Here, I looked for some of the FiDA key principles, such as normalization, problematization, or the constructions of subject positions. I also looked out for rhetorical technicalities, including tensions, pauses, hesitations in speech, as well as what has not been said. As Wiggins and Riley (2010) explain, the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ questions lead the researcher to the ‘why’ question, which asks ‘why something is being said, or what the consequences for saying it might be?’ In answering the ‘why’ question, I further drew on the key principles of FiDA, looking to identify if the talk may be oriented to wider discourses, and also exploring the consequences for thought/behavior of embodying certain subject positions (see appendices for coded transcripts; appendix X. for male partners, appendix XI. for developers, and appendix XII. for MyFlo emails).

The next step in the analysis was to review my coding, and to collate it under each conceptual keyword. Before collating the extracts, I reviewed my analysis by crosschecking the righthand side margins with the transcripts, as well as the keywords in the lefthand side margin, and adjusted the keywords where necessary. Once finished, I printed out the transcripts and collated the extracts with the same keywords into piles. I went through each pile individually, reading through the extracts and looking for the similarities across the discourses used, and the ways that they each construct the keyword. Some of this work required reshuffling of piles and creating smaller groups of extracts within those piles that showed common constructions, such as the constructions of subject positions. A few extracts were left aside, as at the time they did not seem to fit in. I grouped these in a pile as ‘miscellaneous’ and returned to them later in the analysis process.

The last step in the analysis was writing up. Wiggins and Riley (2010) recommend to first chose the extracts that best articulate the discourses constructing the research topic. I sorted my piles in the order in which I wanted the write up to follow, and one pile at a time I

looked for the extracts that best articulated the ideas and let them set the flow for the rest of the commentary. As I worked on writing up, sometimes my ideas developed further, and I decided to reshuffle some piles, and sometimes I reached for the miscellaneous extracts which now made sense in where they fitted in. This process was therefore extensive and iterative in line with best practice for in-depth qualitative analysis (Wiggins and Riley, 2010).

I made a decision to analyse each of the three data sets separately, although I reviewed the idea of combining these data sets for analysis. A provisional analysis suggested that while there were shared discourses, there were differences related to the context of each study that were important to keep within the analysis. As such, the analysis that will follow looks at these three data sets separately, with cross cutting themes and implications for how the data sets differ discussed in the discussion section.

## Ethics

This study gained the approval by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see appendix I. for a full ethics committee approval). The following ethical issues were considered in designing this study.

This study generated a potential risk for causing discomfort, or embarrassment to the participants, as it involved interviewing men about the topic of menstruation which may be a sensitive topic for some. As such, participants were fully informed of the topic as well as the nature of the questions that were to be asked during the interview. Participants were informed that they may opt out from the interview at any point and choose not to answer certain questions. Upon receiving the transcript of the interview for review, participants were given the opportunity to alter their answers or exclude certain information. The information sheet clearly conveyed how participants' anonymity was maintained and what steps were to be taken to ensure that interview recordings were fully confidential to the researcher. While it was important to consider these risks, it was also reasonable to assume that these participants were going to be comfortable in speaking on the topic of menstruation, as they self-selected themselves for this study by expressing interest to take part in it.

Confidentiality was an ethical issue in this project, as interviews with participants were audio recorded and transcribed. As such, the identities of participants were only known to the researcher, and pseudonyms were used in the research process and the final

report. All data with confidential information, including the audio recordings, were stored on either a password protected computer in a locked room, or on a university password protected server storage. Once audio recordings were transcribed, the researcher destroyed the audio files.

Safety to the researcher was a potential ethical issue throughout the project. As such, the researcher created an email address and social media accounts specifically for the purposes of recruitment and any communication with the participants. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted via an online platform, omitting any potential risk of in-person contact.

The researcher sought cultural consultation, as this research was based in New Zealand and was relevant to Māori communities. The relevance to Māori was in that it explored sense-making of digital technologies relating to reproductive health, which affects Māori, and also in that it explored how dominant societal constructions of masculinities are translated into men's experiences of sharing information about their partner's cycles. The consultation took place in March 2021, as part of the researcher's BA Honours research report. The consulted research project studied women's lived experiences of managing PMS through an MTA. The current study is on a similar topic to the research report (menstruation app use), so the research practices developed from the previous study's cultural consultation were to be applied to this research should it involve Māori participants. One of the outcomes of the cultural consultation was to ensure the possibility for a preliminary Zoom meeting with the participant to create research design in partnership with them. Further, I ensured that the recruitment process offered equitable participation opportunities through advertising in places of wide demographics. Lastly, the researcher's interpretations of Māori participants' accounts were to be double checked by a person with culture expertise, however, this was not relevant for the participants who volunteered.

## Reflexivity

I understand that reflexivity is an integral part of any good qualitative research project. I identified two key issues for reflexivity concerning the dynamics of that played out in this study. Firstly, as FiDA is concerned with power relations, I found it necessary to consider the way that power was distributed in this study. The dynamics that are to be taken into consideration are the researcher-researched, and the researcher-university. In

the former, as Burr (2003) points out, despite efforts to escape the power relation, it is the researcher's account that carries more weight and has the final say about the study results. This may have impacted on the way that participants drew on discourses available to them; aware of this dynamic, they may have drawn on discourses that made them feel secure in such an unbalanced power dynamic. The latter concerns the power dynamic issue between the researcher and an institution, which from the perspective of FiDA is constructed by wider discourses that the student's work must adhere to, if it is to be judged as 'good' (Burr, 2003). This concerns the power dynamic between the present study and the university. In reflecting on the implications of this dynamic, what comes to mind is the pressure of correctness when it comes to discussing gender relations. At times I felt anxious about making sure that this study adhered to the desired ways of talking about gender relations, in order to avoid labels such as extreme feminism or sexism. Upon reflecting further however, these anxieties may stem from my personal background.

Personal reflexivity is integral to qualitative research; as Burr (2003) points out, the researcher brings to the study his or her own constructions and understandings of self and the world. With this in mind, the task for reflexivity was for me as the researcher to acknowledge my own my biography, and my personal values that may have shaped this research. I am originally from the Czech Republic, where I lived until the age of 19. My personal observation is that in the Czech Republic, women have tendencies to embody the subject position of a 'wonder woman'. Mapping onto practices of postfeminism, many Czech women work hard to achieve the ideals of success and feminine beauty. These ideals involve keeping a spotless, organized home, preparing homecooked meals for the husband, juggling a successful and fulfilling career, all the while looking immaculate and sexy. While this model is familiar across most of the Western world today, after living in New Zealand for the past twelve years, somehow the pressures to adhere to these ideals of female empowerment seem particularly strong in the Czech Republic. It is reasonable to say that my upbringing in a culture where these discourses are the considered norm will have impacted on doing a critical study on gender relations. When engaging with feminist literature, at times I felt tension around deciding what was sexist and what was not, and in conceptualizing what postfeminism means in gender relations. In order to minimize the impact on this study, it was important for me to maintain this reflexivity throughout so that I

was able to recognize the source of those tensions, and to keep an open mind to various perspectives.

Lastly, I would like to include a reflection on the recruitment process. I found it very difficult to find men who would participate in this study, which suggests to me that men shy away from having conversations on this topic. It would be reasonable to assume that the men who participated in this study were particularly open in that they were able to talk about this issue. My question remains, how these men's discourses would have been different from those men, who are reluctant to have these conversations and why? Furthermore, the bigger app developers did not engage with this project even though they were invited to do so. Whether they thought this project was not big enough for them, or whether they wanted to avoid sharing commercial information is unknown.

## Analysis

This section provides the analysis of data across the three studies in the following order; 1) emails sent to men by the MyFlo sharing feature, 2) interviews with two developers, and 3) interviews with five male users. As well as the specific discourses identified in each dataset, the analysis shows how a biomedical discourse and an optimal living discourse acted as overarching discourses, shaping the whole data set.

## Study 1 - MyFlo Emails

Two main discourses were identified in the emails that men receive via the MyFlo sharing feature, what I called the 'biomedical discourse', which employed a biomedical framework to medicalize the menstrual cycle, love and construct binary gendered characteristics between men and women. These emails produced four subject positions; the 'confused man', the 'monstrous woman', the 'predictable woman', and the 'ideal fertile woman'. In contrast, the second 'optimal living' discourse framed the menstrual cycle, relationships, and sex through an understanding that individual work on these elements through the technologies of the self of app use and behavior change would create an ideal, controlled, optimal life. This discourse produced the subject positions of the 'supportive partner', the 'seductive lover', and the 'self-regulated man'.

### Biomedical discourse

The dominant discourse that runs throughout the emails is one that draws on the biomedical model of health and the hormonal imperative to construct ideas about women and the menstrual cycle. An example of this is the following short extract:

*"Remember – We are all driven by our hormones."*

This statement can be found as the opening line of the concluding paragraph that appears across all four emails. The authors use ECF to construct all people, men and women alike, as subject to hormonal control, thus hormones become the discourses of health. This statement is an example of biological essentialism, constructing human nature and individual characteristics as a result of biological influences, rather than a product of circumstances, upbringing, culture or individual agency (Chandler & Munday, 2016). The authors also urge the reader to *remember*, as if issuing a warning that there is a risk in forgetting. And, as I show below this biomedical discourse underpinned three patterns in these letters related to medicalization of the menstrual cycle, medicalization of love, and constructions of gendered characteristics.

### *Medicalization of the menstrual cycle*

The female menstrual cycle is primarily discussed in terms of hormones and scientific language. This was shown in how all the emails introduced the phases of the cycle by stating the relevant hormonal process occurring in the body at a given time of the month. For

example, the follicular phase was introduced as *“At this point in her cycle, where hormones are at their lowest, with FSH just beginning to rise”*, the menstrual phase email started with *“With all the hormone levels coming down to their lowest concentrations this week”*, the ovulation phase explained as the time when *“Estrogen, testosterone and FSH are peaking”*, while the luteal phase was presented as *“estrogen and progesterone decrease”*. These opening lines evoke a biomedical discourse that positions hormones as the key acting agents in the menstrual cycle, and for understanding their female partner. And as extract 1 below shows, the biomedical discourse was also used to frame hormones as key the determinants of health:

Extract 1 (menstrual phase email)

*“Depending on what is going on with her hormones, her period could be healthy, normal - 3-5 days, red or it could be a few other colours, lengths, and intensity with bleeding and cramping. It should be the first.”*

Here, hormones act as a determinants of menstrual health. The authors build on this idea and draw on biomedical discourse to construct a normative period in terms of length and colour. At the same time, the authors conflate normal and healthy, problematizing any other types of menstruation (*it should be the first*). The article draws on these discourses of health across the four emails. For example, the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle is medicalised when the authors link the hormonal processes to the problematic, and undesirable PMS:

Extract 2 (luteal phase email)

*“A word about PMS - it’s not supposed to happen, if it does happen, it will occur during this second segment of 5 days, and it is caused by an imbalance of the ratio of estrogen to progesterone - too much estrogen and not enough progesterone. If it happens, she will have physical symptoms of bloating, moodswings, acne, and more, and instead of having enough progesterone to feel focused and energized to do things, she will be foggy and fatigued.”*

The authors draw on biomedical discourse to problematize and pathologize PMS as an issue caused by hormonal imbalance, and construct PMS and its associated symptoms such as bloating, mood swings, acne, eating a bit more, low energy, foggy, and fatigued as markers of ill health. At the same time, the authors offer a contrasting scenario by setting out the norms for what it means to be healthy, namely having enough progesterone to feel focused and energised. A similar account can be found in the follicular phase article, in which a regular cycle is constructed as the norm in the phrase, *“Of course, [low chance of fertility] is predicated on the fact that she has a healthy, regular, predictable cycle.”*

Here, the authors construct the norms of a healthy cycle by conflating healthy with regularity and predictability. Furthermore, the use of the words such as *of course*, *predicated*, and *the fact*, work to create an objective, unquestionable truth. It also manages stake inoculation of the author’s investment in the biomedical narrative; an irregular cycle is impossible to track and predict, and therefore it falls outside of the medical discourse of precision and predictability. A predictable body is manageable, desirable, normal and healthy and therefore valuable within the biomedical paradigm.

#### *Medicalization of love*

Hormones were also constructed as the foundations of relationships and love; the reader is told that doing new activities with his partner *“builds intimacy, boosts oxytocin levels (the falling in love hormone) and refreshes relationships, protecting them from dating ruts.”* This extract is one of many examples in which romantic relationships were framed through hormones. In this instance, the hormone oxytocin is understood as the acting agent of falling in love and of maintaining relationships; it does things actively, it builds, boosts, refreshes, and protects. At the same time, those relationships which do not work on boosting those oxytocin levels are problematized, as the dating ruts loom over the couple otherwise. This medicalisation of love and loving relationships constructs relationships and love as objects worthy of clinical observation and perhaps even medical interference.

#### *Constructing gender: Masculinity and femininity characteristics*

A lot of the text in the emails was focused on discussing gender. In these accounts the authors drew on the biomedical discourse when constructing gendered characteristics

about men and women, masculinity and femininity. For example, below female sexual arousal is predicated on gendered hormones:

Extract 3 (luteal phase)

*“In bed, in the first 5 day segment, she’ll still feel hot and bothered due to an additional boost of testosterone. But in the second 5 day segment, she might not be as in the mood for sex. She will crave the physical and emotional intimacy ...”*

The female sex drive is instructed as driven by and improved thanks to a hormonal *boost*, linking testosterone to her sex drive. However, when the boost wanes, she no longer feels in the mood. Within the biomedical discourse, the authors also drew on some of the taken for granted ideas about sex, gender, and hormones; testosterone is commonly thought of as a male hormone and is closely linked to hegemonic masculinity. In extract 3, these taken for granted ideas about gendered hormones is used here to explain her being hot and bothered (sexually aroused) when having testosterone, and without it, she is described as showing characteristics generally associated with femininity, in that she craves physical and emotional intimacy. The link between testosterone and sex drive is made again in the ovulation phase email, which states that when *“Her testosterone levels are also peaking, so she is most naturally in the mood for sex during her whole cycle.”* The rationale of this extract also draws on and bolsters the accounts of hegemonic masculinity, in that high testosterone levels are most naturally linked to high sex drive and intense, passionate and physical sex. The use of the term *‘naturally’* draws on biological essentialism to imply that hormones are the sole natural determinant of a healthy sex life.

Besides sexual gendered characteristics, hormone levels were constructed as determining various other feminine and masculine traits, which can be seen in the following extract:

Extract 4 (luteal phase email)

*“With all the hormone levels coming down to their lowest concentrations this week, ... allows her to have the most conversations between the right and left hemisphere of her brain. This means she best able to synthesize how you feel about situations*

*with the facts of the situation and determine the best course of action. She's at her most strategic and inwardly focused time."*

In the above extract hormone levels are related to brain processing and cognitive functioning, where low hormones are linked to high levels of cognitive functioning "best able to synthesise", "she's at her most strategic". In connecting low hormones, traditionally associated with femininity (estrogen) with rational cognitive functioning, traditionally associated with masculinity, this account can also be read as reproducing notions of the hormonal, unstable woman. As such, when she reaches the "lowest concentrations [of all hormones] this week" it theoretically makes her more like a man; she is *best able to have conversation between left and right hemisphere, synthesizing facts of the situation, determining best course of action, being strategic, and inwardly focused*, all of which are traits generally associated with masculinity. A similar discourse can be seen here in describing the male partner: *"Your testosterone is lowering and your estrogen is rising, which will make you more emotionally attuned to her feelings."* Lower levels of the masculine hormone testosterone and higher levels of estrogen causes the man to have more feminine traits, including emotional attunement and being open to feelings.

While low testosterone and elevated estrogen make it possible for men to inhabit some femininity, feminine traits remain unnatural to men: *"Also be open to the fact that it's a time that she's going to want to have a conversation about how you're feeling."* These texts bring together sex, traditional gendered traits, and hormones, so that a male body is constructed as having masculine traits (rationality) and male hormones (testosterone); a female body has feminine traits (emotionality) and female hormones (oestrogen and progesterone), sometimes those bodies will have elevated opposite sex hormones, which will lead to expressing opposite gender traits. This is biomedical discourse, within which sex, gender and hormones are all biological and there are clear distinctions between male bodies and female bodies, mapping onto historical, sexist, and dichotomous constructions of male/female, rational/emotional. And while sometimes men can have female hormones, which will make them more female like and emotional (as in the extract above) the 'normal' state is for women to be feelings oriented and so when women want to talk feelings men are invited to rise to the challenge of doing this not so desirable activity.

### *Subject positions within the biomedical discourse*

Four subject positions were found within the biomedical discourse. These were the 'monstrous woman', who is driven by her hormones and is mad and bad, 'the confused man' as a victim to the hormonal woman, 'the predictable woman' whose madness can be predicted thanks to medical knowledge about hormones, and the 'ideal fertile woman', whose all-positive traits are also mapped onto hormones.

#### *The monstrous woman*

Long-standing discourse of hormonal women as mad is also articulated in these articles and legitimated through a biomedical framing. For example, male readers are given suggestions around what they might expect during the luteal phase, such as that "[She] will need some help getting out of her head (and massive to-do list)". In this extract, the woman is constructed as someone *who has a massive to-do list*. This is an ECF (*massive*), which together with the claim that she *needs some help getting out of her head* implies an abnormal, distressed or in colloquial terms 'mad' behaviour. This is also a script formulation, presenting this behaviour as routinely occurring among all women during PMS, which draws on the long-standing discourse of the mad, unpredictable, monstrous woman.

The luteal phase letter is by far the longest one of all, covering PMS with various other suggestions for men on how to engage with the premenstrual woman. "*It's often (and unfortunately and unnecessarily) the most contentious time during the month. I want to break this down for you and give you tools to have the love FLO again.*" The authors are drawing on existing PMS constructions as 'most contentious time of the month'. This contentious time is constructed as having consequences on the woman's communication; "*this is a powder keg situation and something small will set things off. This is unnecessary and corrosive to maintaining safe emotional space for the both of you in a relationship.*" In this extract, the authors are using an ECF to liken PMS to a ready-to-explode powder keg situation, drawing on the historical discourses of the explosive, monstrous-like woman. In explaining the reasons for the premenstrual women's behaviour, the authors make the following disclaimer: "*It's not because she has hormones this week that she isn't thinking clearly and is hypercritical.*" As a rhetorical strategy, this disclaimer shows that it is potentially problematic to frame women as not thinking clearly because of their hormones. Nevertheless in articulating this disclaimer, it then allows the authors to reproduce this

account about women. And consistently through the luteal phase email, as well as the other three emails, is a very dominant discourse that hormones in women lead to behaviour that men find difficult (wanting to talk about their feelings, not thinking clearly, being easily set off by small things, etc.), which is reflected in another example, *“that [hormonal] imbalance is not the sole source of your conflict.”* While in this extract the authors are pointing out that there are other sources of conflict in a relationship, the taken for granted idea implied in this statement is that hormonal imbalances are the primary sources of relationship conflict.

Other taken for granted discourses can be found in the constructions of the menstruating woman, for example the images about the menstruating woman:

Extract 5 (menstrual phase email)

*“Gauge if she’d like some solo time to recharge her batteries. ... She’ll likely be happy to stay home and relax with a book or binge-watching her favourite new show. ... when [the hormones] hit their low point, ... she will need to support her energy by eating a bit more.”*

Drawing on taken for granted ideas, the menstrual woman is constructed as tired, wants to stay home, binge-watch a TV show, eats more than usual to console herself. These images of the hungry, tired, and moody menstrual woman are bolstered by biomedical discourse ‘it’s because of hormone levels, when they hit the low point’. To ‘hit the low point’ tends to carry with it negative implications, as it usually means to reach the worst moment of situation or an activity. These constructions with reference to lowest hormone levels offer an interesting contradiction to extract 4, in which low hormone levels allowed her to be the ideal woman (i.e. just like a man – rational, ‘hot and bothered’), whereas in this extract low hormones position her as the most intense version of a woman (moody and needy).

### The confused man

The biomedical and genealogical constructions of the monstrous woman carve out the subject position of the confused man, whose fate is predetermined by her fluctuating hormones. The opening sentence of each email reads: *“What you need to know about her body on hormones this week.”* A close analysis of this text highlights how the unpredictable female hormonal body throws the man into a victim position, a space of hopelessness and

confusion. The phrase 'her body on hormones' sounds as if the woman was under the influence, resembling references made about someone on drugs or out of control. The phrase also implies that what her body on hormones looks like *this week*, will likely look a whole lot different the week after, fitting onto the discourses about the unpredictable woman. The authors also use the modal verb you *need* to know, invoking a sense of urgency and necessity in the male reader and the confused man, to educate and prepare themselves for what is to come. The authors further justify the reasons why he *needs to know*:

Extract 6 (appearing in all four emails)

*"Understanding how [hormones] affect your partner allows you to not only avoid common and often unnecessary relationship pitfalls, but more importantly gives you a predictable map to plan how to engage your partner so that you win every week with your woman, giving her just what she wants when she wants it. And you thought all you had to figure out was how to be psychic;)"*

In this account is a subject position of the confused man who is a victim to the common relationship pitfalls that he endures as a result of the unpredictable, fluctuating female hormones. He is confused and feels a sense of hopelessness; he thinks that he needs to figure out the impossible task of being a psychic, accentuated by the use of a wink emoji which works to show how impossible the task of being a psychic was. Lucky for him though, supported by biomedical knowledge, there exists a predictable map in the form of an app, which has all the answers and can tell him exactly what his woman wants and when she wants it. The confused man is no longer at a loss, but he has a chance to win; likening the menstrual cycle to a game and a matter of winning or losing. The discourse of winning and losing is also oriented to extreme, in that he gets to be a winner all of the time. The extreme case formulation further reinforces the biomedical model, in that there is no unknowns; knowledge about her hormones yields results every time.

### The predictable woman

If a woman is controlled by hormones and medicine possesses the knowledge about hormones, the woman is then predictable. This knowledge makes her predictable within the biomedical realm, but also in everyday life in that it is possible to predict what she is

thinking or doing at a given phase of the cycle. This gives the confused man hope, transforming the monstrous woman into a predictable one. For example, the man can predict what she wants him to say at a given time of the month:

Extract 7 (luteal phase email)

*“If she is saying, I want us to do something with the yard, she is not saying, you never help me with the yard. What she wants is for you to say, yeah, let’s plan to get some new furniture for the patio”*

The premise of this extract is that if the man understands where his partner is at in her cycle, he might just be able to interpret the complexities of what she is saying. Furthermore, biomedical knowledge is constructed as making it possible to predict the woman’s cognition and behaviour based on her monthly hormonal cycle:

Extract 8 (ovulatory phase email)

*“This week, your love is in her ovulatory phase. The verbal center of her brain is positively affected by all the increase in estrogen, so it’s the perfect time to get out and be social with friends as well as an ideal time to talk to each other about things that are important to your relationship’s growth.”*

During ovulation she is predicted to have an increase in estrogen, which is linked *positively* to verbal abilities, sociability, and desirability. The authors make an assessment by using the word *positively* in relation to the effects on her brain, framing the ovulating woman as having all-positive characteristics. This interpretation is supported by other assessments and markers of importance such as ‘perfect time, ideal time, important, and relationship growth’.

### The ideal fertile woman

As could be seen already in extract 8, the emails make positive assessments about the woman, constructing the subject position of the ideal fertile woman. Similar patterns were found across all four emails which included topics of conversation, ability to make decisions

and levels of productivity. For example, the emails make positive assessments about the woman as someone who is sociable in her ovulatory phase *“it’s the perfect time to get out and be social with friends”*; rational in her menstrual phase *“[she is] best able to synthesize how you feel about situations with the facts of the situation and determine the best course of action”*; she gets things done (productive) in the luteal phase *“She’s interested in getting things done, attending to projects and accomplishing tasks”*; she has integrated thinking between the left and right brain *“[lowest hormone concentrations] allows her to have the most conversation between the right and left hemisphere of her brain”*; she works optimally and takes things to the next level *“The presence of progesterone circulating in her brain is making her look for ways to improve things, complete things, and take things to the next level”*, and fertile *“In fact, her hormones are designed to have her be most fertile this week”*. Bringing this all together, these positive assessments construct the subject position of the ideal fertile woman, where hormones are positioned as the key acting agents of these all-positive traits.

#### Optimal living discourse

The second dominant discourse in the emails is a discourse of optimal living. The discourse of optimal living revolves around the idea of achievement in terms of a better and healthier life if one lives optimally. It is part of a wider, contemporary discourse linked to the quantified self movement more generally, but is also specifically connected to the MyFlo app developer, who is the author of the book named *Optimized woman: Using your menstrual cycle to achieve success and fulfillment*. Within the optimal living discourse, I identified the accounts of the ‘optimized menstrual cycle’, ‘optimized relationships’, and ‘optimized sex’, as well as the subject positions of the ‘supportive partner’, the ‘seductive lover’, and the ‘self-regulated man’.

#### Optimized menstrual cycle

The menstrual cycle, and particularly the luteal phase, which is also constructed in these emails as the PMS week, is positioned as something that can and should be worked on in order to achieve an optimal life, *“The bad rap this week gets due to hormones is unfortunate, as PMS is a correctable hormonal imbalance.”* In this extract, the biomedical

discourse of hormone driven behaviour meets the optimal living discourse as PMS becomes farmed as both hormonally driven and correctable through the use of technology and diet: *“The good news is, that if she’s using her MYFLO app, she’ll be learning how to eat to keep her hormones balanced and making her PMS a distant memory.”* In this extract, PMS is problematized as an issue that should be made a distant a memory. The authors make direct link to the practice of healthism, prescribing the activities that one performs in the name of health, where the app serves as technologies of self in *‘learning how to eat to keep her hormones balanced’*. The link between diet and PMS is now made regularly in the biomedical literature, although studies investigating this correlation point out that the existing evidence is rare and call on further research to investigate (Kwan, Sung & Lee, 2022; MoradiFili et al, 2020; Hashim et al, 2019; Cross, 2002).

#### *Optimized relationship*

The emails are suggesting some ways in which couples, or individuals within a couple, can work on themselves in order to optimize the relationship. The most important work that the couple can do is to care for their hormones. *“Knowing how [hormones] impact you and how to care for them is key to a healthy life.”* In line with the healthism narrative, the authors construct healthy life to be something that should be stived for, and use ECF in claiming that caring for hormones is the *key* to unlocking the doors to a desired, healthy life. While the emails place most of the emphasis on the woman to fix her hormones, men are also held responsible:

#### Extract 9 (luteal phase email)

*“Her hormones aside, your hormones also play a part – as levels of testosterone and estrogen and cortisol, not to mention your blood sugar – affect your mood, energy and sex drive on a day to day basis. If you’re not managing your own hormonal health, you’ll be just as moody and contentious as you may be finding her to be.”*

Both, men and women, should manage their hormonal health, as a coupled endeavour with the promise of the good life, otherwise they both will be moody and contentious. Hormones become the discourses of health, so the management of hormones becomes a tool for doing the practice of ‘relational healthism’, as proposed by Robson and colleagues (2022). In the

coupled endeavour of relational healthism, there is always more work to do, as in the luteal phase; *“While you both address the hormonal stuff, you can also work on something else that will help make things more harmonious.”* Besides the hormonal, the email encourages the couple to work on their communication, as PMS week is linked to communication breakdowns (among other disasters). The follicular phase calls for different acts of relational healthism, such as trying new things and getting outdoors together. *“If you can do this once a month, you’ll be an A+ partner.”* The reader is promised the achievement of being the highest grade (A+) partner if he engages in relational healthism and lives optimally, and the corollary is *“unnecessarily”* living with a *“powder keg situation”*. As such, optimal living requires work on the self and one’s relationship, and is something that is expected and which brings significant benefits, such as avoiding the *corrosive, unsafe, and unnecessary* problems of living with a woman with PMS.

### *Optimized sex*

Using the discourse of optimized living, the articles construct the idea of optimized sex. Each of the four emails has two paragraphs designated to the optimization of sex, one of which is titled *Best time of Day to have Sex*, outlining the exact time to have sex at a given phase of the cycle. The second paragraph is titled *What kind of sex works best? / Love-Making*, and as the in the former case, outlines exactly what it says it does. To give some examples of optimized sex discourse, here is an extract from the luteal phase article; *“Try it on the weekend, but do try to schedule it (biggest orgasmic potential) – is not to be missed.”* Optimized sex, in this case meaning scheduled weekend sex in the luteal phase, is linked to *biggest orgasmic potential*. This is an ECF, implying the magnitude of pleasure that one can achieve when optimizing sex. The best time of day to have sex during the luteal phase is predicted on the hour; *“The afternoon delight week – 3pm is perfect. Your testosterone is lowering and your estrogen is rising ...”*.

The justification for this optimized sex discourse is underpinned by the hormonal imperative; hormones determine the best time for *“intense, passionate, physical sex”*. The authors are inoculating their stake in these claims about optimized sex by using rather vague statements; *“Think hot and passionate ... (however you define it and enjoy it) ... or whatever turns you both on and intensifies the attraction”*, leaving the previous promises of intense, hot, passionate, and physical sex open to individual interpretation. Furthermore,

the optimized sex discourse leaves no room for impromptu living, assuming that people have the time, resources and flexibility to plan sex based on the hormonal schedule, rather than any other schedule demands like work, children, and other commitments.

### *Subject positions within the optimal living discourse*

Three subject positions were found within the optimal living discourse. In these subject positions, men oscillated between hegemonic and inclusive masculinities; the 'supportive partner' juggled romance and heroism, the 'seductive lover' was primarily driven by his sexual urges but also displayed romantic characteristics, and the 'self-regulated man' was someone who suppressed his biological urges.

### *The supportive partner (romance + hero):*

In every phase, the supportive partner is imagined or extolled to do various activities. One of many examples is this extract from the luteal phase; *"planning a romantic night in will make her swoon ... Give her a massage, rub her feet, rent a movie"* So there is a lot of work, multiple activities designed to meet her needs in the given phase. This extract builds on taken for granted ideas of the premenstrual woman who prefers to stay at home, avoids socialising, and needs to 'be comforted' because of her premenstrual distress. There is also a discourse of health in constructing the supportive partner; *"If she's working on balancing her hormones, fixing her period, then restaurant/take out food will make her symptoms feel worse and she'll need more quiet time this week."* In this extract from the luteal phase, diet is framed as a discourse of health, problematizing certain ways of eating and placing the responsibility for health on the individual. To prevent her premenstrual symptoms from worsening, the supportive partner is urged to cook her a healthy meal, *"something with sweet potatoes and kale ... make some organic sugar free hot chocolate and popcorn with coconut oil"*. In the menstrual phase *"paleo style is best here - meat or salmon with avocado on the side"*. This kind of optimal living is linked to affluence; organic, sugar-free choices, paleo style are a high-end consumer culture consumption.

The supportive partner uses the sharing app to be supportive. He helps to balance her hormones and set her free from symptoms through optimal living and healthism practices, and is supportive and patient along the way:

Extract 10 (menstrual phase email)

*“As she works on that healing, be supportive and patient ... . . . to learn more about her FLO - go to the V-Sign quiz page on FLOliving.com. If her hormones are out of balance, and her period week is very symptomatic, just be sympathetic and encourage her to take care of her hormones by changing her diet with the MONTHLY FLO program at FLOliving.com.”*

In this extract, the partner’s support is framed in terms of changing her diet. This coincides with the practices of relational healthism, in which the male partner balances care with control over her diet/hormonal health, a task which people find contradictory (Robson et al., 2022). Drawing on Foucault’s idea of technologies of self, these menstrual tracking apps are thus becoming something like the ‘technologies of couples’; the app makes it possible for men to be involved in the coupled endeavour of achieving an asymptomatic (problem-free) menstrual cycle. The contradictory task of support and surveillance is constructed as possible and desirable, leading to the promise of the good life if one lives optimally.

With all the attentive work and meeting her every need, the supportive partner gets framed in terms of a hero: *“Be her hero this week by offering to help in any way that makes sense. Maybe put up a shelf while she organizes the closet, for example.”* The supportive partner is called upon to ‘be her hero’, he offers help in any way that makes sense, maybe puts up a shelf. This statement is drawing on the taken for granted gender stereotypes; she organizes the clothes, while the man does DIY stuff around the house. As such, the subject position of the supportive man is complex, in that it involves moving between hegemonic masculinity characteristics of surveillance and heroism, and the characteristics of inclusive masculinity by being caring, supportive, and romantic.

### *The seductive lover*

The second subject position in the optimal living discourse is the seductive lover, who is driven by biological urges, and possesses rather masculine characteristics, as per the constructions of hegemonic masculinity. The time of the month that calls for the seductive lover is the ovulation phase:

Extract 11 (ovulation phase email)

*“Make plans for dinner with friends, dress up and go out to a party, mix and mingle and flirt with each other from across the room. Go see a movie and sit in the back row and make out. Play footsie under the table at dinner. Send her suggestive emails/texts about how much you are thinking about her and how much you want her and want to make her feel loved. ... She is literally a magnet for your desire this week, you will find her irresistible, and you should not resist ;)*

The identity of the seductive lover is constructed as someone who teases and flirts in a relatively risky way - flirting across the room, making out in the back row of the cinema – all actions during which he can get caught. Taking risks is often associated with hegemonic masculinity. In line with this theory is that he acts based on his biological sexual urges; he has no control and is pulled in like a magnet, unable to resist, nor should he resist these biological urges. Nevertheless, the seductive lover is not confined to the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity, as he can simultaneously express his desire for sex (how much he wants her) and his feelings (makes her feel loved), all in one sentence. The seductive lover thus balances the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity together with romance and expression of feelings, and as such, he is someone who optimizes his engagement with his partner based on the phase of her cycle. For example, he optimizes his engagement during the follicular phase:

Extract 12 (follicular phase email)

*“In bed, some things you can try that will get her hot include lots of touching, massage, nonpenetrating foreplay, and lube. As it’s a dry week, not only is lube important, but focusing on her clitoral orgasm first and repeatedly is the key to getting things flowing for you to join the party. Be generous and take your time. Is*

*there a new position you've been talking about trying? What about roleplaying? Let your imagination run wild and see what develops. ;-)* “

This extract proposes some of the duties that the seductive partner performs in bed during the follicular phase; using a three-part list of things that they can try (a new position, role-playing, imagination running free). Such detailed instructions highlight the care taken for the other person, representing an optimal living discourse in that through optimization of sex, the seductive lover can achieve a sexually fulfilling relationship and the good life.

While appealing to the seductive lover, another new subject position emerges and intersects here; a man who is self-controlled, focuses on her first and repeatedly, is generous and patient. The subject position of the self-regulated man is being constructed, and while it exists alongside the seductive lover, it also contrasts the biologically-driven seductive lover, and as such he deserves a short discussion in a separate section below.

#### *The self-regulated man*

The self-regulated man does not give in to the biological, testosterone-based urges to have sex. For example, when she is menstruating, he gauges the interest levels of both, and if she is a definite no, he forgoes his needs and respects her boundaries:

Extract 13 (menstruation phase email)

*“You have to gauge both of your interest levels. Do you enjoy having sex when she's menstruating? IS your woman someone who enjoys that? if she is a definite no, because it doesn't actually feel good for her - then honor her space.”*

The self-regulated man makes sure to distinguish clearly, whether she IS or IS NOT someone who enjoys period sex. The authors use capital letters here to emphasize the clarity that needs to be established, and the importance of equal consideration. Furthermore, the self-regulated man lives optimally; *“To match her lower levels of hormones this week, early evening is good for you both.”* Unlike the seductive lover, who is driven by his biological urges, the self-regulated man does not give into the peaking levels of testosterone early

morning and rather is thoughtful of his partner, so he waits until the evening to match her hormone levels.

To conclude, MyFlo emails were constructed with two different discourses, the biomedical discourse where women are driven by their hormones, that intersects with the optimal living discourse to create an overall narrative that a man's job is to understand women's hormones in order to predict, manage and live optimally. Insights into why these discourses might be mobilized for communication with users are discussed in Study 2, in interviews with two app developers.

## Study 2 – Developers

In interviews with developers, two discourses emerged. The first discourse constructed 'menstruation as a problem with unmet solutions', and the second discourse positioned the 'app as a technical fix that makes life better'. These discourses produced the subject positions of the 'ignorant man', 'the unsupported woman', 'the visionary developer', 'the ideal partner', and 'the controlling partner'.

### Discourse 1 - Menstruation is a problem with unmet solutions

This discourse constructed the idea that there are problems associated with the management of menstruation, and the first problem was that there were no solutions to it when Greg looked into becoming an app developer:

#### Extract 14

*"I had a teacher who said to create something to support women. And I thought Okay, and looked what was there on the market and there was nothing there, there was very little for women to try."*

Here, Greg was building up the rationale for launching menstrual tracking app as 'in support' of women, using an EFC 'nothing there' in evaluating the lack of support available at the time. The problem of nothing there in support of women is related to the issue that both men and women need these technologies.

To women, the need for this app relates to the taboo surrounding menstruation, *"this is a topic that you don't like to run around with even as a woman, saying 'Hey, today I got my period' or so. So it is a fine way to share that information."* In his account, Greg was drawing on socially prescribed ways of thinking about periods, in that for women, this topic is taboo. As such, the app is tool that gives women control over sharing information about their menstrual cycles with the discretion that it requires. By default, this relieves women of stress;

#### Extract 15

*“[she] can be relieved of stress, or not always having to think about Oh I have to tell my partner, I have to tell my partner. She can let go and say, okay, he has possibilities now to access it and trust him with it, and it keeps her head free”.*

The sharing feature removes the cognitive load of having to think about telling her partner, therefore enhances communication and knowledge through sharing. It gives men “possibilities” and women “can let go” and keep their “head free”. Greg’s talk is displaying notions of the quantified self, optimal living discourse, since the app provides men and women with possibilities; men can do more through knowledge and women experience convenience and a reduced cognitive load that they can use for other things, she can feel more “free”. Extract 15 also hints an element of ignorance in terms of women not needing to have to keep remembering when their menstruation is due, where “having to think about” it all the time is an implication of women’s forgetting or ignorance of where they are in their cycle. As such, the app takes some of the cognitive load of women and does the remembering of where they are in their cycle for them.

To men, the need for this app also relates to their ignorance, and not wanting to talk about it either. As Liam stated, men tend to be ignorant towards the female menstrual cycle;

Extract 16:

*“I think there's more connect on that topic and more understanding, um, in, in, in, uh, women to woman relationship. Right. Uh, or, uh, whereas men, once again, from my perspective, sometimes are more, could be more ignorant on the subject”*

Liam viewed the sharing feature as most valuable in heterosexual couples, positioning men as ignorant and in need of more understanding on the subject. Liam displayed trouble of speech and made a disclaimer about speaking from his “perspective”, which could be interpreted as ongoing tensions around speaking to the matter of gender relations and attempts to mitigate potentially negative interpretations of his claims. Another way in which the management of menstruation is made a problem is related to communication between partners, as a result of their ignorance and the taboo surrounding it;

Extract 17:

*“so the idea of the app was helping, um, a partner or partners in a couple, kind of, [laughs] well better communicate to, uh, on the, on the, on the subject of, you know, monthly periods. Right? And especially help men better understand what women are going through regularly. And hopefully, at least that was my take, help them be more empathetic and sensitive, uh, in those times and, and overall to kind of raise the awareness and hopefully provide some educational value there as well, ... because not a lot, my perception is that not, you know, some, well, at least some don't really understand and the topic is somewhat taboo.”*

In this extract, men's ignorance is explained in terms of saying that men do not understand the menstrual cycle, and that they need to understand it better; men need raised awareness and education. The reason why men do not have this understanding is because the topic is taboo, and as a result, the communication and relations around it between partners are not as good as they could or would be in an optimal life. More trouble of speech was found as well as reframing from not a lot of men to some men, again, signalling the sensitivity around making a claims about gender relations.

The outcome of men acquiring a better understanding is that it will improve the relations between partners:

Extract 18:

*“I think that it, firstly, and, and, and mainly I think it would help, uh, men ... understand if there are such moments where their partner need slightly more support or maybe, you know, um, a little more attention. And through that improving, or not improving, but like, , you know, facilitate or, or, or, or just get close, grow closer in that relationship”*

The app as technologies of self meets the needs of the ignorant men to understand better, pay more attention to their partner, and as such helps the couple become closer together;

Extract 19:

*“if my partner's feeling down or something and I'm somehow preoccupied with something else to notice it myself, maybe there are some cues that the app can give me to, to kind of, to, you know, to, to remind me that ... there's other considerations in, in, in a relationship besides my own, you know, feelings. There's another person who might be feeling down who might not be necessarily ready for, um, a particular kind of, I dunno, emotions tonight”*

In this talk there is a desire to be a better partner, the app helps the developer/partner (and here Liam holds both positions) to do the ‘feeling work’. Linking back into masculinity theory, extract 19 describes both, the modern, caring, sensitive man mapping onto IMT, and at the same time the man who needs to have technology to remind him about feelings, mapping onto HMT.

Menstrual management is also related to the unspeakable problem that women are a bit mad, and the implications of their madness for gender relations. The trouble of speech and hedging as seen in extracts 16, 17, and 18, signals that talk related to gender relations is difficult to articulate; which points to the usefulness of looking at rhetorical strategies as they highlight what is unspeakable (Wiggins, 2017). Part of this is the orientation of talk towards the mad woman, and the app providing the man with some security; *“then I would have just a little bit, you know, more security, okay, maybe next day she starts her period, so I will be a little more careful”*. The app would help him know when to be *“more careful”* in two ways. Firstly, he can be more careful around the mad woman during her mad time, and secondly, be more careful in the sense of being sensitive to her needs at that time and trying to meet them. The unspeakable problem is therefore that women are a bit mad, but one is not allowed to say it. This is further emphasised by referring to gender relations as a minefield; *“Oh God. This is like a minefield, isn't it? ? [both laughing]. Um, I, I, I don't know, man. ... First of all, I don't, I'm not sure what current gender relations even means anymore.”* The topic of gender relations is highly sensitive, dangerous, and one needs to avoid going there. Liam and I both laughed, which suggests that there was something troubling that was neutralised by the laughter. Liam further displayed some ignorance and avoidance of further discussion *“I don't know what that means anymore”*.

To briefly summarize, discourse 1 constructs menstruation as a problem with unmet solutions, creating various needs among men and women which occur within a context

characterized by ignorance and taboo. And the other context occurring in this discourse is one of gender relations, which cannot be talked about because it is a minefield.

#### Discourse 2: The app is a technical fix that makes life better

Discourse 1 suggested that there is need for a solution to the management of menstruation, and discourse 2 constructs the app as a technical fix that makes life better. Developers of the sharing feature create this technology to meet that need, and in the process, do good;

Extract 20:

*“So, I thought, that [menstrual tracking app] is cool for women, it’s practical, it is very liked and I can make it better most important ... So I thought I can do this, and then I thought I can add other service, like service for the woman and the partner.”*

The sharing feature is constructed as a solution to men’s ignorance and the taboo that surrounds the menstrual cycle. The app is a technical fix to create knowledge and facilitate communication between partners, since the menstrual cycle is a sensitive or taboo topic; women do not want to talk about it and neither do men – the app either does the talking for them, or works as a solution to facilitating conversations between partners; *“I think to, to start to even start using such an app, there needs to be a, a conversation... it just builds, um, it creates conditions to have a more open discussion, right?”* The app enables understanding by breaking the male ignorance problem or bypassing the communication problem.

As a solution to men and women’s’ needs, the app offers convenience;

Extract 21:

*“wouldn’t it be cool if I could use it myself and I could see this, what my partner has and so that I don’t have to ask her all the time to share ... I mean it’s convenient, so that I don’t have to ask always, and I can check the... mmm I forgot what you call it ... where basically the woman has the symptoms when she is not feeling good around her ovulation or period.”*

The app meets his needs by facilitating an optimized engagement; not only can he forego the inconveniences of having to ask her all the time to share, he can see for himself when she is not feeling good so that she does not even have to tell him. This kind of talk reflects the discourses of the quantified self and optimal living, through an image of living the best life supported by technology.

The app represents another technical fix by enabling predictions, planning and ideal relations;

Extract 22:

*“the man can plan ahead ... you see it upfront, then you can make a flower, or be especially nice, or plan a trip, so you can just, yeah, without asking your partner always if you make something that makes them really happy just based on information. ... you can see the upcoming ovulation and period, period maybe if you’d like to be intimate, and ovulation it’s good if you want to have babies so you know you can go for it at this time.”*

The app provides him with security because he can see where the woman is for himself. This allows him to live optimally, he can adjust his behavior and be especially nice, do something that makes her really happy, and he can also optimize his intimate life.

The app as a technical fix also has risks, but these risks can be mitigated with further technical fixes. A key risk is how much data women want to share, and this is framed within the language of individual control:

Extract 23:

*“first, for a woman in a relationship to um, very granularly select what kind of data she is willing to share out of, well, first she’s willing to share with the app, right? Let the app collect it. And secondly, willing to share with the, with her partner.”*

Liam is building up talk about women having control and granular choices over what they want to share with the app and the partner. However, this talk is contrary with the literature suggesting that data security in MTAs is a point of concern (Riley & Paskova, 2022), or

relations of control, for example instances in which men might control the woman's phone in the first place;

Extract 24:

*"I def like, I don't think it's a great situation, for example, we're in a couple and I'm starting using that app without your knowledge [laughing]. That would be strange. . And, and I don't think that's, that's appropriate ... I mean but in that case the partner has to agree to use this feature and then it should be all fine."*

Liam is recognizing the potential that a man could be using this information without consent, and he makes it a problem; it is "strange" and "not appropriate". However, instead of thinking more deeply about what kind of relationship that would be and how the technology might be facilitating that control, a technical tweak is presented through reference to the fact that it is an agreed feature. The issue of relations of control is minimized, and the technical fix of consent means that "it should all be fine".

Further in the interview, Liam returns back to the issue of data security, but again, the issue is minimized;

Extract 25:

*"assuming the app is securely implemented and it doesn't collect any unnecessary data or like anonymizes data, hopefully, you know, it doesn't get leaked or ... compromised and, and, and lead to some, you know, some, basically doesn't lead to a result that, that would like, um, embarrass somebody or just, you know, it's basically the same thing as, it's kind of, it's kind of, it could be close to something like, uh, you know, working with medical data in a way, Right? It's very personal data, I think. And so if it's securely implemented, then hopefully there's no risk of that."*

On one hand, Liam is using EFC 'very personal data', and relates the data to medical data, working up the magnitude of the stakes in having control over data since it is very personal. At the same time, hedging and trouble of speech can be detected as Liam minimizes the issue, assuming that the app is secure, "hopefully" data does not get leaked, and hopefully there is no risk. With these rhetorical technicalities, Liam's account is lacking confidence in

the way that he presents these risks to which the solutions are left unaddressed. Greg is aware of other security issues;

Extract 26:

*“then there is a partner change and sometimes by accident and the other doesn’t know it and there is confusion. So sometimes I even had cases where one partner deleted by accident the data thinking that he didn’t need it, but he forgot that his partner’s data got also deleted. ... So mmm ... this is small things that can happen, but it’s not so often, I hope so.”*

When there are problems, they are accidental, technical, and easily fixed, which makes them *“small things”*, further minimised because they do not happen *“so often”*. Overall, any problems are minimised by the developers and the solutions are constructed as easy and technical.

### Subject positions

There are 5 subject positions that come from discourse 1 and 2, the ‘ignorant man’, ‘the unsupported woman’, ‘the visionary developer’, ‘the ideal partner’, and ‘the controlling partner’. These subject positions are discussed in brief, with references to the relevant extracts used above.

#### *The ignorant man*

Across discourse 1 and 2, the ignorant man is constructed on the basis that men *“could be more ignorant on the subject”*, as found in Liam’s talk in extract 16. The ignorant men, they *“don’t really understand”* (extract 17) the matter, they are unaware, insensitive, uneducated, and the app would help them *“better understand what women are going through regularly ...help them be more empathetic and sensitive ... and raise the awareness and hopefully provide some educational value”* (extract 17).

#### *The unsupported woman*

The subject position of the unsupported woman is constructed in two ways. Firstly, the woman is unsupported through a lack of technology; as Greg said in extract 14, he wanted to develop an MTA in support of women, and *“there was nothing there, there was very little for women to try”*, and so he thought how he can *“make the feature most convenient and simple”* in support of women. Secondly, the woman is unsupported by her partner, because most men embody the subject position of the ignorant man, and without the technology they may not be able to recognize the moments when *“their partner need slightly more support or maybe, you know, um, a little more attention”* (extract 18).

### *The visionary developer*

In developing the app, the men evoke a subject position for themselves of ‘the visionary’, one who has a desire to ‘do good’, who can fix the problems and be useful. Greg *“thought, that [menstrual tracking app] is cool for women, it’s practical, it is very liked and I can make it better most important”*. Liam also envisioned the app as useful and doing good: *“I was looking at it from a ... kind of a values, um, perspective, right? Whether I would, I could see this app doing good or whether I could see this app being useful to somebody.”*

### *The ‘ideal partner’*

The ideal partner is constructed as the ideal man who knows when to buy her flowers without even having to ask; *“you see it upfront, then you can make a flower, or be especially nice, or plan a trip, so you can just, yeah, without asking your partner always”*. When further asked what kind of man was envisioned to use the sharing feature, Greg responded; *“Nothing in particular, just for a man who loves his woman [sighs and laughs softly] ... but for sure there could be people who use it as spying and knowing everything, which would not be ideal.”* The ideal partner is a man who loves his woman. At the same time, Greg’s account construct the subject position of the ‘controlling partner’ in contrast to the ideal man, which maps onto the notion of relational healthism.

### *The controlling partner.*

The subject position of the controlling partner constructs a man who misuses the sharing feature for spying, or knowing everything, as Greg mentioned earlier. Liam too refers to the controlling partner in extract 24, as someone who starts *“using that app*

*without your knowledge*” and makes an assessment about this behaviour as *“strange”* and not *“appropriate”*.

### Study 3 – Male Users

In interviews with men who use a sharing feature to track their partner's menstrual cycle, four discourses and subject positions within those discourses were identified. The first discourse was 'the problem of the menstrual cycle, which produced subject positions of 'the unstable woman' and 'the confused man'. Next 'the optimal living' discourse produced four subject positions of 'the researcher', 'the self-regulated partner', 'the supportive partner', and the 'connected/involved partner'. Discourse three, 'the ambivalence of knowledge', is a discourse articulating how intimacy is both desirable and problematic, and within it emerged the subject positions of 'the mystery woman', 'the intimate partner', and 'the spy'. Lastly, discourse four highlighted the dangers of the hormonal imperative that informs menstrual tracking apps.

#### Discourse 1: The problem of the menstrual cycle

The first discourse captures the way that participants understood the menstrual cycle as a problem, which affects themselves, their partner, and the relationship. For example, Shane recognizes how the menstrual cycle is a problem for his partner; *"I just find that, um, my partner's really intensely affected by, um, her cycle. Um, and it really knocks her around, um, physically and emotionally."* Shane is describing his partner as intensely affected by her cycle, using talk orientated to extreme, such as 'really intensely', or by using the metaphor to be 'knocked around', which usually implies the effect, or damage caused by a rough experience. And his partner realizes the problem too; *"she's aware of how much it affects her.* Similarly, Matt recognizes his partner's noticeable shifts as a problem:

Extract 27:

*"my partner had, um, really noticeable shifts, um, in, in personality and, and would, you know, really deep anger, um, sadness, despair, uh, . . and there's no real obvious outward, um, connection to, to work or relationship or anything like that."*

Matt's account also builds up the menstrual cycle as problematic, using emotion categories and EFC's to list the symptoms of deep anger, sadness, and despair, to emphasise the magnitude of his partner's personality shifts as outside of normal and justifying the need for

action, perhaps through a technological solution. Simultaneously, he positioned himself as confused by these personality shifts and their origin. He listed the possible explanations for these shifts that he has considered, such as the connection to work, relationship, and a completer 'anything like that', making the list of possible explanations seem complete and strengthening the validity for his confused state. Similar notions of confusion and mystery can be seen in Tom's account; *"I think for just men in general, it's kind of a, um, it's kind of a demystification or something like that or, you know"*. When asked what the app could do for men, Tom reported his perceived consensus that to men, the menstrual cycle is something veiled in mystery and hope that the app would demystify it.

An issue that Shane found was that the effects of the menstrual cycle can also prevent his partner from being able explain what is going on; *"when they're affected by their, by that, their explanations sometimes aren't as good either. Cause they're affected by exactly what they're talking about."* The menstrual cycle was seen as a source of emotions and behaviour that fluctuate as a result of 'their', and 'that', using a generalized pronoun here to possibly avoid criticising the woman specifically. The result is that she is unable to verbalize what she's going through at the time of the affect. This lead to further struggles, *"Oh, we, we just coming to a, basically came to a head where I couldn't get a handle on the situation and couldn't understand what was going on"* Shane used a metaphor 'come to a head' in saying that him and his partner reached a crisis, due to the immense confusion on his part; 'couldn't get a handle on the situation, couldn't understand'.

The app was perceived as a tool to address the problem by facilitating the understanding that men describe as lacking;

Extract 28 (Shane)

*"in the interest, I guess, of improving the relationship, um, I decided that, um, yeah, there would be a, could be value in, in, in understanding a little bit more about what's going on. ... Cause you understand the background, but then it will improve your relationship because it just takes those, um, emotional, uh, peaks and troughs out and settles it."*

Here the hoped-for outcome for knowledge was imagined, in that understanding what is going on can help with the problems associated with the menstrual cycle, and with

improving the relationship. The app as technology of self can help enhance the man's sensitivity side, (linking back to study 1 and 2 where men were constructed as ignorant and not emotionally orientated).

Extract 29 (Shane)

*[the app] gives you a, um, like a, a reminder window of where something, um, where something sits, um, ... And then, um, when you are, um, ready for, um, ready for something, I think you're better prepared, um, to respond in an appropriate manner*

The app was envisioned as enabling them to overcome their 'natural', insensitive side and manage/regulate their feelings and associated behaviours. Being better partners and having better relationships sits in contrast to the less desirable lack of understanding and the associated poorer relationship standard.

### *Subject positions*

The two subject positions of 'the confused man' and 'the symptomatic, unstable woman' were constructed in the discourse of the problematic menstrual cycle. The unstable woman is someone who displays symptoms, fluctuations, or other recognizable effects attributable to the menstrual cycle, as in Shane's account about women being "*affected by exactly what they're talking about*", or the symptoms of "*really deep anger, um, sadness, despair*" (extract 27). Simultaneously, men's talk built up the subject position of the confused man, who emerged as a consequence of these symptoms, causing confusion as in Shane's account, "*I was struggling a little bit at times to, um, see what was coming my way*", he just "*couldn't understand what was going on*". These two subject positions were in a dynamic interchange, constructing each other mutually since the confused men envisioned the app as a medium which could help them demystify the unstable woman.

### Discourse 2: Optimal living

Next, 'the optimal living' discourse identified in men's talk was about living optimally and being able to respond to challenges while creating the envisioned good life a reality;

Extract 30 (Matt)

*“once we started having a bit more open conversations around, you know, sort of the natural shifts and seasons of the cycle, it started to open up space to be able to have more honest conversations about the shifts that were present.”*

This extract shows how the sharing enables honest conversations which are treated as a taken for granted in the narrative of optimal living. Matt further envisioned these conversations as facilitating active involvement, mediated through technology;

Extract 31 (Matt)

*“I knew that it was something that we could share, um, um, because I was sort of actively, a little bit more actively involved, you know. And so, uh, first thing in the morning when the temperature was taken, you know, we're able to have a conversation about that. Uh, and then when it was sort of being tracked, I knew it was something that we'd have a bit more of an ongoing interaction with”*

The technology seemingly facilitated Matt's inclusion, sharing, conversations, and interactions in the relationship, *“It allowed, allowed for my involvement, um, and to feel like I was a bit more a part of what was going on. And yeah, I, I, I was excited and really appreciative of that aspect”* His experience of being involved elicited positive emotions of excitement and appreciation as a result of living optimally, working together with his partner towards the ideal of the good, optimized life. He continued, *“It wasn't just, um, theoretical chit chat. It was, it was able to be kind of matched with data.”* Here, Matt praised the app as facilitating the quantified self/optimal living in that it offers hard data. The desirability of this hard data and scientific discourse is contrasted with the less desirable theoretical conversations which are devalued as 'just' a form of chit chat. The app provides men with the knowledge they might just need to reach the optimal life with their partners.

As part of the optimal living discourse, the app serves to fix other problems, such as Jared's frustration over having to *“hear all the details every month”* from his partner. Jared used ECF (all the details, every month) to emphasise the legitimacy for his frustration, and continued on to explain how he though the app might be helpful in regulating his response:

Extract 32 (Jared)

*“I thought maybe the app might remove that, [pauses] might somehow shift my awareness by having a third party, like, remind me of certain things and maybe make me more sympathetic. ... potentially remove some of that subconscious frustration”*

Previously Jared had talked about feeling frustrated but being unaware of it which he called subconscious frustration. The app was seen as potentially helping forego this subconscious frustration and curate his response into sympathy instead. This is again in line with the subject position of the ‘ignorant man’ as discussed in study 1 and 2, where sympathy or other signifiers of emotionality are not deemed as natural to men. The app is envisioned as enabling men to be more sympathetic, and as helping them mediate frustration, leading to an ideal, conflict-free relationship. In this context, the app serves as technologies of self in the quest of becoming a better version of oneself:

Extract 33 (Jared)

*“You know, just kind of a reminder for us less sensitive creatures [laughing] to, to, to do something a little extra, um, to, to make the partner, you know, feel like you're, you know, that you're aware of what they're going through.”*

Here, Jared refers to men as ‘creatures’, building up an entitlement category of men, who are less sensitive in comparison to women. His claim supports the necessity of the app as technologies of self to help remind him to do something a little extra in support of his partner, and by default in support of his relationship in line with the narrative of the good life.

### *Subject positions*

As the outcome of the analysis on how the optimal living discourse is articulated by these men, four subject positions were produced: ‘the researcher’, ‘the self-regulated partner’, ‘the supportive partner’, and the ‘connected/involved partner’.

### The researcher

The researcher is someone who has the knowledge about their partner's menstrual cycle obtained via the app. The app enabled Shane to conduct research to *"line things up between what I was seeing, um, in her with what the app was telling me."* He then recalled the time prior to using the app; looking back, he is now able to recognize the link between his partners menstrual cycle and her emotional volatility; *"the emotional volatility was, um, now looking back was really strongly, um, you know, synchronized with that."* The app objectively demonstrates the link between hormones and emotion, drawing on the hormonal imperative. Instead of being confused about her symptoms and instability, he could position himself as an objective researcher who observes causal factors. Shane strengthened the credibility of his talk by discourse orientated to extreme 'emotional volatility, really strongly synchronized'. For Matt, the app was also like a research tool, thanks to which his partner's shifts were *"able to be kind of matched with data"*. This knowledge that the men gained via the app helped them out of their ignorance, and out of the position of the ignorant man, and more towards a partner who fits in with the narrative of the ideal relationship, and the optimal, good life.

### The self-regulated man

The self-regulated man is one who learns to override inappropriate responses with more appropriate behaviour. This can be seen in extract 32, where the app was thought of as a third party which helped override frustration and elicit more sympathy in Jared. Matt's account also constructed the position of the self-regulated man, when he talked about using the app to remind himself where in the cycle his partner was, *"or see if I needed to change the way that I was interacting with her during a period ... so I'm aware of, of how I can adjust my behaviour."* In this context, the app serves as technologies of self in the quest of becoming a better version of oneself, in line with the optimal living discourse.

### The supportive partner

The subject position of the supportive partner constructs a man who can plan for, and improve the relationship. For example, the app helped Jared to be a *"bit more sensitive. Maybe I should, you know, do a couple of extra things around the house or, you know, get the hot water bottle, you know, things like that"*. The app was perceived as an efficient

mediator, a “*third party*” between the partners taking out the difficult conversations about pain and suffering and allowing him to proceed straight to the supportive partner role. Shane saw the sole act of using the sharing feature as an act demonstrating that he is a good, supportive partner; *“I suppose if I’m using it, well then I’m supporting something that she wanted to bring to the relationship. ... You could be seen as supporting the relationship.”* As in the subject position of the self-regulated man, the app facilitates the partner to be less ignorant, more supportive, and becoming a better partner in line with the optimal living discourse.

### The connected/involved partner

The optimal living discourse also constructs the connected/involved partner. This was demonstrated for example in extracts 30 and 31 where Matt talked about the app enabling him to have more honest conversations with his partner, and to become more involved. Similarly, Tom viewed the app as facilitating connection; the sharing feature was *“a really good way to break down those, um, individual takes on the experience and make them more, um, of a couple experience.”* The app was perceived as having the potential to break down individual experience and transforming them into a couple one in the expectations of technology bringing a couple closer together; *“You know, if you’ve got people at two ends of the spectrum, it’s quite a good way of bringing them closer together”* Tom used contrast, ‘opposite ends of the spectrum’, to convey the gap that can exist between people’s perspective, and how the app can bring the couple from distance and disconnect to being closer together, allowing the partner to be more involved. The closeness and involvement as facilitated by the app is desirable, assessed by Matt as something to be *appreciative* and *excited* about. leading to a better relationship aligned with the idea of optimal living.

### Discourse 3: The ambivalence of knowledge

Discourse three, ‘the ambivalence of knowledge’, is a discourse articulating how intimacy afforded by having the knowledge is both desirable and problematic. As demonstrated above in the optimal living discourse, an overarching theme was one of men viewing the intimacy that the sharing feature afforded as beneficial. However, a different account emerged in men’s talk, which was about the loss that happens with this greater

knowledge. One of the losses that men referred to was a loss of mystery in the relationship, as seen in Shane's account, *"You know, like, let's keep some mystery [giggling], you know?"* Shane used a modal verb 'let's' in articulating his wish for maintaining mystery in the relationship. He also repeated 'you know' twice in his statement and giggled, as if hinting at an implicit meaning of the desirability involved in having mystery in the relationship. This gained knowledge created ambivalence; on one hand the app helped men gain knowledge about the menstrual cycle, but on another hand, they've lost mystery in their relationship.

Within the discourse of ambivalence of knowledge, men articulated that they were unaware of what they were going into before they started using the sharing feature. For example, Shane *"hadn't considered, um, something like that and I didn't know that I was, um, that comfortable with something like that on the basis of, uh, just too much information."* He referred to the app as 'something like that', categorizing the sharing feature among matters which require careful consideration, he *'just didn't know'*, on the basis that the feature would reveal *'too much information'*. Matt had a similar experience: *"I was probably, I became, uh, hypersensitive to what was going on. Cause I, cause I'd come from a place of having no access to, to infinite access."* Here, Matt described the undesirable results of using the sharing feature, sharply contrasting no access to having infinite access, and using EFC's *'infinite'* to articulate the implications of his excessive investment, in that he became *'hypersensitive'*. He continued *"there were times where I appreciated having the knowledge and there were times where I, I almost regretted having that knowledge or that insight ... you know, perhaps I, I became too invested."* Here, Matt shared the ambivalence that the app evoked; being more involved was appreciated, yet at the same time he regretted it. As such, men's hopes for outcomes of good relationships in the form of understanding and knowledge were actually harmful.

A second problematising of knowledge was the way that the knowledge gained through the practice of tracking made the men feel bad over concerns of interfering with their partner's autonomy and privacy. Matt explained: *"Um, and, uh, you know, there were sort of periods where I felt, um, I probably felt a little bit like, uh, um, [thinking and sighing] spying is not the right word, but, but. You know"* Matt was having trouble of speech and displayed affect when sighing as he searched for the right word to express how he felt at times of using the sharing feature. The first word that came to his mind was 'spying',

carrying with it connotations of wrongdoing, misuse, and guilt. Tom looked at it from the female perspective:

Extract 34 (Tom)

*“Um, I can understand how some women would see it as prying. Very private part of their lives and that's the way their relationship is. And um, yeah, they would kind of see it as a, could, could well see it as an invasion of their privacy.”*

Tom's word selection, including 'prying' and 'invasion of privacy' infers a sense of wrongdoing and misuse on behalf of men, confirming Matt's hesitant suggestion about feeling a sense of 'spying'. Matt continued:

Extract 35 (Matt)

*“I felt like I had access to information that allowed me insight, but at the same time, I also felt like I was overstepping, you know, I was getting access to something or, or having an opinion on something that ultimately, uh, was quite a personal, was quite a personal experience? ... Uh, but I felt like I was encroaching on her autonomy and, and in her space by even bringing it up because it was her body and her cycle.”*

Matt was talking about the conflicting ideas that the app can evoke; on one hand it invites research, investigation, curiosity, yet at the same time, this permission to be insightful can leave him feeling like he is 'overstepping and encroaching on her autonomy, cycle, body, and space. *“I think, yeah, I, I, I, what I felt like it was that all of a sudden I'd been led into, to what had previously been a very, very personal experience.”* Matt was displaying trouble of speech, potentially implying that the recollection of this experience was surrounded with difficulty. In his account, he spoke of himself as without agency 'he had been led into', as if the use of the app could result in sudden, unanticipated, and unwanted outcomes, emphasizing the magnitude of difficulty by using EFC 'very, very private experience'.

### *Subject positions*

'The ambivalence of knowledge' discourse produced two subject positions. One of them is 'the mystery woman', who is desired by those men who have become too close with

their partners through knowledge; in context of the sharing feature, 'the mystery woman' represents a point of conflict where the desire to be closer is halted by desire to be a separate human. The next subject position was the 'the spy' (relating to the controlling man who misuses the sharing feature, as constructed in interviews with developers). 'The spy' is a man who uses the app for 'spying', 'prying', 'encroaching on her autonomy', and 'invasion of her privacy'.

#### Discourse 4: The danger of the hormonal imperative

The way that men understood the menstrual cycle was on the basis of the hormonal imperative, meaning that they viewed hormones as the key agents of their partner's bodily and emotional processes. For example:

##### Extract 36

*"when I compare hormonally what happens, it's sort of, there's a point of difference between the two of us. There's such a significant shifting of, of, you know, the environment with her from week to week. ... seeing first-hand just how much is actually going on, just how much the hormones are jumping and shifting and switching and, you know, just, just how much change, uh, is going on at any one given time"*

Matt drew on the hormonal imperative to explain his partner's personality shifts, and used ECF to emphasise how 'significant' these shifts were. Hormones were positioned as acting agents that do things; they 'shift, jump, and switch, causing so much change at any given time'. The hormonal imperative constructs the characteristics of the unstable woman, and biomedical discourse was used here to bolster biological essentialism in making claims about the differences between men and women on the basis of hormones.

What was salient in men's accounts was the amount of tension around the hormonal imperative, as noticeable in the following extracts:

##### Extract 37 (Shane)

*"It's probably the, the PMS part of the cycle, really, that's the one that, um, is, um, and then yeah, I think, yeah, that's the PMS part, part of it that I think is the bit that,*

*um, ... yeah, when I talk, when, when men and their mates talk about this sort of thing, it's usually the most challenging time for, for guys in relationships relative to, you know, cycles."*

Significant trouble of speech can be detected in this excerpt, as well as a footing shift where Shane began his statement in first person 'when I talk', shifting to 'when mates talk'. By using these discursive devices, Shane worked to avoid sounding like a bad guy when referring to the medical diagnoses of PMS, which was formulated in his talk as if routinely affecting all women monthly. Tom recognized the risk of the hormonal imperative within the sharing feature, as he expressed his concerns over how healthy it is to look to the app for answers:

Extract 38 (Tom)

*"I would also worry that you'd get too hung up on it. You know, you'd be constantly looking at where, where you are in every month and, um, yeah. ... I think there's probably also risk that you'd be kind of trying to work out what was gonna, what emotional part of the, you know, the emotional reactions that you might have been viewing or seeing or anything like that, and going straight to the app, looking for an explanation, you know, So I dunno if that's that healthy."*

Similar to Shane's account, tension in speech was detected when Tom referred to his partner's emotionality, working hard in selecting the right words to prevent sounding like a bad guy. He assessed turning to the app and its hormonal imperative for explanations as worrisome, risky, not healthy, and considered receiving constant notifications from the app as detrimental to the relationship:

Extract 39 (Tom)

*"I'm just saying could, could be actually detrimental. ... because everyone's kind of just like, 'Oh, what was that that just dinged on your phone? Are you gonna, um, make some assumption about how I'm gonna be today', you know?"*

Tom's account captured how the hormonal imperative puts him in a difficult position, where on one hand the app encourages a view that emotional and behavioral attributes are linked to hormones, while on the other hand, making assumptions about her based on hormonal processes may be detrimental to the relationship. Shane shared Tom's concerns:

Extract 40 (Shane)

*"You've gotta be very careful how you, how you use it. You can't kind of, bring it up and say 'Oh this is what the app tells me, and this is what I'm expecting'. I think you're looking for a fight if you say something like that. So, yeah, I think you got to be, you've gotta be strategic, you know, relative to its use, so it could actually force you apart too."*

In this extract, Shane embodied the subject position of the self-regulated man, yet this time his self-regulating behaviour related to negotiating the dangers of the hormonal imperative. The app is recognized as having power to force a couple apart if not careful. Similarly, Matt realized the risks associated with the hormonal imperative of the sharing feature:

Extract 41 (Matt)

*"Cause I think maybe left to its own devices, it it, you know, it's at the whim of whatever's going on. You know, if the relationship's bad, it can be used as a, as a tool that's sort of weaponize to say, 'Oh well this is because you are, you know, PMSing'"*

Matt's word choice to 'weaponize' implies the magnitude of risk that the app carries with it.

## Discussion

This study used three different sources to explore how men navigate MTA sharing features in today's complex world of masculinities; interviews with five men who use the sharing feature to track their partner's cycle, interviews with two MTA sharing feature developers, and analysis of 4 emails sent to men via the MyFlo sharing feature each pertaining to one of the four phases of the menstrual cycle. Engaging with various sources provided an opportunity to explore a breadth of accounts from different positions to see how these technologies construct men's understanding of the female menstrual cycle, the implications of these understandings, and the subject positions within it. The key findings from each study are briefly discussed below, followed by a discussion on the dominant discourses that they shared, which were the hormonal imperative and the promise of the good life through optimal living. Next, I discuss what the implications are of these discursive frameworks structuring men's understanding of the menstrual cycle. This section finishes off with a brief review of using the PS-IMT framework, consideration of the study's limitations, and recommendation for future research.

## Summary of key findings

### *Partners*

The findings from interviews with male partners show that men account for their use of the sharing feature in terms of hope to know more about the female menstrual cycle, yet that there are also some tensions around having this knowledge. The finding that men hope for the feature to provide them with knowledge is in line with existing literature that points to men wanting to know more so that they are better able to provide support to their partners, but they also frequently report that not knowing what to do to help which leaves them with a sense of frustration, confusion and helplessness (Hoga et al, 2010; Rabiepoor & Yas, 2018; Rajak, 2015; Rezaee et al, 2016). The hopes of the men in the present study were that the MTA sharing feature would provide them with knowledge about the menstrual cycle, which was constructed as a problem to themselves, their partners, and to the relationship. As such, the MTA sharing feature was positioned as technologies of self, helping men overcome their 'naturally' insensitive side, and adopt more appropriate behaviors, such as being more sensitive and supportive of their respective partners. These

discourses mapped onto the narrative of optimal living and the good life; as a source of information, the MTA sharing feature was envisioned by men to help them be better prepared for the women's hormonal fluctuations through open conversations and increased involvement, leading to better relationships and a better life as a result. While men demonstrated a desire to become more involved in their partner's menstrual cycle, this hoped for involvement was also seen as problematic. The attained knowledge was perceived as 'too much', they felt like creepy spies, and expressed contradicting hopes for maintaining mystery in their relationship.

Interviews with male partners also demonstrated the way that historical understandings of the mad menstruating woman are still entrenched in discourses among men today. Men perceived the menstrual cycle as veiled in mystery, but also as a source of the woman's fluctuations of emotions and behaviors. These discourses position her as the unstable woman and him as the confused man and a victim to her instability. This resembles findings produced in study by King and colleagues (2014), who found that men position themselves as either victim to their partner's premenstrual wrath and mistreatment, and/or as the good husband, who continues to be the financial provider, good father, and caring and loving husband, despite the injustice that he endures from the woman's poor behaviour. These discourses map onto the notion of the monstrous feminine that has been reproduced in discourse throughout history (Ussher, 2005), demonstrating that these notions still persist today, despite men reporting that they want to know more and be more involved.

The MTA sharing feature encouraged men to view hormones as key agents of the female menstrual cycle, which was found to be problematic for men and their relationships. The hormonal imperative discourse was found as central to men's constructions and understandings of the menstrual cycle, with the MTA sharing feature perpetuating these understandings as it encourages men to draw links between hormones and their partner's bodily and emotional processes. However, significant amount of tension was found consistently across male participants when drawing on the hormonal imperative; they reported the need for being extra cautious and strategic when using the MTA sharing features, as it might compromise their relationship otherwise. Some men explicitly acknowledged that drawing on the hormonal imperative might be detrimental to the relationship. For example, if they were to make assumptions about how she was going to be

based on the time of the month, they worried that the partner would be angry, and it would damage their relationship. The hormonal imperative that the MTA sharing feature draws on therefore puts men in a difficult position, in that it encourages men to map their partner's bodily and emotional processes onto hormones with a vision of becoming better men, but at the same time doing so presents a potential threat to their relationship.

### *Developers*

Interviews with developers showed that one of the ways in which the men account for the female menstrual cycle is that it is problem with unmet solutions. This discourse of problematizing the menstrual cycle involved accounts with references to both women and men. The issue was articulated in that neither women or men like to talk about the menstrual cycle; to women, thinking or talking about it with their partners is an unnecessary cognitive load, and men are naturally too ignorant to be talking about it at all. These discourses pertain to the longstanding notions of the female menstrual cycle as taboo (Erchull, 2020; Ussher, 2005), and the gendered hegemonic constructions of men as ignorant and insensitive (Connell, 1987).

The second discourse found in interviews with developers accounted for the MTA sharing feature as a technical fix that can help solve the problems of managing the menstrual cycle, mapping onto optimal living and the promise of the good life. The sharing feature was constructed as a solution to men's ignorance and the taboo that surrounds the topic; it helps the couple bypass conversations about it, and helps men become a better versions of themselves by being less ignorant, and by adjusting their behaviour accordingly. This maps onto Foucault's concept of technologies of self in which is the work that people do to better themselves with the vision of attaining a better life (Owen & Riley, 2019).

Developers acknowledged some risks in the MTA sharing feature, however these risks were de-emphasized. For example, developers acknowledged the possibility of the app being used by creepy men to spy on women, that there are data security issues, or also that there is a risk of the feature putting strain on the relationship. However, these risks were minimized as they did not align with the developer's vision to 'do good' and as such fell outside the discursive space of the good life. Instead, developers hoped that the men who use this feature are men who love their women, and that any misuse or potential strain would be mitigated by the woman's consent. The question of gender relations was side-

stepped, as this was perceived as a dangerous topic, 'a minefield', and much like the previous risks did not align with the idyllic vision of what the app might do. This selective approach of envisioning and romanticizing the app as 'doing good' without considering gender relations is problematic, since the envisioned discretion that the feature offers perpetuates the taboo surrounding the menstrual cycle, ignores the risks of data security and misuse by men, which could have detrimental implications to women.

### *Emails*

Central to the way that men were encouraged to understand the female menstrual cycle via the MyFlo sharing feature was through biomedical discourse. The emails medicalized the menstrual cycle by drawing on the hormonal imperative; constructing norms around what periods should look like and conflating these norms with health, where hormones were positioned as key actors and determinants of health. Within this framework, 'issues' such as cycle irregularity or PMS symptoms were pathologized and linked to hormonal imbalance. PMS was found especially problematic and framed as in need of complete elimination. The hormonal imperative discourse also medicalized love and relationships; a direct link was made between oxytocin hormone levels and love, encouraging users to work on their oxytocin levels in order to avoid dating ruts. These discourses demonstrate the way that technologies of self (work done on self using the sharing feature) and the concept of quantified self (the sharing feature quantifying women's bodies, relationships, and love), enable the practice of healthism (thinking of the menstrual cycle and relationships in terms of healthy/unhealthy and normal/abnormal hormone levels).

Such discourses are aligned with medical literature about PMS as a pathology, where imbalances and sensitivities to abnormal hormonal levels cause a debilitating condition, one which should be either addressed by a GP, or alternatively by a gynaecologist or a psychiatrist, sometimes calling upon a multidisciplinary teams to help alleviate diagnostic symptoms (Gnanasambanthan & Datta, 2022). The current available treatments for PMS vary from drug treatments including antidepressants, oral contraception, estrogen hormone patches or implants, Danazol, and hormone replacement therapy, to surgery removing either ovaries alone, or together with the uterus (Managing PMS, 2009). Equally, thinking of relationships and love in terms of hormones and assigning them the power to act in these

ways constructs them as objects worthy of clinical observation and medical interference, much like the female menstrual cycle.

The hormonal imperative discourse reflected genealogies of the monstrous feminine. For example, PMS was referred to as the most contentious time for men, giving them tips on how to engage with the premenstrual woman. These discourses can be mapped onto the genealogies of the mad, monstrous woman, positioning the man as a victim to her unpredictable shifts. However, the MTA sharing feature represents a point at which biomedicine and technology come together, making it possible to predict the women's cognition, behaviour, as well as produce the best strategies on how to relate to her on the basis of her hormone levels. As such, the once monstrous woman is now thought of as the predictable woman. However, the position of the predictable woman is no less monstrous; predicating the ill effects of hormones on her cognition and behavior in the name of science is a contemporary way of framing the ill effects of the wondering womb on the body and mind.

The second dominant discourse framing MyFlo's emails was the optimal living discourse. The app is framed as a tool that can help the female user and her male partner achieve a better life through optimal living. One of the areas for optimization is the menstrual cycle; the emails prompt the male partner to encourage her to use the app, because doing so will teach her how to balance her hormones and help her eliminate PMS. This links into the practice of healthism, where the app serves as technologies of self to attaining optimal life. This section also intersects with Foucault's concept of governmentality and the notion of the 'good citizen' who engages in healthism practices to eliminate the problematic PMS and an abnormal menstrual cycle. Continuing the narrative of the good life, the emails also promise an optimized relationship; from a position of knowledge, the man can optimize his plans based on the phase of the cycle that she is in, including shared activities, life planning, timing of sex, and so on.

Bringing key findings across the three categories together

### *The hormonal imperative*

A common discursive thread that weaved through all three studies, male partners, developers, and emails, was the biologically essentialist hormonal imperative discourse.

MTA sharing features are developed with an intention to provide men with information about the female menstrual cycle and in doing so, they draw on biological essentialism and encouraging men to understand the female menstrual cycle within the hormonal imperative. The MyFlo sharing functionality was found to be leaning heavily on the hormonal imperative throughout the letters, positioning hormones as key agents of female embodied experience that control their emotional and biological processes. Male partner's understanding of the female menstrual cycle also reflected the hormonal imperative, as they drew links between hormones and their respective partner's behaviors and cognitions, and used the MTA sharing feature to help them with this. This finding is in line with literature showing that medicalisation of the female menstrual cycle is at the centre of how men understand it today (Erchull, 2020). The concerns over the way that MTA's encourage women to learn about their bodies through hormones are therefore to be extended to the MTA sharing features, as they emphasise the hormonal imperative in men's understanding of the female cycle. This is despite multiple studies stressing that it is very difficult to know for sure whether the menstrual cycle can be linked to behavioural and emotional patterns, and how these embodied experiences exactly relate to 'being hormonal' (Ford, De Togni, & Miller, 2021; Kressbach 2021).

The hormonal imperative perpetuates the historical narrative of the mad woman, which was found across all three categories. The hormonal imperative allows for the MTA sharing feature to be the man's one stop shop to see what is going on with her hormones, and on that basis, he is able to make predictions about how she might be. Developers viewed the feature as providing men with extra security against her madness through predictability, and the texts outlined in vivid detail the predictions of how she might be at any given week of the month. The hormonal imperative which dominates these technologies therefore opens the possibility of predictability, which however is necessitated by the historical notions that women are unpredictable, mad and irrational. This medicalised model of female psychology positions women as biologically inferior to men; women are placed clearly on the side of nature, infirmity and irrationality, and men on the side of rationality, learning and control (Ussher, 1992).

The danger of the hormonal imperative in the use of MTA sharing features is therefore in the gendered attributes that it constructs about the hormonal and unstable woman, in direct contrast to the stable and rational man. This puts men in an immensely

difficult position, as it means that when they draw on the hormonal imperative to think and speak of their partners as hormonal, this also positions women as irrational and thus inferior to men. Perhaps these were the tensions noticed in men's accounts, when drawing on the hormonal imperative; significant tensions, pauses, and reframing were found in these accounts, not to mention that finding male participants who would speak to this topic at all proved to be difficult. Similar tensions were found in a study by Riley (2003) who explored men's talk on gender roles and the male provider role. She found that despite egalitarianism becoming increasingly valued, there was no discursive space for men to be both egalitarian and masculine; those men who abandoned the 'breadwinner' role and adopted more egalitarian attributes were at a loss of their masculine identity. The study by Riley (2003) demonstrated the tensions between a need to be a good guy, which is at odds with men's gendered identity of masculinity. Similarly, the present study recognized men's motivations for using the MTA sharing feature with a hope to become better, less ignorant men towards their partners, while at the same time, the hormonal imperative positioned their partners as inferior to the rational man. As such these men could not be both, good men and egalitarian. See below for further discussion in relation to masculinity theory.

### *Promise of the good life*

The next thread that all three categories have in common is a thread of hopefulness and vision of the good life. Developers create the MTA sharing features with a vision help men and women fulfill the promise of the good life, MyFLO frames their emails as a key to a better life if one lives optimally, and men use these technologies with hopes that the feature will resolve their confused state, help them understand her instability, help them become better men, better partners, and ultimately, help them attain the ideal of the good life. These notions map onto Lupton's concept of the quantified self, in that through the datafication of the woman's menstrual cycle, and this data being shared with the partner, the man will be able to optimize his engagement with her, which carries with it the utopian notion of attaining a better life.

However, the promise of the good life becomes problematic when people's hopes are not met. With the vision of attaining a better life, men's hopes to have more information were met with the trouble of having too much information, the desired closeness with their partners evoked a desire for space and mystery, and their hopes of

becoming better men and better partners was also unfulfilled. Rather, they felt like spies, like encroaching on her autonomy, and felt like bad men when they mapped their partner's behavior onto hormones, which the app encouraged them to do. With these results, the promise of the good life is more like cruel optimism, as proposed by Berlant (2011); cruel optimism, as she defines it, is the phenomenon of a relationship between people and objects to which they assign attachments of optimism, in that those objects will lead to their transformation, flourishing and happiness with the ideal of attaining the good life. These optimistic relations become cruel when the objects that probed the person to develop their optimistic attachment actively hinder the person's initial aims, as they are either impossible to realize, are a sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic (Berlant, 2011). Like in Berlant's cruel optimism, MTA sharing features evoke optimism for men's better life, while at the same time these technologies impede their ability to attaining it.

Drawing further on the idea of cruel optimism, the MTA sharing feature is filled with contradictions, and here is a summary of the contradicting ideas recognized in this study. Firstly, the MTA sharing feature is envisioned as opening conversations about the menstrual cycle, while at the same it suggests that menstruation should be treated with *discretion*. The feature also aspires to change the way that men think about the menstrual cycle, while at the same time it draws on discourses reproducing genealogies of the monstrous feminine. The apps offer men the promise of the good life, yet if men draw on the hormonal imperative discourse (as encouraged), they may compromise their relationships. The feature is intended to challenge hegemonic masculinity, yet the hormonal imperative positions women as inferior to men, perpetuating hegemonic masculinity. The sharing feature is a technology that deeply pertains to the topic of gender relations, yet gender relations are not considered in the app's development. And lastly, an interesting contradiction exists between the optimal living and the biological essentialist discourses; optimal living and the associated practices, such as the quantified self and healthism, are discourses of neoliberal individualism in terms of being a responsible individual and making the right choices (Riley et al., 2021). While biology and biological essentialism emphasize hormonal processes and view socialization as products of upbringing (Chandler & Munday, 2016), which is the opposite of individualism. As such, it interesting that these two contradicting discourses run shoulders together in each of the three studies.

## The implications of the hormonal imperative and the promise of the good life

Reviewing findings across the three data sets shows how discourses of the hormonal imperative and the promise of the good life get mobilized in different ways by different people and with what effects. One of the effects is that people who develop these technologies do not question or even consider the implications of drawing onto the hormonal imperative, the implications of the feature promising an unattainable result, or the risks of security and of women having a controlling partner. The emails by MyFlo ignore the implications altogether and present the feature as a wonderful solution to life's problems. With the creators of these technologies turning a blind eye, these problems trickle down to the male partners, who are left to contend with its challenges by themselves; they are having to negotiate between being manly (and sexist), versus egalitarian, and left to recognize and manage the risks associated with this technology on their own or with their partners. These bigger discourses mean that there is no safe space for these men to talk about the women's menstrual cycle, where they can draw on the hormonal imperative, which they are encouraged to do, while not sounding as sexist men or positioning their partner as not equal. This makes it difficult for them to have an equal relationship, when the woman is being framed as having a deficit – hormonally driven rather than rationally driven. Furthermore, there is no safe space for men to become more involved without feeling like 'creepy spies'. The way that men might resolve this precarious situation is by positioning themselves in the best possible light and refraining from talking about it too much, keeping the topic of menstrual cycle shrouded in mystery and taboo.

## PS-IMT Framework

The PS-IMT framework used in this study helped show the way that men can embody and shift between hegemonic and inclusive masculinities, or perhaps embody both at the same time, in relating to their partners using MTA sharing function. For example, the subject position of the seductive lover maps onto hegemonic masculinity, positioning the man as driven by his biological urges to have sex, while at the same time mapping onto inclusive masculinity as someone who can express his feelings and make her feel loved. Another example is the dyadic subject positions of the confused man and the unstable woman, which map onto the hegemonic masculinity discourse about women as hormonal, irrational, and inferior to the rational man; while discourses of the same men also

constructed the subject position of the supportive partner, who embodied characteristics of inclusive masculinity such as explicit care and support for his female partner. The way that men shift across orthodox and inclusive masculinities has been found in other studies, such as that by King and colleagues (2014) who studied men's perceptions of PMS. They found men displaying romantic constructions of masculinity, which are considered as subordinate in the hegemonic masculinity framework, as it is associated with feminine qualities of care and support. Nevertheless, they argue that romantic and traditional constructions of masculinities need not be mutually exclusive, and that it is not uncommon for men, who enact hegemonic masculinity, to also express masculinities which may be deemed by it as subordinate (King et al, 2014). This present study as well as various others, such as that by King and colleagues, demonstrate that in exploring men and masculinities, the HMT alone is not broad enough to account for the shifting nature of masculinities, much like the IMT alone falls short on explaining contemporary masculinities due to the lack of engagement with the wider picture of gender relations. As such, the PS-IMT provided a useful framework for thinking about contemporary masculinities in this study.

### Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was that the findings may have been shaped by the context in which the interviews took place – and that is in a male participant to female researcher dynamic. As discussed earlier, people might shift between different subject positions which are formed through relevant, contextual discourses. Given that the researcher was a female, the male user participants may have been mapping onto discourses that were deemed as appropriate in this interchange. The discourses that men employed may have also been shaped by the contextual dynamic of researcher – participant; this dynamic involved a power imbalance, where the researcher may have been thought of as an expert, a judge, or possibly as a threat since the participant was disclosing information about themselves to the researcher who had control over the process of what happens with the data. As such, the question remains, how the discourses produced in this study might differ outside of the research context and among men themselves? The results of this study hint at what these differences could have looked like; the trouble of speech and disclaimers found in interviews with male users and developers point to missing

accounts, which were interpreted as relating to the monstrous feminine, and not being free to talk. As such, perhaps there is a missing discourse of anti-feminism or of feminism, making it hard for men to speak about their experiences of their partners' challenging behaviors.

The next limitation of this study is that it falls short to explore the differences in the discourses used across the varied sociodemographic backgrounds of participants, as this was beyond the scope of this study. The participants that took part in this study were of differing sociodemographic backgrounds; the professional backgrounds of participants were a tradesman, a business owner, university professor, therapist, and a yoga teacher, ranging with nationalities from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and American/European (residing in the Middle East). This makes for a diverse participant pool, and while this study found discourses that were consistent across the 5 participants, it did not explicitly look for the differences that may have been present based on participants' backgrounds. Seeing that there are common discursive threads across participants with different sociodemographic background is valuable in that it strengthens the validity of this study's findings and knowing that these discourses are widespread. What was missing in the discursive approach were personal lived experiences shaped by the participants' unique historical antecedents which might have been accessed through a more phenomenologically or life history informed analysis.

#### Recommended future research

The limitations of this study create opportunities for future research; a study of a similar kind could be undertaken by a male researcher using either one on one interviews or focus groups to identify shared constructs between men, who may or may not evoke different responses in male participants when speaking amongst themselves. A focus group discussion as a methodological approach might make men feel more at ease in expressing themselves freely, leading to potentially new findings, different to the ones generated by this study. Future research might also benefit from examining how men of different sociodemographic backgrounds may employ different discourses in their understanding of the menstrual cycle and MTA sharing technologies. Focus group discussion methodology would also allow them to explore how more localised cultural contexts that intersect with these globalised discourses of optimal living through technology.

Another direction for future research is to focus on couples trying to conceive and pregnancy tracking. The focus of this study was to gain an insight into the discourses that frame men's understandings of the female menstrual cycle when using MTA sharing functionalities, which excluded those couples who use fertility technologies specifically intended for conception, and pregnancy tracking apps. As Hamper (2021) explains, the use of these technologies is increasingly common among men, as they are specifically designed to foster men's engagement, such as timing of sexual intercourse to increase chances of conception in fertility tracking, or in tracking for the development of the child (Hamper, 2021). Her study explored women's perspectives on sharing conceptive fertility work with male partners and found that the use of these technologies reflects an uneven gendered division in fertility work, with women struggling to engage their partners in the process. In another study by Harper and Nash (2021) exploring women's use of pregnancy apps and how they foster bonding, they found that men are more likely to engage with these technologies over fertility apps, as they were motivated by a shared parenting ideal and resistance to being passive recipients of information. This literature suggests that there is a growing interest in the way that men engage with fertility and pregnancy tracking apps, however so far explored only from women's perspectives. As such there is room for future research to explore what men make of these technologies.

Another direction for future research is to explore how a feminist discourse could be invoked in ways that support men to meet their hopes and ambitions of being better partners to their women in using the MTA sharing feature. As briefly discussed earlier, the discourse of feminism is missing in men's and developers' accounts; it is hidden as a problem that they cannot talk about, it is a 'minefield'. The MTA sharing feature frames the menstrual cycle within the biological discourse of managing the monstrous feminine and the discourse of optimal living. The results of this study suggest that the implications of these discourses are that men worry about being positioned as bad men within a feminist discourse because they experience their women as hormonally driven. The study by Riley and Paskova (2022) on women's experiences of using an MTA to manage PMS offers an interesting comparison. In their interviews, the five female participants described how the app enabled them to learn to love their bodies that had previously troubled them (Riley & Paskova, 2022), pointing to discourses of appreciation. This discourse of appreciation is missing in interviews with male users, developers, and in the MyFlo emails. As such, it might

be liberating for men to also be able to frame their understandings through the discourse of appreciation, if the MTA sharing features facilitated this. As such, a future research direction would be to ask what happens if you bring feminism overtly into the conversation?

Lastly, this study was defined by the parameters of focusing on male partners, however the MTA sharing feature is developed for other actors, such as friends or family. Future research can look at the experiences and the accounts of these actors who use this technology, including the women themselves who enable this sharing feature.

## Conclusion

The aims of this study were to better understand the discursive frameworks within which men experience their partner's cycle through using menstrual tracking app technologies. To address these aims, this study looked for the discourses in men's talk who used the sharing feature, and the implications for how women's menstrual cycle was understood by their male partners when mediated through technology. Using the method of FiDA to analyse interviews with five male partners, two developers, and emails from MyFlo sharing feature, this study found two key discursive frameworks present across the three categories; the hormonal imperative discourse and the promise of the good life discourse. The interviews with two developers showed that these apps are being developed by blindly drawing on the hormonal imperative without questioning the implications of doing so. Instead, developers create these technologies with a romanticized idea of helping men become better men, better partners, and attain a better life. The emails sent by MyFlo to male partners were dominated by the hormonal imperative, explaining the female menstrual cycle with references to fluctuating hormones and encouraging men to make links between hormones and their partner's emotional and behavioural processes. These emails promised men the idyllic good life, if they optimize their engagement with their woman based on her hormone levels, or perhaps help their female partners fix their broken hormones. Interviews with men who used the sharing feature confirmed that they anticipated the sharing feature to help them towards a better life, and that the hormonal imperative was at the centre of their understanding. These discourses circulating ideas about the female menstrual cycle reproduce the historical notions of the mad, monstrous feminine, who is driven by her hormones, is irrational, and therefore inferior to the rational man. As such, these technologies reproduce aspects of hegemonic masculinity, despite men

showing inclinations towards inclusive masculinity positions. The implications of these tensions are that men who use the MTA sharing feature are in a double bind; they want to be egalitarian, but their understandings of the female menstrual cycle informed by the MTA sharing feature impedes them the ability to do so. As such, I argue that despite the visions of the MTA sharing feature opening up conversations about the female menstrual cycle, it shuts these conversations down at the same time.

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## Appendices

i.	Ethics Committee Approval.....	107
ii.	Consent Form - Partners.....	108
iii.	Consent Form – Developers.....	109
iv.	Information Sheet - Partners.....	110
v.	Information Sheet – Developers.....	115
vi.	Timeline .....	118
vii.	Interview Guide – Partners .....	119
viii.	Interview Guide – Developers .....	121
ix.	Social Media Advertisements.....	122
x.	Transcript Analysis – Male Partners.....	123
xi.	Transcript Analysis – Developers.....	168
xii.	Transcript Analysis – MyFlo Emails.....	183

i. Ethics Committee Approval



19/07/2022

Dear: Klara Paskova

**Re: Ethics Application - SOB 22/02 - Men's subjective experiences of tracking their partner's cycle through menstrual tracking app sharing feature**

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee:

**Ohu Matatika 3** at their meeting held on **Thursday, 10 March 2022**

On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are approved.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Professor Craig Johnson  
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise  
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 95106840  
E [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz); [animalethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:animalethics@massey.ac.nz); [gtc@massey.ac.nz](mailto:gtc@massey.ac.nz)

ii. Consent form – partners



***Men's subjective experiences of tracking their partner's cycle using a menstrual app sharing feature***

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Please initial next to the statement if you agree:**

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet	
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study.	
I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice).	
I understand that I may end the interview at any point.	
I understand that I may choose to withdraw from the study until 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2022.	
I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material that could identify me personally, will be used in any reports on this study.	
I wish to receive a summary of the results from the study.	
I agree that I will not share any information that may identify my partner, including showing the app to the researcher	

**Please respond to the following statement by circling Yes or No**

I am happy for anonymized interview transcript to be uploaded onto a data sharing platform for other researchers to check my analysis or to use the data for their analysis. Please note that saying no to this question will not impact on your ability to participate in the present study.

**Yes / No**

**Declaration by Participant:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Consent Form – Developers



***Men's subjective experiences of tracking their partner's cycle using a menstrual app sharing feature***

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**Please initial next to the statement if you agree:**

I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet	
I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study.	
I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice).	
I understand that I may end the interview at any point.	
I understand that I may choose to withdraw from the study until 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2022.	
I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material that could identify me personally, will be used in any reports on this study.	
I wish to receive a summary of the results from the study.	
I agree that I will not share any information that may identify my partner, including showing the app to the researcher	

**Please respond to the following statement by circling Yes or No**

I am happy for anonymized interview transcript to be uploaded onto a data sharing platform for other researchers to check my analysis or to use the data for their analysis. Please note that saying no to this question will not impact on your ability to participate in the present study.

**Yes / No**

**Declaration by Participant:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **MEN'S SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF TRACKING PARTNER'S CYCLE THROUGH MENSTRUAL APP SHARING FEATURE**

### **INFORMATION SHEET**

My name is Klara Paskova and this study is part of my MA Psychology at Massey University. In 2020 I have completed a Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy Studies at AUT, and I am a trained helpline counsellor. This study is supervised by Prof Sarah Riley from Massey School of Psychology, who is an experienced supervisor of undergraduate and postgraduate research, and has herself an extensive amount of research experience. Last year, Prof Riley supervised my research project looking at women's experiences of using menstrual tracking apps to manage their PMS. This research has led us to be interested in hearing about men's experiences of using the sharing feature for partners offered by menstrual apps.

Today menstrual tracking apps are popular among women to track their cycles. These apps offer a sharing feature which allows partners to follow their cycle including ovulation, PMS, and menstruation. Very little is known about the experiences of those who make use of this sharing feature. Given that this is new, intimate technology, I want to know more about their experiences of men who use this feature.

While not all menstruators identify as women and not all of their partners identify as men, for this study, I am interested in the experience of heterosexual couples who identify as male and female because I am interested in how your ideas about gender might also impact on your experiences of using this technology in today's complex world of gender relations. This will help us understand how and why men find it useful to relate to their partners and their cycle through digital technologies, what may be some limitations in doing so, and perhaps ideas for how they would like this technology to develop.

As such, I invite you to participate in this research if you are a male, if you use, or have used in the past a sharing feature of your partner's menstrual tracking app, and are over 18 years old.

If you participate, I will get you to complete a timeline before the interview where you mark the key moments in your experience of connecting with and tracking your partner's cycle through a mobile app. You can see an example of a timeline at the bottom of this information sheet. A timeline can help you recall and brainstorm your past experiences. It can also help you organise what you want to say in the time sequence of events as they happened. Usually people find these enjoyable to do and it can help make the interview flow more easily. Completing the timeline may take you 15-20 minutes, followed by a Zoom (or another online platform) interview, which will last approximately 45 minutes.

During our interview, I will ask you questions about your timeline and your experience of tracking your partner's cycle through an app. The interview will be audio-recorded only, there will be no video recording. The audio recordings will be available to the researcher only. The recordings will then be transcribed, with any potentially identifying information omitted from the transcript, this includes names of people or places. Anonymized quotes from the transcript may be used in research reports. Any information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and your name will not appear on the transcript or the final report. Instead, pseudonyms will be used to maintain your confidentiality. You will also have a chance to read through the transcript, in order to check for any mistakes or for the purpose of changing or omitting some of the information provided. Depending if you have something to add or redact, this may take you anything from 5 to 30 minutes.

If you choose to participate, you have the right to only answer the questions that you feel comfortable answering. Further, you may end the interview, and withdraw from the study at any time up to two weeks after the interview, after which your anonymous data will be included in the analysis and thus cannot be redacted.

The emphasis of this study is on your experiences, not those of your female partner. You are not invited to share with me any information that may identify your partner, including showing the app to me. This is to maintain your partner's confidentiality.

Sometimes talking about personal issues can be emotional, if you feel distress at any point during the process of the interview, we can stop it at any time.

If you wish to receive any more information about the study before you make up your mind, feel free to contact me and I can talk to you further about this study. I especially wish to open this opportunity if you are Maori and would like to discuss how we can ensure that this study best meets your personal needs and values so that it is safe and enjoyable. My email is [research.massey@yahoo.com](mailto:research.massey@yahoo.com)

To help make the process transparent, I have attached an example of a timeline and some indicative questions at the end of this information sheet.

### **Human ethics in this project**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/02. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz) .*

## Timeline

This is an example of a timeline that I would get you to complete. One axis represents your emotions associated with your experience of using an app to track your partner's cycle, and the other axis represents time. You would be asked to map out the key points of your such experience. If you wish, you may begin with the time when you first learned about the sharing feature of your partner's menstrual tracking app, or any other significant time that you can think of. You would also be provided some questions that may prompt you to get started.



## INDICATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me about your first point on the timeline; what happened and why did you include this as the first timeline point?

At which point did you start using the sharing feature of your partner's menstrual tracking app?

What are the significant points *before* and *after* you began tracking your partner's cycle?

What is your next significant point on the timeline? What did you think/feel when that happened?

In exploring your timeline points, how did other people/technology impact on these situations?

What is your most recent point on the timeline? What are the emotions associated with this timeline point?

***The following questions are likely to be asked either explicitly or addressed in the process of discussing the timeline:***

What made you start tracking your partner's cycle through the sharing feature? What were your first impressions of doing so?

What are some advantages of using this technology?

Has the app changed the way you think about your partner's cycle?

Has the app changed the way you think about your partner's body?

How often do you engage with the app?

Has the way you use the app changed over time? If so, how?

Was there ever a time you used the app more or less?

Do you think the app has any limitations? If so, what are these?

How do you see sharing this intimate data as impacting on your relationship?

Does it bring you closer/shows you are interested?

Does it say anything about your relationship? Or the kind of man you are?

Do people in your social life or family know that you share this information?

If so what are their responses?

Does that impact on how you feel about this technology or your use of it?

Are there other people you wouldn't tell that you share this information, (and if so) why not?



## **PARTNER SHARE FEATURE IN MENSTRUAL TRACKING APPS INTERVIEW WITH APP DEVELOPERS**

### **INFORMATION SHEET**

My name is Klara Paskova and this study is part of my MA Psychology at Massey University. In 2020 I have completed a Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy Studies at AUT, and I am a trained helpline counsellor. This study is supervised by Prof Sarah Riley from Massey School of Psychology, who is an experienced supervisor of undergraduate and postgraduate research, and has herself an extensive amount of research experience. Last year, Prof Riley supervised my research project looking at women's experiences of using menstrual tracking apps to manage their PMS. This research has led us to be interested in hearing about men's experiences of using the sharing feature for partners offered by menstrual apps.

Some menstrual tracking apps have recently added a sharing feature, so that partners can become a part of the users tracking practice. Men are becoming increasingly involved in conversations about menstruation within the wider society, as well as within their intimate relationships. This partner share feature can be seen as a tool, which creates new ways for men to connect with their partners over their menstrual cycle. Given that this is new, intimate technology, I want to hear directly from the people who take part in its development, and know more about the thoughts and processes behind the decision to include this feature as part of the menstrual tracking app.

As such, I invite you to participate in this research in the form of a short interview, approximately 30 minutes long. The interview will take place via Zoom, or another online platform. To make the process transparent, you can find indicative interview questions at the bottom of this document.

The interview will be audio-recorded only, there will be no video recording. The audio recordings will be available to the researcher only. The recordings will then be transcribed. You will also have a chance to read through the transcript, in order to check for any mistakes or for the purpose of changing or omitting some of the information provided. Depending if you have something to add or redact, this may take you anything from 5 to 30 minutes.

You can choose to remain anonymous in this study, in which case any potentially identifying information will be omitted from the transcript, including names of people or places. Anonymized quotes from the transcript may be used in research reports. Any information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality, and your name will not appear on the transcript or the final report. Instead, pseudonyms will be used to maintain your confidentiality.

If you choose to participate, you have the right to only answer the questions that you feel comfortable answering. Further, you may end the interview, and withdraw from the study at any time up to two weeks after the interview, after which your data will be included in the analysis and thus cannot be redacted.

If you wish to receive any more information about the study before you make up your mind, feel free to contact me and I can talk to you further about this study. My email is [research.massey@yahoo.com](mailto:research.massey@yahoo.com)

### **Human ethics in this project**

*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/02. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz).*

## **INDICATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

Tell me about the decision to add the sharing feature the menstrual tracking app?

What was the process like to include this feature?

What were some challenges along the way?

Did you envisage a particular kind of user?

Did you carry out research on who might use this feature, or any research with men/partners?

What is the general feedback on this sharing feature by its users?

Are you able to share with me the percentage of app users that make use of this sharing feature?

What do you think are some of the benefits of the feature?

What do you think are some of the weaknesses or downsides of this feature?

How do you think the feature can enhance a relationship in a heterosexual couple?

Do you perceive any risks in couple sharing?

How do you think this sharing feature maps onto contemporary gender relations?

Do you use this sharing feature yourself?

Do you think the sharing feature allows you to distinguish your app from others in the field?

What is the business viability of adding this feature?

Does this feature align with your vision of what digital technology can do?

## MY EXPERIENCE OF TRACKING MY PARTNER'S CYCLE USING A SHARING FEATURE OF A MENSTRUAL APP

### **Instructions:**

1. Using the graph below, mark key points during your experience of using a sharing feature to track your partner's cycle.
2. If you can, begin with the time when you first learned about the sharing feature of your partner's menstrual tracking app
3. The horizontal axis represents time, and the vertical axis represents emotion.
4. Feel free to write a broader description of your experience on the timeline, or draw an image. I invite you to have fun in thinking about through your journey.
5. If stuck, use the interview guide to see what kind of information you may want to include. However, do not feel confined by these questions.
6. Please complete this prior to our interview, and send me a copy.





## PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview procedure will start by looking at your timeline. I will ask questions about each point of your timeline to understand what the key points for you in your journey were of using this sharing feature. I will ask you to tell me about the significance of each point on your timeline and may ask follow up questions to help me best understand your experience, such as what happened, why was it important/significant. Once you have talked me through your timeline, I will then ask questions about other issues that might be relevant to your experience that we haven't covered. The following questions are likely to be asked either explicitly or addressed in the process of discussing the timeline:

### PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me about your first point on the timeline; what happened and why did you include this as the first timeline point?

At which point did you start using the sharing feature of your partner's menstrual tracking app?

What are the significant points *before* and *after* you began tracking your partner's cycle?

What is your next significant point on the timeline? What did you think/feel when that happened?

In exploring your timeline points, how did other people/technology impact on these situations?

What is your most recent point on the timeline? What are the emotions associated with this timeline point?

***The following questions are likely to be asked either explicitly or addressed in the process of discussing the timeline:***

What made you start tracking your partner's cycle through the sharing feature? What were your first impressions of doing so?

What are some advantages of using this technology?

Has the app changed the way you think about your partner's cycle?

Has the app changed the way you think about your partner's body?

How often do you engage with the app?

Has the way you use the app changed over time? If so, how?

Was there ever a time you used the app more or less?

Do you think the app has any limitations? If so, what are these?

How do you see sharing this intimate data as impacting on your relationship?

Does it bring you closer/shows you are interested?

Does it say anything about your relationship? Or the kind of man you are?

Do people in your social life or family know that you share this information?

If so what are their responses?

Does that impact on how you feel about this technology or your use of it?

Are there other people you wouldn't tell that you share this information, (and if so) why not?



## PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW GUIDE

*Please note, the following questions are indicative questions to our interview. For this reason, these questions may be asked in a different order, some questions may be irrelevant to you personally, and other questions may arise as we progress through the interview. You have the right to answer only those questions that you are comfortable answering.*

### Possible interview questions

Tell me about the decision to add the sharing feature the menstrual tracking app?

What was the process like to include this feature?

What were some challenges along the way?

Did you envisage a particular kind of user?

Did you carry out research on who might use this feature, or any research with men/partners?

What is the general feedback on this sharing feature by its users?

Are you able to share with me the percentage of app users that make use of this sharing feature?

What do you think are some of the benefits of the feature?

What do you think are some of the weaknesses or downsides of this feature?

How do you think the feature can enhance a relationship in a heterosexual couple?

Do you perceive any risks in couple sharing?

How do you think this sharing feature maps onto contemporary gender relations?

Do you use this sharing feature yourself?

Do you think the sharing feature allows you to distinguish your app from others in the field?

What is the business viability of adding this feature?

Does this feature align with your vision of what digital technology can do?


**PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY**

I am interested in **men's experiences** of **tracking their partner's menstrual cycle**

This will help us understand how and why men find it useful to relate to their partners and their cycle in today's **complex world of gender relations**

Please reach out if you are:

- **Male**
- **Over 18** years old
- **Using, or have used** in the past a sharing feature of your partner's menstrual **tracking app** to track her cycle



To participate in this study please email [research.massey@yahoo.com](mailto:research.massey@yahoo.com)

**Invitation to APP DEVELOPERS of MENSTRUAL TRACKING APPS**

**To participate in a study:**  
(30 min online interview)

Aiming to understand better the processes and decision-making involved in launching a **partner-share feature**

I am also interested to know **how and why men find this feature useful** to relate to their partners and their cycle

Please reach out if you are:

- **App developer** of a menstrual tracking app
- **Using, or have used** in the past a sharing feature yourself



To participate in this study please email [research.massey@yahoo.com](mailto:research.massey@yahoo.com)

x. Transcript Analysis - Male Partners

<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>TRANSCRIPT - TOM</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
Reaction	INT: All right. So you've used the timeline to brainstorm a little bit. Can you tell me about the first point that you've noted?  001: So, we've, uh, you've asked me here to record the first time, um, considered using the sharing feature of. um, of the app. Um, in relation to this, it's the sharing feature is obviously something that, um, I haven't used before, but I've seen an app that tracks my partners cycle before that. Um, I thought the, you know, the first point when it was, um, mentioned that we could have a sharing function on it would be, um, I was obviously happy, interested, excited, Um, not really on the basis of, um, how we'd use it or what it would be, it was just a new way of, um, looking at the whole experience.	Initial reaction to the possibility of sharing was obviously happy, interested, excited, in that it was a new way of looking at the whole experience.	Script formulation – obviously  Technologies of self	In building up the expectations of using the app, the speaker uses script formulation ‘obviously’, as if being excited, happy, & interested is the obvious reaction to all who might be offered this possibility, expecting the technologies of self to offer a new (better) perspective.
Perspective	Um, yeah. Um, probably the best way to comment on this is to go forward. A few months or so, and then my next kind of thought to go with it is it wasn't actually as useful as I expected it would be, or as interesting.	It wasn't actually as useful as he expected it would be, or as interesting.	Assessment – useful, actually	The expectations were unmet; app assessed as not as useful as expected, where ‘actually’ is implying a sense of surprise.
Expectation/ Disappointment	Probably the first month or so, yeah, it was little bit interesting, but um, in order to comment on that, I'll go back to before that and I'd seen app tracking before and um, I think I keep a fairly good, um, Uh, intellectual record of where my partner is in her cycle anyway, and, um, I've known her for quite a while. So it was perhaps, um, not only do I keep a record in there, I, um, was constantly getting reminded or reinforced because I recognize certain behaviors in the cycle, which then reminded me of what part of the cycle my partner was in. So, um, I guess we're probably talking about that on a day to day basis, or maybe not a day to day, but on a regular basis. So we didn't necessarily need the app to, um, remind us to communicate about those things., um, or did it bring anything new to our relationship or anything like that? And my answer is I thought it might, but in the end, we were probably doing it without, without needing an app to do that, to do, to	Thinks he keeps a good intellectual record of where his partner is in her cycle anyway, he's known her for quite a while, and keeps constantly getting reminded or reinforced because he recognizes certain behaviors in the cycle.	Hedging – I think  EFC – constantly	Speaker is hedging his claim that he keeps a good intellectual record, awareness, of his partner's cycle and the associated behaviors, using ‘I think’, perhaps because it is delicate to make such claims? He then further goes on to add credibility to this claim by using EFC ‘constantly reminded’ and known her for quite some time.
Awareness				
Behavior				
Communication		Didn't necessarily need the app to remind them to communicate, as they were talking about it anyway without needing an app to do that, probably not as clinically as the app talks about it, but more emotionally and stuff like that.	Technologies of self  Contrast – clinically vs emotionally	Expectations unmet – app as technologies of self is expected to offer a new (better?) perspective, while in reality it offers a more clinical perspective which is not necessarily better, then the emotional one that the couple have without the app already anyway.
Expectation			Completer – stuff like that	

<p>Communication</p>	<p>talk about it. Probably not as clinically as the app talks about it, but more, um, emotionally and stuff like that. Um, would I, you know, consider, um, that, and then if I go through to today, I would say we hardly, well we don't use the shared aspect of the functionality really at all. So, um, yeah, to sum it up, expected that I'd used it more then found out why I didn't. Then upon considering why I didn't, I kind of looked back and thought, well, we're already really doing this without the use of an app. So now, um, we're back to where we were before.</p> <p>INT: So if I take you back to the start of the timeline, you said you had some idea of, uh, what it might bring, some sort of a new perspective perhaps. Can you talk to me a little bit about what you may have expected to find? Or you've also mentioned that you felt it was gonna be exciting. Can you talk about that?</p>			
<p>Expectation Excitement</p>	<p>001: Yeah, I thought more, probably more, just excited from the sharing aspect. In terms of the actual detail of what to be excited about. I dunno that there was anything in particular. It's just kind of another sharing aspect between yourself and your partner. So that's exciting in its own kind of way. Um, [long pause] yeah.</p>	<p>Another sharing aspect in a relationship is exciting in its own way.</p>		
<p>Sharing</p>	<p>Um, [long pause] yeah, like I, I, I don't think there was anything specific that I thought it would bring that, that it probably, um, wasn't. Uh, at that point in time, there wasn't anything that specific that I thought it would bring. And as time went by, I kind of realized that it wasn't gonna bring, you know, nothing was revealed to me that it brought to, to the relationship because of that, because we were kind of already roughly communicating around those lines anyway, and I really didn't need any of the reminder functions or anything like that of, um, where my partner was in her cycle.</p>		<p>Technologies of self The promise of the good life?</p>	<p>The way that technology can be perceived/expected to work as a tool for a couple to do more and share more together, and bringing the relationship closer as an ideal of the good life?</p>
<p>Cues Counting</p>	<p>You know, like I say, it was kind of, there's lots of cues and stuff like that that you would, um, recognize. And obviously you've got the, um, you've got the anchor period every month, so you're kind of reverting back to zero. It's not like you're trying to follow a pattern over five or six months and need a reminder. It's only a month, you know? So you, you're pretty much re-</p>	<p>There is a lot of cues that you would recognize, with the period being the anchor every month, reverting back to zero, so you're pretty much rezeroing all the time, so it's not like you need a reminder, hard to get lost over a month.</p>	<p>Completer – cues and stuff like that Metaphor – anchor Footing shifts – you Metaphor – ‘re-zeroing’</p>	<p>Using footing shifts ‘you, you would, you’ve got, etc.’, to report something with higher credibility and minimizing one’s own stake in what is being said, in this case, talking about the female menstrual cycle as having cues and stuff like that (completer to imply completeness), including the</p>

<p>Easy</p>	<p>zeroing all the time. So you hard to get lost over a month. Yeah.</p> <p>INT: Aha, so can you remember what actually has made you start using the tracking app?</p> <p>001: I think it's really just around, um, it's just a sharing feature. Just, you know, if your partner suggests that to you, you might as well explore whether it's going to be useful or otherwise, you know? Um, [pause] yeah. Like I think if you are trying to get pregnant or something like that. Yeah, sure. It would be, um, it would be really quite useful, but I, I would also worry that you'd get too hung up on it. You know, you'd be constantly looking at where, where you are in every month and, um, yeah. I'm just not sure that that's, yeah. Would that, would, would, would that be healthy in the long term? I think you can probably get a little bit. My personal feeling would be that you could get a little bit too attached to the app telling you what was going on rather than using your own personal observations. You know, Oh this, this feels, or sounds very much like this time of the month, you probably know it anyway. I suppose an app would be, um, it would be a good way of checking, but I think there's probably also risk that you'd be kind of trying to work out what was gonna, what emotional part of the, you know, the emotional reactions that you might have been viewing or seeing or anything like that, and going straight to the app, looking for an explanation, you know, So I dunno if that's that healthy.</p>	<p>Worries that there is a risk of getting too attached to the app, and using it as explanation for what was going on rather than own personal observations. Unsure if that would be healthy.</p>	<p>Emotion category – worry Discourses of health ‘healthy’ Technologies of self</p>	<p>period, described by metaphor as the anchor, being the most obvious cue, the most stable one in the context of instability and fluctuations?</p>
<p>Risk</p>	<p>001: I think it's really just around, um, it's just a sharing feature. Just, you know, if your partner suggests that to you, you might as well explore whether it's going to be useful or otherwise, you know? Um, [pause] yeah. Like I think if you are trying to get pregnant or something like that. Yeah, sure. It would be, um, it would be really quite useful, but I, I would also worry that you'd get too hung up on it. You know, you'd be constantly looking at where, where you are in every month and, um, yeah. I'm just not sure that that's, yeah. Would that, would, would, would that be healthy in the long term? I think you can probably get a little bit. My personal feeling would be that you could get a little bit too attached to the app telling you what was going on rather than using your own personal observations. You know, Oh this, this feels, or sounds very much like this time of the month, you probably know it anyway. I suppose an app would be, um, it would be a good way of checking, but I think there's probably also risk that you'd be kind of trying to work out what was gonna, what emotional part of the, you know, the emotional reactions that you might have been viewing or seeing or anything like that, and going straight to the app, looking for an explanation, you know, So I dunno if that's that healthy.</p>	<p>Worries that there is a risk of getting too attached to the app, and using it as explanation for what was going on rather than own personal observations. Unsure if that would be healthy.</p>	<p>Emotion category – worry Discourses of health ‘healthy’ Technologies of self</p>	<p>Evaluating over-reliance on app using discourses of health ‘would that be healthy’, drawing on the taken for granted medicalizations of relationships and technologies of self. The speaker expresses worry (emotion category) to convey perceived risk of the sharing, assessing it as potentially unhealthy.</p>
<p>Healthy</p>	<p>INT: Yeah, sounds like you're quite in tune with your personal observation, uh, in relation to your partner?</p> <p>001: Yeah, well, like, I think it is with us. I'm not saying that an app wouldn't be useful for other people who weren't, um, who weren't, um, open to talking about it. And if I looked at my prior or past experiences, That probably would've been useful in terms of, um, I don't know, breaking the ice around that sort of communication. Um, I know personally I'm not uncomfortable with it, but I know a lot of women would be, and that's why the app wouldn't be suitable</p>	<p>In his past experiences, the app would've been useful in terms of breaking the ice around communication on a more open basis. He is personally not uncomfortable with talking about it, but knows that a lot of woman would be.</p>	<p>Modal verb.</p>	<p>Building up the expectations of what the app could do, using modal verb ‘would’, supporting his assumption formulating a script and using an EFC ‘lot of woman would be uncomfortable’.</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>001: Yeah, well, like, I think it is with us. I'm not saying that an app wouldn't be useful for other people who weren't, um, who weren't, um, open to talking about it. And if I looked at my prior or past experiences, That probably would've been useful in terms of, um, I don't know, breaking the ice around that sort of communication. Um, I know personally I'm not uncomfortable with it, but I know a lot of women would be, and that's why the app wouldn't be suitable</p>	<p>In his past experiences, the app would've been useful in terms of breaking the ice around communication on a more open basis. He is personally not uncomfortable with talking about it, but knows that a lot of woman would be.</p>	<p>Modal verb.</p>	<p>Building up the expectations of what the app could do, using modal verb ‘would’, supporting his assumption formulating a script and using an EFC ‘lot of woman would be uncomfortable’.</p>

<p>Relationship</p> <p>Perspectives</p> <p>Third party</p>	<p>for all couples. Um, to begin with. I'm not saying not useful to all couples, but if they were able to use it to start, uh, communicating, uh, communicating on a more open basis, perhaps the app would be useful then, with a view to ending up probably where my partner and I are in terms of the, the app actually not being that useful at all. Cause we've already kind of gone through, got familiar. Um, yeah. And then so the app really is, doesn't offer a lot of extra information that we aren't already aware of. ,</p> <p>INT: Can we just stay here for a second? When you say the app might have some, uh, potential benefits to couples in terms of breaking the ice and talking about things, where do you think that might lead further? How might that benefit the couple?</p> <p>001: Oh, um, yeah, like what I was kind of driving at is that it, Um, you know, I think it's a, like, it could be a really good point at, um, like, um, uh, just, just as a general way of, um, um, <b>making a relationship more open, you know, or more understanding</b> or, um, yeah, I think it just, it just goes back to people's individual perspectives on it. <b>You could have one person who's right out in one extreme who, who is not, um, fussed by it and doesn't see it as a private experience. It's a relationship experience and everything like that. And then you'll get another partner, another person within a relationship who might see it as a purely private, personal, um, you know, experience.</b> And then, and then you've got kind of, you know, <b>not a big conflict</b>, but you've got one person that kind of wants to know and one person who doesn't, um, necessarily probably not say, doesn't want the other person to know, but doesn't feel comfortable about it. <b>So that's really, uh, a nice way of bringing the two together.</b> One person doesn't have to feel uncomfortable about not wanting to share, and the other person doesn't feel uncomfortable about being left out. You know, so you've got the, the two people who are a long way apart on their individual responses to the cycle, or not the responses to the cycle, or their take on menstruation, full stop. So you've got <b>one person who doesn't want or is either ashamed or</b></p>	<p>The app could help relationships more open and understanding in relationships with differing perspectives where:</p> <p>One person is right out in one extreme, not fussed by it, doesn't see it as private but rather as relationship experience, wants to know,</p> <p>Another person sees it as purely private, personal experience, doesn't want other person to know, doesn't feel comfortable, is ashamed or shy.</p> <p>The app helps prevent conflict, brings the two perspectives together, where one doesn't have to feel uncomfortable, and the other doesn't have to feel left out, breaks down the individual experience and makes it more of a couple experience.</p>	<p>EFC/script formulation?</p> <p>Modal verb</p> <p>Contrast</p> <p>Building up category entitlements</p> <p>Category entitlement</p> <p>Technologies of self Agent distinction</p>	<p>Building up the expectations of the app using modal verb 'could', in terms of what the app could do.</p> <p>Using contrast to build up two categories of people, user profiles, to whom the app might be useful.</p> <p>As technologies of self, the app does things actively, it has potential to break down individual experience and transform it into a couple one, in the expectations of what technology can do in bringing a couple closer together and closer to the ideal of the good life.</p>
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	<p>shy or views it very different to the other person. You've actually got quite a potential for some, not conflict, but um, can't think of the word that I'm looking for, but what, uh, the app might offer a really good way to break down those, um, individual takes on the experience and make them more, um, of a couple experience, you know, so yeah, that, I probably think that's probably the biggest potential benefit in, in my mind, looking at it from a perspective, um, like past perspective. Yeah. You know, everyone's got a different take on this, you know?</p> <p>INT: Mm mm, so when you speak about the couple experience, uh, do I understand correctly that, uh, maybe using the app and breaking the ice or opening the conversations, it might actually bring people closer together, if men are involved in, in the know of the partners cycle?</p>			
Perspective	<p>001: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yep. Yeah, just, just, just on the different, um, you know, uh, perspectives that people have. You know, if you've got people at two ends of the spectrum, it's quite a good way of bringing them closer together and, um, one's more sympathetic to the other person's point of view on it, you know? I think it would just be good to start off with would they use it long term? Uh, my take is probably not. Cause once you get to a point where you're kind of in tune and sync, you really don't need an app to tell you what's going on. Well, that's my view anyway.</p>	<p>The app can help bring the couple closer together and be more sympathetic if their perspectives are on the opposite end of the spectrum.</p>	<p>Contrast Technologies of self</p>	<p>Using contrast 'opposite ends of the spectrum' to convey the gap that can exist between people's perspective, and how the app as technologies of self can bring the couple from that distance/disconnect closer together to be 'in tune, in sync'.</p>
Close	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. We have departed a little bit from your own experience perhaps, but while we are here, Uh, I'd like to ask what do you think this app can do for men specifically?</p>	<p>The app is probably not to be used long term, because once you're in tune, in sync, you don't need an app to tell you what's going on.</p>	<p>Script formulation Metaphor 'in tune, in sync' Technologies of self.</p>	
Redundant	<p>001: Yeah, it's really hard, like, for a, you know, I, I can't speak generalized because it's probably a fairly private subject for, um, you know, a lot of relationships. I think for just men in general, it's kind of a, um, it's kind of a demystification or something like that or, you know, I, I don't quite view it that way for myself, but, um, I could see how that could be in some</p>	<p>Thinks that for men in general this app could be kind of a demystification, as he knows a lot of couples who don't even discuss anything in this arena at all.</p>		

Demystification	circumstances cause I know a lot of couples that don't even discuss anything in this arena at all. Um, and would they, could I see them using an app like this? Some of them I don't, I just don't see that at all. Um, and I could probably almost identify the couples that would, you know, just, you know, the way I feel. So, um, for men, oh, [pause] I think that's a relationship-specific situation. In general, yeah, maybe demystifies it a little bit. But it's very relationship specific, you know, like it could be useful in one relationship and absolutely hopeless in another.		Consensus 'men in general'	When asked what the app could do for men; reporting as men in general are in agreement over the perception that the app could work as a demystification – implying that the menstrual cycle is something veiled in mystery for men in general.
Communication				
Demystification	INT: So if we come back to your own experience and the app, the technology, do you have a recollection of what your initial impression of the sharing feature?			
Disappointment	001: Yeah, I, I don't think it's as well developed as what it can be. Yeah, I think it was very, pretty simple, you know, um, um, somewhere like the commentary that comes with, like from the app in relation to parts of the cycle and everything like that was kind of good for a laugh or whatever and I dunno whether it was just the, the way it was presented [pause] Yeah, like nothing special, you know, really grabbed me. I thought, I thought it was very simple, like very underdeveloped. Yeah.	The first impressions were that it was very pretty simple, nothing special grabbed him, thought it was underdeveloped.	Assessment	Assessing the app as simple, underdeveloped.
Underdeveloped	INT: Did you hope for more?			
Underdeveloped	001: Yeah. I, I think it can be done exceedingly better than it's been done, and I'm very surprised that it isn't done more, but maybe that, maybe that tells us or tells me that it's, that I'm probably on the right page, that it has a very limited lifespan in terms of being useful to people. You know, you might get on, click it, use it, six months later you go, 'Oh yeah, no, I'm kind of in tune now, don't need the app anymore to tell me what's going on'. So maybe, maybe that's why, or maybe they, and that's maybe what they've realized is that there's nowhere to take the app. You know, once you come in six months that, how do you further develop it, you know? Is it just too much information? You know, like saying too much, like not too much information, but	On one hand, thought the app could have been done exceedingly better, very surprised that it hasn't.	Assessment Emotion category	Assessing the app as underdeveloped, could have been done exceedingly better, supporting this claim by expressing a sense of surprise/shock 'very surprised'. Which sits in contrast with thinking that if it had been developed further, it could have been too much information. These contrasts can be seen as the conflicting ideas between wanting to be closer to the partner hoping that technology can deliver that outcome,
Potential		On the other hand maybe there is nowhere further to develop it, otherwise it could become too much information.		

<p>Too much</p>	<p>does it have any more value If you had more information? I, I dunno that I can see how it can be, um, expanded.</p> <p>INT: Is that, uh, personally or, uh, generally from like a developer perspective?</p> <p>001: Uh, that's what I look at it personally and then I look at it why that it isn't. So then I would put myself in the developer's shoes and ask, What more do I do? And I actually struggle to see what, what more could, could be done. I'm not trying to dumb it down or make it overly simplistic, but I think yeah, I think it's one of those things that could get to the point, especially from a male perspective, as too much information and way too technical, you know, um, and, and could just make things really complicated, a relationship quite complicated if you're constantly in your phone looking at what's going on, you know?</p>	<p>Especially from a male perspective, it's one of those things that could get to the point of too much information and could just make things and the relationship really complicated.</p>	<p>Contrast Assessment</p>	<p>as in the supportive partner SP, while at the same time too much information is threatening to the hegemonic masculinity 'male perspective', in which the app and too much information is just one of those things that can make things and the relationship really complicated.</p>
<p>Male</p>	<p>INT: Um, do you have an idea of perhaps what more you'd like to see in the app without it getting too much?</p>		<p>Entitlement category Assessment</p>	
<p>Complicated</p>	<p>INT: Um, do you have an idea of perhaps what more you'd like to see in the app without it getting too much?</p>	<p>Getting constant notifications and relying on the app could become too unnatural and overwhelming.</p>		
<p>Unnatural</p>	<p>001: I, um. Yeah. I, I wonder if there was constant notifications coming through, it would actually become, um, for one of a better expression, too unnatural. You know, you'd be a lot relying on the app to kind of try and understand where your partner was, understand where um, emotions might be at or anything like that. I think it's, I think it's useful in terms of education or make, or just awareness, but to drill down into it more and to be getting notifications every morning or something like that, I think it would be just overwhelming, and I'm not sure that it'd be that helpful for a, for a relationship. You know, like, let's keep some mystery [giggling], you know? Or, or let's not be ignorant of, what I'm saying is let's not do the, uh, let's not let the app do what we should be doing ourselves in terms of being connected to our partner, is perhaps what I'm saying. Yeah. Don't let an app get in the way, so I just wonder if more information would be, would be too much, you know? Not saying it's a fault with an app, but I'm just saying could, could be actually</p>	<p>Best to keep some mystery [giggling]</p>	<p>Assessment – unnatural EFC constant</p>	<p>Using EFC to portray the level of risk that the app carries with it – constant notifications and relying on the app is assessed as too unnatural, overwhelming, and detrimental to the relationship, using EFC again by saying that 'everyone' would be suspicious of the other partner making assumptions about them based on the app. Giggling implying excitement in keeping some mystery.</p>
<p>Too much</p>	<p>001: I, um. Yeah. I, I wonder if there was constant notifications coming through, it would actually become, um, for one of a better expression, too unnatural. You know, you'd be a lot relying on the app to kind of try and understand where your partner was, understand where um, emotions might be at or anything like that. I think it's, I think it's useful in terms of education or make, or just awareness, but to drill down into it more and to be getting notifications every morning or something like that, I think it would be just overwhelming, and I'm not sure that it'd be that helpful for a, for a relationship. You know, like, let's keep some mystery [giggling], you know? Or, or let's not be ignorant of, what I'm saying is let's not do the, uh, let's not let the app do what we should be doing ourselves in terms of being connected to our partner, is perhaps what I'm saying. Yeah. Don't let an app get in the way, so I just wonder if more information would be, would be too much, you know? Not saying it's a fault with an app, but I'm just saying could, could be actually</p>	<p>Let's not let the app replace connection to the partner.</p>	<p>Affect display</p>	<p>Using modal verb in what we 'should' be doing ourselves in terms of being connected to our partner, signaling the accountability that partners</p>
<p>Connection</p>				

<p>Risk</p>	<p>detrimental.. , like you could, could, the usefulness of it in terms of breaking the ice could end up, if you got too much information be would actually could do the, could do the opposite and actually close it in like, and present a bit of a barrier because everyone's kind of just like, 'Oh, what was that that just dinged on your phone? Are you gonna, um, make some assumption about how I'm gonna be today', you know? So yeah, that's probably my view on that. Yeah.</p> <p>INT: Mmm, mm. Do people around you, whether it's family or friends, know that you've been using this app? Have you shared with anybody?</p>	<p>Too much information could be detrimental, present a barriers because everyone could suspect the other person to make assumptions about how they're going to be today.</p>	<p>Modal verb – should be doing</p> <p>Script formulation EFC</p>	<p>have in a relationship to connect with one another, while simultaneously using the modal verb 'let's not' in implying the intention or wish for technologies of self to replace the basics of human connection.</p>
<p>Relationship</p>	<p>001: Um, yeah, I think I've shared it with, um, one friend. Yeah. Um, Yeah, and I, I, like if you, I can kind of elaborate on that and like, um, I, that was probably, he was probably in a relationship where I actually wasn't sure whether they would be all in or all out, you know? Um, and we did talk about it and yeah, his take was, um, he wasn't keen, he didn't think it would work well for them. you know, um, in our conversation when we were just sort of talking about it. And, um, yeah. I think that's just a difference in relationships, you know? Um, I can understand how some women would see it as prying. Very private part of their lives and that's the way their relationship is. And um, yeah, they would kind of see it as a, could, could well see it as an invasion of their privacy.</p>	<p>Can understand how some women would see the use of this app as prying, invasion of privacy as it is a very private part of their lives, and that's the way that their relationship is.</p>		<p>Working up a category of women, to whom menstrual cycle is a very private thing – to them using the app would be an invasion of privacy, or seen as prying.</p>
<p>Perspective</p>			<p>Entitlement category</p>	
<p>Privacy</p>	<p>INT: Well, um, we've reached the end of the interview. Mm. Just before I turn off the recording function Mm. Is there anything that you wanted to add that you thought was relevant to this study that we didn't mention?</p> <p>001: Yeah. No, I think we have covered probably a bit wider than the specifics of the question.</p>			

<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>TRANSCRIPT - SHANE</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
<p>Comfortable Oversharing</p> <p>Consider Helpful</p> <p>Symptoms</p> <p>Unfamiliar Noticed</p>	<p>INT: All right, so can you tell me about your first point on the timeline? What happened and why did you include this as the first point?</p> <p>005: Um, yeah. So, um, yeah, it was probably about three, three months ago I guess, that, um, my girlfriend was showing me, uh, tracker app that she has and, um, mentioned that it had a sharing function, um, uh, available to it and that I could, uh, download that to my phone. Uh, and track her period via the app.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . So is this the point at which you started using the feature?</p> <p>005: No. No, it wasn't. I was kind of, hadn't considered, um, something like that and I didn't know that I was, um, that <b>comfortable with something like that</b> on the basis of, uh, <b>just too much information</b>. So, um, Um, I, um, yeah, kind of sat on it for like three or four weeks, um, and then, you know, reconsidered and thought, yeah, we'll, we'll, um, we'll give this a go see, um, see if it's helpful.</p> <p>INT: What was the thought process that you were going through when you mentioned, uh, would this be too much information? Uh, what did you mean by that?</p> <p>005: Yeah, I just find that, um, my partner's really <b>intensely affected</b> by, um, her cycle. Um, and it really knocks her around, um, physically and emotionally. And it wasn't something that I, um,</p>	<p>Sat on it for like three or four weeks because he didn't know if he was comfortable with something like that on the basis of just too much information.</p> <p>Partner is really intensely affected by her cycle, really knocks her around physically and emotionally.</p>	<p>Metaphor 'sat on it' Categorizing? 'something like that' Assessment 'too much' Normalizing devices – first thought, then realized.</p> <p>Extreme assessment 'really intensely' Metaphor 'knocks around'</p> <p>Trouble of speech</p>	<p>Menstrual app referred to as 'something like that' categorizing it as something unknown, too much information, something to be uncomfortable about, something that needed to be weighed up. These first thoughts are now reconsidered, assessed as wrong, having relabelled the app as potentially helpful.</p> <p>Describing partner as affected by her cycle in talk orientated to extreme, 'really intensely', using the metaphor 'knock around'</p>

Confused	had to, uh, be, um, I was just getting familiar with, you know, cause it was early on in our relationship and I had noticed it before. And, um, I guess I was struggling a little bit at times to, um, see what was coming my way. And I thought, well, maybe this would be helpful.	Was only just getting familiar with this, it was early on in the relationship. He had noticed it before. At times, he was struggling to see what was coming his way, and though maybe the app could be helpful.	Pronouns ‘it, this’	SP: The confused man - it was only early in their relationship and he was only just getting familiar with how the menstrual cycle affects her partner – he was struggling to see what was coming his way. Thought the app could be helpful
Helpful	INT: Mm-hmm. Can you share how long you've been together?  005: Oh, it's just, oh, it's six months now, I suppose.  INT: All right. Um, so you would've, um, you would've considered using the feature at about four months into your relationship?  005: . Yep.  INT: Okay. So when you say you were weighing up whether or not to use it, what was going through your mind? What did you perceive the benefits could have been? Or perhaps what would've been the reasons that you'd wish not to use the app?	Been together for six months	Subject position ‘confused man’	
Symptoms	005: Yeah, I guess I'd never been in a relationship with someone who was, um, I guess so, so affected. Um, and this is, this is with hindsight as well. Obviously at the time I wasn't quite joining	Never been in a relationship with someone who is so affected.	Categorizing ‘someone who is so affected’	Describing partner as affected by her cycle in talk orientated to extreme ‘never been in relation with someone so affected.
Unfamiliar	the dots on, uh, you know, I don't want this to sound the wrong way, but the emotional volatility was, um, now looking back was really strongly,	At the time he wasn't joining the dots. Doesn't want it to sound the wrong way, but the emotional volatility was strongly synchronized with that.	Normalizing devices - At the time vs. now. Disclaimer EFC – volatility SP: the unstable woman Emotion category – courage	The time in the past of being unaware and uninterested in the cycle and the app, contrasted to the now – encouraged to participate to better understand & in the interest of improving the relationship – making oneself look virtuous?
Predictability	um, you know, synchronized with that. And so I guess I got, I was kind of, trigger is not the right word, but I was, I guess I was, I encouraged myself	Encouraged himself to participate in it with a view to getting a better understanding. Things were changing from one week to another with no apparent change on his part.		
Participate Understanding	to kind of participate in it with a view to, um, getting a better understanding of, of kind of how things I thought were changing from one week to		SP: the unstable woman SP: the confused man	Supported by the discourse of constructing the unstable woman ‘emotional volatility EFC, things changing week to week vs the confused man ‘no apparent change on my part.
Predictability	another with no apparent change on my part and, you know, and more of a change on, on in her, you know, so it was, I thought, you know what, I probably, you know, in the past wouldn't have been	In the past he wouldn't have been interested in anything like that, but in		
Interest	at all interested in anything like that, but, um, you			

<p>Improve Value Understand</p>	<p>know, in the interest, I guess, of <b>improving the relationship</b>, um, I decided that, um, yeah, there would be a, could be value in, in, in understanding a little bit more about what's going on.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. So you mentioned that your partner's shown you that there's this app and there's this sharing feature and you sat on it for some time. What happened next? How did you decide to, uh, use it in the end?</p>	<p>the interest of improving the relationship decided that there could be a value in gaining understanding.</p>	<p>Good life narrative?</p>	<p>The promise of understanding &amp; optimal living is better relationship.</p>
<p>Conflict Understand</p> <p>Affect Value Understand</p>	<p>005: Oh, we, we just coming to a, <b>basically came to a head</b> where I <b>couldn't get a handle on the situation</b> and <b>couldn't understand</b> what was going on. So I thought, you know what, um, maybe I've been, maybe I've been suggested this feature by her because she's aware of how much it affects her. Um, and maybe thought that it would be good for us, for, for me to understand it.</p> <p>INT: Okay. So when you first started using the feature, what was your impressions of it? First impressions.</p>	<p>Basically came to a head and couldn't get a handle on the situation, couldn't understand what was going on.</p> <p>Thought that maybe she suggested the feature because she is aware of the effects and that it would be good for them / for him to understand.</p>	<p>Metaphor – come to a head Minimization – just, basically SP: the confused man</p>	<p>Discourse constructing the confused man 'couldn't get a handle on the situation, couldn't understand, came to a head – metaphor for saying having reached a crisis</p>
<p>Understanding</p> <p>Secret Understand</p>	<p>005: Um, yeah, like it was pretty insightful. Yeah. Um, [long pause] yeah, like I, I'm, I wasn't looking at it every 10 minutes or anything like that, but, um, you know, <b>secretly</b> I was basically trying to line, you know, line things up between <b>what I was seeing</b>, um, in her with <b>what the app was telling me</b>.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm, so you were like a little bit of a researcher there for a while.</p>	<p>First impression – insightful.</p> <p>Wasn't looking at it every 10 minutes, but secretly tried to line up between what he was seeing and what the app was telling him.</p>	<p>Assessment – insightful Confession? Secretly, without her knowledge. SP: researcher?</p>	<p>App assessed as insightful, implying positive characteristics SP: The researcher: the man who studies his partner's cycle using the app 'lining up what he is seeing with what the app is saying. This 'research' is done in secret, perceiving that there might be repercussions if she finds out?</p>
<p>Secret</p>	<p>005: Yeah, I guess so. Yeah. You <b>wouldn't say that out loud</b>, but yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's probably a <b>fair</b> comment. . [laughs]</p> <p>INT: Okay. Um, when you say it was insightful, is there anything in particular that you found insightful?</p>	<p>Wouldn't say that out loud, but it's probably a fair comment.</p>	<p>Confession? Secret Assessment – fair comment</p>	<p>SP: the researcher wouldn't say out loud that he is studying her. Labelling him as a researcher felt as judgement, though assessed as fair – feeling a sense of wrongdoing?</p>

Understand	005: Oh, well, it was insightful, you know, um, that you could, you know, pretty quickly I could, um, <b>join the, the dots</b> , um, together and now with a few more months, maybe even like, probably six months of knowing each other and using the app for two, I can now go right back to probably the whole six months and <b>see some of the patterns all the way through</b> . Um, you know, will I probably, yeah. Will I need to use the app forever? I doubt that I will. Cause once I've got a handle on the pattern, I think, um, I'm kinda, um, ready for it. Ready for certain, um, you know, emotional, um, characteristics, you know? I'm not saying they're good or bad, I'm just saying that when you're ready to expect something or you're, um, you can explain it to yourself, you're, you don't necessarily need your partner to explain it to you, because when they're, um, when they're affected by their, by that, their explanations sometimes aren't as good either. Cause they're affected by exactly what they're talking about. Yeah.	App helps join the dots and help see patterns retrospectively.	Assessment – insightful SP: researcher Metaphor – join the dots	SP: the researcher – the app helps him 'join the dots', metaphor for cause & effect?
Prepared		Doubts he would use the app forever, because once he has got a handle on it, he is then ready for certain emotional characteristics.	SP: researcher	SP: the unstable woman has certain emotional characteristics, including not being able to verbalize well what she's going through at the time of the affect.
Symptoms		Not saying they're good or bad, just saying that if you're ready to expect something, you can explain it to yourself rather than your partner explaining it, because their explanations may not be good as their affected by exactly what they're talking about.	SP: unstable woman	Reframing from passing judgement on her affect, managing accountability.
Understand			Disclaimer	
Affected				
Communication			SP: the unstable woman	The app can help the SP: researcher explain things to himself. Furthermore, it helps integrate knowledge, so that he is no longer confused, but rather has got a handle on it and is prepared for what is to come.
	INT: Okay. So the app helps you be prepared in some way from what I am hearing...			As technologies of self, the app helps be prepared and have understanding.
Understanding	005: Yep. Yep and more understanding I guess	App helps be prepared and have understanding.		
	INT: And more understanding, can you share with me what are the points, uh, or, or what, what is it exactly that you are better prepared for now?		Technologies of self	Trouble of speech when speaking of PMS, hedging 'I think', hesitation 'probably', trouble of speech – leading into detailed statement that 'men find PMS the most challenging time in relationships'.
PMS	005: It's probably the, the PMS part of the cycle, really. That's the one that, um, is, um, and then yeah, I think, yeah, that's the PMS part, part of it that I think is the bit that, um, is probably most useful. And yeah, when I talk, when, when men and their mates talk about this sort of thing, it's usually the most challenging time for, for guys in relationships relative to, you know, cycles.	App is most useful in helping be prepared for the PMS part of the cycle.		Footing shift to manage accountability for the statement from 'I' to 'men and their mates'.
Useful		Men and their mates talk about this sort of thing (PMS) as most challenging time for guys in relationships.	Hesitation – probably, trouble of speech, hedging 'I think'	
Mates			Footing shifts	
Consensus				
Challenging	INT: Mm-hmm. So how often would you engage with the app?			

<p>Notice Secretly</p> <p>Confirmation</p>	<p>005: I probably not every day, and probably I could go a week without using it. But if I sense, if I sense it, I'll, um, probably go and secretly have a look at the app just to see where everything's at. Um, that probably the, the, the actual signals that I'm getting is, is and what I'm feeling in the relationship will tend to send me to, um, to the app, to, um, just double check, you know, where things are at.</p>	<p>When he senses something, feels the actual signals and what he is feeling in the relationship – sends him to go and secretly has a look at the app to see where everything is at, just to double check.</p>	<p>Confession – secretly</p>	<p>The app is like a trusted confidant for secretly (without her knowledge) confirming /validating of what he is sensing/feeling may be related to the cycle</p>
<p>Prepared</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. Um, so when you say the app can help you be more prepared, how do you, how do you then prepare yourself? Is it just in having the knowledge about what's coming or is there actually some action that you take in preparation?</p>	<p>App can help him be emotionally prepared himself.</p>	<p>SP: the prepared partner</p>	<p>SP: the man has to emotionally prepare himself for the unstable woman</p>
<p>Response Optimized Escalation</p>	<p>005: Yeah. Uh, I think it's being emotionally prepared myself. Um, you know, cause we all, we all have, um, stuff going on in our own lives as well. And then, um, when you are, um, ready for, um, ready for something, I think you're better prepared, um, to respond in an appropriate manner and I think it kind of stops escalation of things, stuff like that, you know, if you're trying to discuss something, you can have a better, um, understanding on how it might be received.</p>	<p>We all have stuff going on in our lives, but the app can help be ready and better prepared for something to respond in an appropriate matter, knowing how the response might be received, helping to stop escalation.</p>	<p>Generalization</p> <p>Assessment</p>	<p>The app, as a technology of self, allows the man to be better prepared, better respond, and stop escalation</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. That, that leads me to a question whether you think this app brings you closer or improves your relationship in any way?</p>	<p>App gives reminder window where something sits, so that you can prepare yourself and save escalation.</p>	<p>Technologies of self</p>	<p>The app as a technology of self, can give reminders, as such, escalation can be prevented, and the relationship can be improved. Promise of the good life.</p>
<p>Reminder</p>	<p>005: Yeah, I, no, I, I think it, it, it, it definitely does because it gives you a, um, like a, a reminder window of where something, um, where something sits, um, so that you can, um, prepare yourself and it just saves up an escalation, I think. Um, so if you, if you can deescalate like deescalate a situation or be more understanding. Cause you understand the background, but then it will improve your relationship because it just takes those, um, emotional, uh, peaks and troughs out and settles it, that that's my opinion anyway.</p>	<p>The app helps improve a relationship because being prepared to prevent escalation or to actively deescalate, takes the peaks and troughs out and settles the relationship.</p>	<p>Optimized living, tech of self</p>	<p>The app as a technology of self, can give reminders, as such, escalation can be prevented, and the relationship can be improved. Promise of the good life.</p>
<p>Prepare Escalation Understanding</p>	<p>005: Yeah, I, no, I, I think it, it, it, it definitely does because it gives you a, um, like a, a reminder window of where something, um, where something sits, um, so that you can, um, prepare yourself and it just saves up an escalation, I think. Um, so if you, if you can deescalate like deescalate a situation or be more understanding. Cause you understand the background, but then it will improve your relationship because it just takes those, um, emotional, uh, peaks and troughs out and settles it, that that's my opinion anyway.</p>	<p>The app helps improve a relationship because being prepared to prevent escalation or to actively deescalate, takes the peaks and troughs out and settles the relationship.</p>	<p>Optimized living, tech of self</p>	<p>The app as a technology of self, can give reminders, as such, escalation can be prevented, and the relationship can be improved. Promise of the good life.</p>
<p>Fluctuations De-escalate</p>	<p>005: Yeah, I, no, I, I think it, it, it, it definitely does because it gives you a, um, like a, a reminder window of where something, um, where something sits, um, so that you can, um, prepare yourself and it just saves up an escalation, I think. Um, so if you, if you can deescalate like deescalate a situation or be more understanding. Cause you understand the background, but then it will improve your relationship because it just takes those, um, emotional, uh, peaks and troughs out and settles it, that that's my opinion anyway.</p>	<p>The app helps improve a relationship because being prepared to prevent escalation or to actively deescalate, takes the peaks and troughs out and settles the relationship.</p>	<p>Optimized living, tech of self</p>	<p>The app as a technology of self, can give reminders, as such, escalation can be prevented, and the relationship can be improved. Promise of the good life.</p>

<p>Initiation Support</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm, do you think it shows to your partner as well that you're interested?</p> <p>005: Yeah, I, I guess it does. Yeah. I hadn't really pondered on it from, from that like, like I guess she was the person that put the concept forward, so I guess she was trying to, um, encourage it. So I guess, I suppose if I'm using it, well then I'm <b>supporting</b> something that she wanted to bring to the relationship.</p>	<p>Using the app shows that he is interested, because he is supporting something that she wanted to bring to the relationship.</p>	<p>SP: the supportive partner</p>	<p>Using the app fits in with the SP: of the supportive partner – he is seen as supporting the relationship by doing something she wants</p>
<p>Maturity Mates Maturity Understanding</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. Do you think using the app says something about your relationship or the kind of man that you are?</p> <p>005: Um. I don't, maybe to a degree, but I think it's probably more about the relationship. Um, I think kind of the ages that we both at. It's probably something that you're a bit more mature about than say if you were 18 or 20. You kinda, <b>no one</b> talks about that when you're that age or in my experience has even, you know, talk about. When you talk with your mates and stuff like that. It's kind of <b>not something that really registers in that age group</b>, but as you get <b>older and more mature</b> and more understanding and all of that <b>good stuff</b>, well then, um, yeah. Then I guess it does say maybe not something about the man you are, but probably the, the age that you are or your maturity and stuff like that. Yeah. I probably just says something about where you are at life.</p>	<p>The app says something about the relationship and the maturity of individuals.</p> <p>At the age of 18 or 20, no one talks about it when talking with mates. It's not something that registers at that age.</p> <p>Using the app says more about age and maturity, as in the 30's, one gets older and more mature, gets more understanding, all the good stuff [and as such more likely to use the app]</p>	<p>Generalisation EFC – no one Script formulation Assessment</p>	<p>Script is being formulated – that no one (EFC) talks about or registers the topic of the menstrual cycle at under 20 years old, footing shift used to manage accountability, from 'I' to 'you &amp; your mates talking'</p> <p>Getting older and having more understanding assessed positively 'the good stuff', associated with willingness to use the tracking app.</p>
<p>Stability Understanding Relationship</p>	<p>INT: Okay. Yeah. And where is that?</p> <p>005: [Laughing] that's a tricky question! Yeah, I, um, yeah, I think you're just trying to look for a more, um, I think you're more <b>stable</b>, um, you're wanting a more, um, <b>settled</b> life. You're more, um, open to the <b>detail</b>, perhaps a bit more <b>understanding</b>. Um, yeah. Yeah. I think, you know, at that age you're looking. Um, you're looking for a <b>longer term</b>, um, <b>relationship</b>, so that kinda starts to</p>	<p>Using the app says something about where you are at life – looking for more stability, settled life, more open to detail, more understanding, looking for a long term relationship, and as such, one delves more into that sort of thing a littlebit more.</p>	<p>Script formulation</p>	<p>Use of the app associated with maturity and long-term relationships; stability, settlement, understanding, detail.</p>

Interest	<p>delve into that sort of thing a little bit more than perhaps you would at any other time in your life.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. . So do you think that being at this stage of your life and having used this app now for, uh, a couple of months at least, has it changed the way you think about the female cycle?</p>		Pronoun Footing shifts	
Understanding Affect	<p>005: I think it probably has. Probably the insightful thing about it is it is to recognize the different <b>impacts</b> it has on different women. Yeah. For some, some women, it's a really a <b>non-event</b>, you know, in terms of, um, other than a physical event, um, whereas for other women it's an <b>emotional and a physical event</b>. Um, so yeah, I guess that that probably ties back into getting a little bit older too. You probably realize that anyway. Um, and I think it's probably, uh, a useful tool to, um, to help you navigate situations when you're in a relationship with, um, with a woman where it's both a, um, quite a, a significant emotional and physical event.</p>	<p>The app is insightful as it helps recognize the different impacts it has on different women.</p>		A script about the different impacts of the cycle on different women.
Symptoms		<p>For some women, the cycle is a non-event, while for others it is an emotional and physical event. One probably realizes that with age anyway.</p>	Assessment	
Prepared		<p>But the app can be useful in helping to navigate situations in a relationship with a women who is impacted physically and emotionally.</p>	Script formulation	SP: The confused man is particularly vulnerable if a woman is prone to emotional and physical effects of the menstrual cycle – in that case, the app can help him navigate situations. App as a trusted confidant.
Symptoms	<p>Mm-hmm. Has it changed the way you think about your partner's body?</p> <p>005: Uh, not, not really.</p> <p>INT: Okay. Um, do you think this app has any downsides or risks?</p>		SP: the confused man	
Temporary	<p>005: Yeah, I don't think you'd use it forever. I think once you kind of got where, where it's at, um, and you've got more of an, I think it brings, gives you more of an understanding of your partner like that, I, I think once you've kind of used it for a while, it's gonna drop off the radar, you know? Um, cause, um, yeah, I think it's, it's, it's, yeah, I, I just don't, don't, don't think it's got a long-term application, but it's, it's certainly useful.</p>	<p>The app is not to be used forever, doesn't have a long term application, because once you've used it for a while and got more of an understanding, it's gonna drop off the radar.</p>		The app, as technologies of self, eventually integrated into the knowing, so he no longer needs the app.
Usefulness	<p>INT: Mm-hmm, has your engagement with it changed over time?</p>	<p>But the app is certainly useful.</p>	Technologies of self  Metaphor	

<p>Engagement</p>	<p>005: Yeah, I, I would say that I'm already using it a lot less than I was even in, um, you know, within the first or second cycle, so like the first two months or so.</p> <p>INT: Okay. Do any people in your family or wider social circle know that you're using this app?</p>	<p>Using the app less now than in the first or second cycle.</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	
<p>Sharing</p>	<p>005: Um, yeah, probably mention, I . . . you know, actually I don't think so. No, I don't think I've mentioned it in, in wider conversation.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm, is this something you would be, uh, sharing with people about?</p>	<p>Hadn't shared using the app with anyone.</p>	<p>Comparison</p>	
<p>Mates Discretion</p>	<p>005: Depend on the people aye like, you wouldn't share it at a dinner party or something like that, but you are just having a conversation with your <b>closest mates</b> or something like that, and yeah, and, or you wouldn't be, you know, presenting <b>detail</b> or anything to go with it. But yeah, I don't think there's any issue around, around the fact that the app exists and, and that you use it.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Yeah. If you were to share with your mates, what would you say?</p>	<p>There is no issue with sharing about the use of app with others, that it exists and that you're using it. You wouldn't say it at a dinner party, but you can share with closest mates, wouldn't be presenting detail though.</p>	<p>Footing shift Social norms</p>	<p>Social norms of what is acceptable as speaking off at a dinner party – using a menstrual tracking app isn't.</p> <p>Mates would not share the detail of it, social norms among men</p>
<p>Sharing</p>	<p>005: Oh, just, just that, um, probably be in the context of, um, <b>guys talking about their partners</b> and <b>rolling their eyes</b> and, and that, and probably offering it as a, um, as somewhat of a <b>support</b> for them really, you know, have like along the lines of, you know, have you considered this, you know, or you know, do you think this is a <b>pattern</b> or something like that? And would it, you know, just. Kind of, <b>obviously you wouldn't know how guys kind of talk, but you know, probably they kind of joke and carry on about it</b> and it would be something that you offer as a suggestion.</p>	<p>Guys talking about their partners and rolling their eyes, you obviously wouldn't know how guys talk, but they king of joke and carry on about it, so in that context you could offer it as a suggestion, somewhat of a support along the lines 'have you considered this, or do you think this is a pattern'.</p>	<p>Inappropriate</p>	<p>Script formulation about men and talk, drawing on hegemonic masculinity?</p>
<p>Sharing Frustrated Support</p>			<p>Script formulation</p>	<p>SP: the supportive partner – mates can give each other suggestions, supporting each other</p>
<p>Guy talk</p>	<p>INT: I may have asked this already, but I can't actually quite remember right now. Um, do you</p>		<p>Footing shift</p>	

Useful	think using this technology brings you closer as a couple?			
Initiation	005: Yeah. And I think you did ask that. Yeah. Um, I thought, yeah, you did. Cause I think we talked about the fact that she was the one that instigated the use of it. Therefore, um, you know, she's the one that put it forward. So I guess if you start using it, it's at one of the partners requests. You could be seen as supporting the relationship. And so, but yeah, I think so. Yeah. You've gotta be very careful how you, how you use it. You can't kind of, bring it up and say ' Oh this is what the app tells me, and this is what I'm expecting'. I think you're looking for a fight if you say something like that. So, yeah, I think you got to be, you've gotta be strategic, you know, relative to its use, so it could actually force you apart too.	She is the one that instigated the use of it, so if you start using it at the partner's request, you could be seen as supporting the relationship.	SP: the supportive partner	Using the app fits in with the SP: of the supportive partner – he is seen as supporting the relationship by doing something she wants
Support Careful		You've got to be very careful how you use it, you can't bring it up and say this is what the app tells me and this is what I'm expecting. You're looking for a fight if you say something like that. You got to be very strategic, or it could actually force you apart too.	Modal verbs	There are consequences/risk if one is not careful in the way that they use the app – using modal verbs 'got to be, can't'
Drawing conclusions Fight Conflict	INT: So in a way there is a risk if you, um, weigh in too much on what the app might be suggesting.		Agent distinction	The app is recognized as having power, agency, to force a couple apart if not careful.
Conclusions Listening	005: Yep. Yeah. Or use the app to explain everything. You know, you gotta make sure you're listening or you might just discount, discount what you're hearing as being, um, related to, to, to the time of the month or anything like that. Um, whereas it could nothing to do with that. It could be, um, something new or, or, or to them, or it's not related to, um, you know, the cycle.	There is a risk if you use the app to explain everything, you gotta make sure you're listening or you might just discount what you're hearing as being related to the time of the month, while it could have nothing to do with the cycle.	Modal verb	There is a risk in using the app to explain everything, in the app replacing the communication that partners should have – a warning, caution
	INT: So to wrap this up, the app can work as sort of a support to men to help them be prepared and see what's going on, but at the same time, it's not to replace the communication between the partners.		Footing shifts	
Communication	005: No, no, no. It's never gonna do that. Cause you, uh, you still need to communicate in order to, to deal with what's in front of you. The app doesn't do that. The app does not, does not, um, make up for good communication.	The app is never going to replace communication between partner because you still need to communicate about what's in front of you, the app doesn't do that, it doesn't make up for good communication.		Very strong perception of the apps limitations – where it's usefulness begins and where it ends.

	<p>INT: Okay. Is there anything else you'd like to add? Any concluding remarks, anything else that's relevant in your mind.</p> <p>005: No, I think we have canvased most things for me.</p> <p>INT: All right. Thank you so much.</p> <p>005: No worries.</p>		<p>Repetition</p> <p>Modal verb</p>	
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<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>TRANSCRIPT - MATT</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
	<p>INT: So thank you so much for filling the timeline. I see that in terms of, um, emotion it has been a bit of a, a roller coaster for you I see. I would like to invite you to speak to me maybe about the first point of the timeline.</p>			
Awareness	<p>002: Um, so I think, uh, I, when it comes to contraception in general, I think, um, [pause] I think I've become more and more aware of, of, uh, , how much of a burden of responsibility it can be, um, and how one sided that that burden is. Um, and also probably over time as well become more aware of just the impact, um, that it has hormonally, um, physically and mentally, uh, when someone is taking something that alters the natural, you know, cycle of their body. Um, and so when, uh, when I spoke to my partner early on in our relationship, um, about her, the way in which we were going to address, um, uh, that element of our relationship, I was really excited and impressed and, um, on board when she shared that she was tracking her cycle naturally using the, um, natural cycle.</p>	<p>Has become more aware about what a burden, responsibility and how one-sided managing contraception is for women,</p>	<p>Assessment Normalizing device – before now</p>	<p>Using normalizing devices to compare before – lesser awareness, and now – higher awareness, passing judgment on the lack of awareness and exclusion ‘one sided burden &amp; responsibility’ (on behalf of men), when it comes to managing fertility.</p>
Exclusion				
Health		<p>More aware about the impact of taking something that alters the natural cycle of the body.</p>	<p>EFC – just the impact, assessment Normalizing device – before, now Health discourse - Conflating health + naturally Preference</p>	<p>Judgment on unnatural forms of contraception – using EFC ‘just the impact it has hormonally, physically and mentally’ (discourses of health). preference for natural ways, makes it a choice.</p>
Excited		<p>Was really excited, impressed, and on board when she shared that she was tracking her cycle naturally using the natural cycle.</p>	<p>Constructing ‘tracking naturally’, Emotion category</p>	<p>‘Naturally’ as a choice and as preference becomes, constructing the preferred, healthy ways of managing fertility, where anything unnatural is undesirable and deemed unhealthy.</p>
Natural cycle	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . So was that the first time that you've come across this, uh, kind of tracking?</p>			<p>Expresses using emotion category how he felt about the idea when she shared it with him ‘excited, impressed, on board’.</p>
Natural cycle Contraception	<p>002: Um, I'm, I've been quite familiar with just working with the natural cycle as a form of contraception, but it was the first time that I had encountered someone who I was in a relationship with, um, who was using, uh, an app and, um, the sort of the temperature, uh, measuring tool first thing in the morning. Um, yeah. And so, yeah. Was aware that it existed, but yes, it, it is the first time that I'd been with someone or that closely attached to the use of it.</p>	<p>He's been familiar with working with the natural cycle as a form of fertility, bit this was the first time he encountered someone who was using an app and the temperature measuring tool.</p>	<p>Constructing ‘tracking naturally’ Trouble of speech Medical discourse?</p>	<p>Constructing what ‘tracking naturally’ looks like; involves an app and activities resembling medical assessment – a temperature measuring tool which is used first thing in the morning.</p>
Measuring				<p>Some trouble of speech when referring to the temperature measuring tool.</p>
First time	<p>INT: Hmm. So on the timeline, it starts quite high up on the vertical axis. Can you talk to me about what that means to you or what does that mean?</p>			

<p>Sharing</p> <p>Active involvement</p> <p>Conversation</p> <p>Sharing</p> <p>Exclusion</p> <p>Conversation</p> <p>Feelings</p> <p>Measuring</p> <p>Allow</p> <p>Inclusion</p> <p>Appreciation</p>	<p>002: Um, I think it was high because, I, I knew that it was something that we could share, um, um, because I was sort of actively, a little bit more actively involved, you know. And so, uh, first thing in the morning when the temperature was taken, you know, we're able to have a conversation about that. Uh, and then when it was sort of being tracked, I knew it was something that we'd have a bit more of an ongoing interaction with, rather than waking up, someone taking kind of a pill that, you know, and that was it. There was kind of no further conversation or no interaction really about it. It, it, it just, it was, um, one thing, or whether it was an injection or whether it was Mirena. All of those things are very, are very sort of one sided and there's not a lot of, you know, you can, you can discuss how someone might be feeling, um, but the fact that there was sort of a measuring tool that there was a tracking app, like a, you know, a journal or something. It allowed, allowed for my involvement, um, and to feel like I was a bit more a part of what was going on. And yeah, I, I, I was excited and really appreciative of that aspect, um, which is why I rated it really highly at the start.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . So can I just clarify, uh, when it comes to the tracking app, is there, uh, do you yourself have, uh, this app in your phone and make use of the sharing feature, or is it, uh, is it your partner's app and you're tracking it together on?</p> <p>002: Um, initially it was just hers. And then, um, we spoke about it and, uh, and so I have the exact same app, so it's not, it's not a sharing feature. I think we've just both got the same app with the same login.</p> <p>INT: Mm. Okay. So you've created your own version of, uh, of this, of sharing?</p> <p>002: Yeah. Yeah. I doesn't realize some of them had this, the sharing possibility. So it was, it was the way that we could get around it.</p>	<p>Felt excited and appreciative of being able to be actively involved, meaning that after the temperature was taken, they would have a conversation about it, having more interaction with partner.</p> <p>This is in contrast to when someone just takes a pill, or an injection, or a Mirena, there is no conversation or interaction.</p> <p>The app and the activities around it, measuring &amp; journaling allowed him to be involved and part of what was going on.</p>	<p>Emotion category</p> <p>Constructing 'sharing'</p> <p>Contrast</p> <p>Technologies of self</p>	<p>The experience of sharing is assessed positively using emotion category 'excited &amp; appreciative'. 'Sharing' is constructed/defined as active involvement, having conversations and interactions.</p> <p>This is in contrast to being excluded – 'waking up, someone taking a pill and that's it'</p> <p>The app as technologies of self seemingly facilitates inclusion, sharing, conversations, and interactions in the relationship.</p>
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<p>Initial excitement</p> <p>Downsides</p> <p>Boudaries/Spying</p> <p>Access Disconnect</p> <p>Disappointment</p> <p>Mood shifts Understand Hormones</p> <p>Disconnect Self- Regulation</p>	<p>INT: Mm. Okay. Yeah. So just going a little bit further along the timeline, I can see that there's a bit of a decline along the emotional, vertical axis. Uh, can you talk about that please?</p> <p>002: Um, I think, you know, after the <b>initial excitement</b> of, uh, transparency, you know, and being able to be more involved, I think it also, Uh, probably became a bit more apparent that there were <b>downsides</b> to that too. Um, and, uh, you know, there were sort of periods where I felt, um, I probably felt a little bit like, uh, um, [thinking and sighing] <b>spying</b> is not the right word, but, but. You know, I, I, it kind of went from open kind of communication to, <b>I had access to it, she had access to it, and so we kind of just accessed it separately and it kind of lost a lot of the, um, you know, the initial togetherness that, that I, that I had anticipated.</b> Um, and so, uh, I, I, I found that I ended up probably using it more when I was aware of <b>mood shifts</b>, and so seeking it to sort of understand if there was maybe something <b>hormonally going on</b>, um, and, but realized that I was really only using the app when I was experiencing, you know, a <b>disconnect</b> in the relationship. It was almost to sort of find, or just to justify or make sense or <b>see if I needed to change</b> the way that I was interacting with her during a period in her, um, in her cycle. Uh, yeah. And so, and so probably, you know, reflected a bit on that and, and it, it, it kind of detracted a bit from some of the initial excitement.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Mm. . So just to form my thoughts here, is maybe the, the decline in experience related to the experience with the use of the app or, um, rather to the learning, thinking, um and being involved in the cycle?</p> <p>002: Yeah, good question. Maybe, maybe a combination of the two. I think, I think actually the more I started being <b>involved</b> in the process, the more I was <b>involved</b> in the process. And so I kind of went from, um, being outside of the cycle and, and, you know, uh, to being, to being <b>insider</b>. And so I was</p>	<p>After the initial excitement of transparency it became apparent that there were downsides.</p> <p>He felt like, spying is not the right word</p> <p>Felt like having detracted from the initial excitement, and lost the anticipated togetherness</p> <p>He ended up using it when he felt disconnect or mood shifts, seeking to understand what was going on hormonally, to justify if he needed to change the way he was interacting with her during the cycle.</p> <p>He went from being on the outside, having no access, to being an insider with infinite access, and</p>	<p>Contrast</p> <p>Normalizing device – before &amp; now</p> <p>Reframing from spying, trouble of speech</p> <p>Contrast – initial excitement &amp; anticipation of togetherness vs Detraction from excitement &amp; separateness</p> <p>Lost – emotion category?</p> <p>Medical discourse</p> <p>SP: the self-regulated man</p>	<p>Using normalising device, the initial excitement of transparency is in a way reflected upon as having been mistaken, by making a comparison to the present where it is apparent that there are downsides.</p> <p>The initial feeling, although evaluated as not accurate, was a sense that he was ‘spying’, carrying with it connotations of wrongdoing, misuse, guilt</p> <p>Using the word lost implies a sense of loss, disappointment with what was expected versus what has come out of it ‘detraction from excitement and separateness rather than the initial excitement. Failed promise of the good life?’</p> <p>SP: the self-regulated man, changes the way he interacts with her during the cycle, using technologies of self to do so – drawing on medical discourse ‘something hormonally going on’ to justify his self-regulation</p>
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<p>Involved</p> <p>Access</p> <p>Too much</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <p>Too much</p>	<p>probably, I became, uh, hypersensitive to what was going on. Cause I, cause I'd come from a place of having no access to, to infinite access. Um, and it was probably too much access too quickly. Uh, and, and that coupled with, um, you know, perhaps, perhaps me having slightly more knowledge of some of the different phases of the, the cycle than my partner did. It, it, it felt, um, yeah, it, it, it felt like I had a bit too much it felt like I knew a bit more of what was going on than she was, and that, and that wasn't great at times.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . So, looking back at this point retrospectively, what, what do you make of that?</p>	<p>so became hypersensitive to what was going on. It was probably too much access too quickly.</p> <p>With his background, has slightly more knowledge on the different phases of the cycle than she did, and felt that he knew a bit more about what was going on, which wasn't great at times.</p>	<p>Contrast</p> <p>EFC</p> <p>Assessment</p>	<p>Assessing unfavourably the outcomes of being involved using contrast 'went from being on the outside, having no access, to being an insider with infinite access' and EFC 'hypersensitive, too much access, too quickly'</p> <p>Assessing unfavourably as 'not great' when he knows more than she does</p>
<p>Conversation</p> <p>Too much</p> <p>Access</p>	<p>002: In retrospect, I think in retrospect, I, I would have ensured that we sat down together and actually spoke about how we were going to, to, um, use the app together, what the information, you know, I, I, I don't, I think we, you know, there was, there was no clarification around that and um, I think that would've been really helpful. Um, and [pauses and sighs] I think, yeah, I, I, I, what I felt like it was that all of a sudden I'd been led into, to what had previously been a very, very personal experience. Um, and I felt like I had access to information that allowed me insight, but at the same time, I also felt like I was overstepping, you know, I was getting access to something or, or having an opinion on something that ultimately, uh, was quite a personal, was quite a personal experience? Does make sense?</p>	<p>In retrospect, would have ensured that a conversation was had about how they were going to use the app, as there was no clarification around that which would have been helpful.</p> <p>Felt like suddenly being led into what had previously been a very, very private experience.</p> <p>Felt like having access allowing him insight, yet at the same time felt like overstepping and accessing something personal.</p>	<p>Modal verb 'would have'</p> <p>Assessment 'helpful'</p> <p>Subject distinction EFC – 'very, very'</p>	<p>Using modal verb 'would have', implying the intention to have done something differently, assessing the alternative outcome as 'helpful', signalling a sense of regret about the current outcome.</p> <p>As without agency 'he had been led into', as if the use of the app can result in unanticipated and almost unwanted outcomes, emphasizing the significance of the situation using EFC 'very, very private experience'.</p>
<p>Double bind</p> <p>Double bind</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm, yeah. Mm-hmm. .</p> <p>002: Uh, and so I was, I, I felt a bit in a double bind of it's great that I have this information and I know my partner more. I want to be able to talk about this, but, what I wanna talk about, I know is quite a challenging conversation. Um, and so there were times where I appreciated having the knowledge and there were times where I, I almost regretted having that knowledge or that insight.</p>	<p>Found himself in a double bind – great having the information and being able to talk about this, but at the same time almost regretted having that knowledge or insight, as those conversations are challenging.</p>	<p>Conflicting ideas</p> <p>Conflicting ideas</p>	<p>Proposing the conflicting ideas that the app can evoke – allowing access while sense of overstepping/accessing something personal</p> <p>Proposing the conflicting ideas that the app can evoke – feeling great about being involved, while regretting the extent of involvement</p>

Regret	<p>002: Mm-hmm. Um, just a few moments ago, you've, um, mentioned that you turned to the app mainly when you were noticing some mood shifts. Can you, when you think about that, do you have any idea why that may have been?</p>			
Fluctuations	<p>INT: Um, yeah, so, so I, I think there were about three months in a row, uh, where quite significantly my partner had, um, really noticeable shifts, um, in, in personality and, and would, you know, really deep anger, um, sadness, despair, uh, . . . and there's no real obvious outward, um, connection to, to work or relationship or anything like that. And so I think I, I, I sort of mentally noted the, the dates. Um, and then,</p>	<p>Partner had noticeable shifts in personality, deep anger, sadness, despair with no obvious outward connection to work, relationship, or anything like that.</p>	<p>Medical discourse- symptoms</p>	<p>Fitting into the SP of the confused man, he is noticing symptoms (fitting into medical discourse), but is confused about the source of them.</p>
Symptoms	<p>yeah, and, and so that's probably where it comes into alignment with the tracking app cause now not only was I aware of that, there was this sort of monthly period, but I was able to, you know, connect it with whereabouts it fell within her cycle. Um, and, and, but it was a really, I felt like it was a really tricky, really sensitive conversation to have because here I was trying to invite my partner into, um, being a bit more curious about maybe, maybe she experienced more than just PMS and maybe there were elements of PMDD, uh, but it was, it was something that she wasn't open to looking at and so, um, that was hard having, having experience and, um, timelines and data and, and, and feedback that suggested there could very well be some. Yeah. Uh, but I felt like I was encroaching on her autonomy and, and in her space by even bringing it up because it was her body and her cycle.</p>	<p>He mentally noted the dates of the shifts, then with the app was able to align and connect it to where it fell in the cycle.</p>	<p>SP: confused man</p>	
Evidence		<p>Felt that it was really tricky, tried to invite partner to be more curious about possibly experiencing more than PMS, perhaps PMDD, but she wasn't open to looking at that. Felt like encroaching on her autonomy, space, body, cycle.</p>	<p>SP: the researcher</p>	<p>The app enables the man to be a researcher – it helps him explore and confirm what he might be thinking as related to the cycle.</p>
Confrontation		<p>This was hard because experience, timelines, data, and feedback suggested that there could very well be some [PMDD].</p>	<p>Medical discourse Emotion category – sensitive, hard, tricky Conflicting ideas – invitation to investigate vs. closed off conversations</p>	<p>The app creates tricky, conflicting situations – on one hand it invites research, investigation, curiosity on behalf of the man, which can end up being a cul-de-sac situation where she may not be receptive to having conversations about the results of the 'research', leaving him feeling like he is 'encroaching on her autonomy, cycle, body, space'.</p>
Evidence	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Um, so you've mentioned that retrospectively, you would've wished to have sat down and talked about what you were going to do with, um, the use of the app or how you treat the information that you have access to now, how you go about it. And I'm wondering, what, what was it that you actually did? How did it progress?</p> <p>002: Yeah. Yeah. So it was about that time that I, uh, purchased the book written by a friend of mine about</p>		<p>Scientific discourse?</p>	<p>Drawing on scientific/medical discourse 'PMS, PMDD, data' to explain shifts in personality.</p>

<p>Cycle</p> <p>Shared language</p>	<p>the different, um, seasons of, of the cycle. And uh, and it was, it was, it was a turning point in that it, it gave, it allowed my partner probably language, it invited us into a shared language space. Um, and, and she was able to maybe change the way in which she viewed her cycle. Um, and yeah, so, so I, I think retrospectively, I, I could have been, what I would've changed within myself is I would've asked her what she was comfortable with me, you know, how much, um, she was comfortable with me knowing and how she wanted for us to utilize this information. Um, because without that, you know, perhaps I, I became too invested. Um, and, uh, but. . but once we started having a bit more open conversations around, you know, sort of the natural shifts and seasons of the cycle, it started to open up space to be able to have more honest conversations about the shifts that were present. Um, and having the app allowed a bit more of a, sort of a, a close correlation to that. It wasn't just, um, theoretical chit chat. It was, it was able to be kind of matched with data. Um, and so that, that shifted things. Mm. In a positive way.</p>	<p>A book about the seasons of the cycle invited them into a shared language space.</p> <p>Retrospectively, would have asked about what she was comfortable with him knowing and how she wanted to utilize the information. Without that, he became too invested.</p> <p>Language space about the natural shifts and seasons enabled more honest conversations about the present shifts.</p> <p>It wasn't just theoretical chit chat, having the app allowed a close correlation with the shifts, matched with data.</p>	<p>Modal verb 'would have'</p> <p>Assessment 'too invested'</p> <p>Assessment 'natural'</p>	<p>Using modal verb 'would have', implying the intention to have done something differently, namely to have negotiated some boundaries. Assessing being 'too invested' as undesired outcome.</p>
<p>Boundaries</p> <p>Too much</p> <p>Fluctuations</p> <p>Cycle</p> <p>Conversations</p>	<p>INT: Mm. Yeah. Um, I'm not sure how to formulate this question now, but I caught, uh, the idea of, um, uh, having some sort of shared language, uh, or developing some sort of a shared language from the book that you've, that you've read. Perhaps I'm making you repeat yourself with this question, but in what way did that help you? Or what was your experience of attaining that language to, to speak with your partner?</p>	<p>It wasn't just theoretical chit chat, having the app allowed a close correlation with the shifts, matched with data.</p>	<p>Biomedical discourse</p>	<p>Back to the discourse of 'natural' – talking about the cycle in terms of seasons feels more natural, rather than labelling it through medical discourse as PMS/PMDD.</p>
<p>Evidence</p> <p>Shared language</p>	<p>002: I, it gave, I, I think within myself, it allowed permission to, to speak a little bit more openly. Because it felt, my experience was that my partner was less defensive when I was, you know, speaking about my experience, um, um, sort of throughout the cycle. And because I've, again, I'm only speaking from my experience cause I felt like she was in a, in a place of, um, a bit more comfort, uh, a bit more understanding and awareness. Uh, that it allowed for conversations that were less threatening, that felt a</p>	<p>The seasonal language allowed permission to speak more openly, his partner was less defensive, appeared to be in a place of more comfort, understanding &amp; awareness. Conversations were less threatening, he felt less like intruding, both got more curious, and it took away the judgement.</p>	<p>Agent distinction</p> <p>Emotion categories</p>	<p>No matter what language the couple chooses to speak about the cycle, the app anchors their understanding within the biomedical realm.</p> <p>Language is an active agent, it does things, it allows permission to speak more openly, makes people feel a certain way, and can mean the difference between 'threatening, defensive, intruding' vs. 'curious, comfort, understanding'</p>

<p>Understanding</p> <p>Boundaries</p> <p>Conflict &amp; defence vs Comfort &amp; curiosity</p> <p>Fluctuation Acknowledgement</p> <p>Symptoms Language</p> <p>Hormones</p> <p>Agency</p> <p>Cycle</p> <p>Symptomatic</p> <p>Language</p>	<p>little bit less like me <b>intruding</b>. Um, and, and rather, uh, you know, the two of us becoming a bit more curious, more <b>curious</b>, less <b>defensive</b>, and having shared language and speaking to, you know, the fact that it's a do phase or a give phase, or a take phase, took away a lot of the, uh, sort of, I guess maybe the <b>judgment</b> or the, um, yeah, uh, yeah.</p> <p>INT: Hmm. So if I come back to the timeline now, where would we find ourselves at and what is the next, next point, next significant point that you've noted?</p> <p>002: Um, where we are now is, um, I think what's <b>significant for me is</b>, is within the last week actually, uh, was the first time that my partner noticed the, the <b>shift within, the relational shift</b>, or started to, you know, to really acknowledge that she was feeling, um, a little bit off, was perhaps little bit more short and sharp than she normally would be. Um, and <b>used the language, acknowledged that</b>, you know, that she was experiencing a sort of a <b>hormonal shift</b>. Um, and, and it just, I think it was, in my experience, it felt a bit like a, like a <b>reclamation of, of her ownership and autonomy</b>. I think it was, it was her saying, you know, two weeks ago, she was in the do phase and was, you know, snapping orders all over the, but was able to just say, 'Look, I'm sorry, I realize I'm a bit short, I'm in the do phase. I just wanna get shit done.' Um, and it was, it just puts this, this kind of lens on everything, you know, we have a bit of a laugh about it and I'm like, 'Fuck yeah, you just keep on, you know, doing, you know, get, get it done. Just let me know how I can help out' [laughing softly], but without, without that, uh, without my <b>awareness</b> of where she is in the cycle and without her <b>language</b> to sort of share where she is, um, that in the past, you know, could have, <b>could have actually been detrimental to the relationship</b>, um, rather than, rather than sort of a positive element. So that's, so that's where are at, at the moment.</p>	<p>It's significant for him that last week his partner noticed and acknowledged the shift within, the relationship, that she was more short and sharp than she normally would be, used the language to say that she was experiencing a hormonal shift.</p> <p>Her acknowledgement felt like a reclamation of her ownership and autonomy.</p> <p>Without his awareness of where she is at in her cycle, and without the language, could have actually been detrimental to the relationship.</p>	<p>Contrast – threatening, defensive, intruding vs. curious, comfort, understanding.</p> <p>Normalizing device; before and after</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p> <p>Subject distinction</p> <p>Modal verb 'could have been'</p>	<p>Emphasises the significance of using a shared language when sharing menstrual information by comparing the before and after, where now she is able to acknowledge her hormonal shifts.</p> <p>She goes from being a subject to becoming agentic and autonomous.</p> <p>Using modal verb 'could have been' to relay the magnitude of detrimental outcome (to the relationship), that a lack of awareness or appropriate language could have.</p>
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<p>Cycle, seasonality</p> <p>Self-regulation</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Imagine</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <p>Experience</p> <p>Educational</p> <p>Understanding</p>	<p>INT: Mm. Yeah. So how much do you turn to the app now with where you find yourself?</p> <p>002: Um, I, I probably check in maybe four times a month, I think. And, and it, and it's, uh, well, yeah, maybe once a week actually. And, and it really is just to kind of remind myself. what, what <b>season of her cycle she's in</b>. Um, so I'm aware of, of how I can <b>adjust my behaviour</b> to be a little bit more, uh, accepting and, and understanding of where she's at. Um, and yeah, I've, I've found that at that, uh, just, yeah, that, that awareness I think has been, it's. . It's, yeah, it's, it's working well [laughing].</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . So if I was to invite you to, um, again, think retrospectively about using the app and bringing it into your relationship, um, what would you say, what would be the key points of your experience?</p> <p>002: Um, I think there's an <b>opportunity</b> for, uh, so, so just as, um, when you sign up to use the app, um, there's a bit of a guide, you know, 'this is how it works, these are sort of the steps, this is the A, B, and C', you know, and, and, and I think the precursor to that is my, my sort of <b>imagined reality</b> is that a lot of women that are using these apps already have a bit of an idea of, of their cycle and, you know, of <b>contraception in general trends, um, so going into it with, with a fair amount of knowledge and they're getting support when they're accessing and utilizing this technology</b>. Um, and I think there's a real <b>opportunity for men to have a similar experience</b>. And that as part of the sharing feature, um, there is, there is some kind of, you know, <b>educational element that brings men a little bit more into a place of understanding</b>, um, and maybe even has some kind of, uh, suggested communication, um, around, you know, here are some key questions or leading questions, or here's, uh, some recommended reading. Um, I think just to bring the couple into a space with both, uh, at a, at a, at a reasonably good place of knowledge and with an encouraged, um, <b>plan of how,</b></p>	<p>Uses the app once a week to remind himself what season of her cycle she is in, so he is aware of how he can adjust his behaviour to be a bit more accepting and understanding to where she is at.</p> <p>Imagines that a lot of women using these apps already have an idea of their cycle, so going into it with a fair amount of knowledge, utilizing this technology.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to have a guide about how it works with explicit steps, so that men can have a similar experience, involving an educational element to help bring them into a place of understanding, have suggestions for communication around some of the key questions, and have a plan on how to utilize the tool together to enhance the relationship.</p> <p>Otherwise, left to their own devices, it's at the whim of whatever is going on. If the relationship is bad, it can be used to weaponize the cycle.</p>	<p>Technologies of self</p> <p>Comparison – women's and men's knowledge on menstrual cycle</p> <p>Consensus?</p>	<p>Using app as technologies of self to self-regulate behaviour</p> <p>Using consensus to state what would be useful for men, on the basis of men generally having less information than women. As such, envisions that men would be welcoming an introductory guide when beginning to use this app.</p>
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<p>Plan</p> <p>Risk Explanation</p>	<p>of how they intend to utilize, uh, the tool together to enhance the relationship. Cause I think maybe left to its own devices, it it, you know, it's at the whim of whatever's going on. You know, if the relationship's bad, it can be used as a, as a tool that's sort of weaponize to say, 'Oh well this is because you are, you know, PMSing' or, um, yeah, I just, I think transparency is great, but I think there needs to be guidelines and support, um, as well. It's not just enough to have access to.</p>		<p>Contrast</p> <p>Metaphor</p>	<p>Otherwise there is a risk that the app can be used to weaponize the cycle</p>
<p>Plan/guidelines</p>	<p>INT: So, we're getting close to the end of the interview, lastly I wanted to ask whether the you think that the app has changed your thinking about your partner's cycle or body?</p> <p>002: Uh, it has, changed my awareness. I guess it's gone from, from, uh, sort of an objective removed awareness to, um, a bit more of a, a subjective, um, and involved awareness. And, and so, so I think it, and even simply with that, it's gone less from like, like almost a place of judgment to a place of, of, uh, compassion and understanding. Um, I, yeah, I, I feel like without seeing first-hand just how much is actually going on, just how much the hormones are jumping and shifting and switching and, you know, just, just how much change, uh, is going on at any one given time, it's given me a greater, um, empathy, I think for my partner and what she's going through and, and what the body's, what the body's going through. Um, and you know, when I compare hormonally what happens, it's sort of, there's a point of difference between the two of us. There's such a significant shifting of, of, you know, the environment with her from week to week. Um, and yeah, so I think I have, um, greater patience, greater, um, yeah, I said empathy before, but, but it's allowed me to be more accepting, I think, of, uh, the different spaces and places that she might be in.</p>	<p>App changed awareness, gone from objective removed awareness, to a subjective involved awareness. It's gone from a place of judgment, to a place of compassion and understanding.</p>		
<p>Awareness Involved</p> <p>Judgment Vs Compassion/ Understanding</p>	<p>002: Uh, it has, changed my awareness. I guess it's gone from, from, uh, sort of an objective removed awareness to, um, a bit more of a, a subjective, um, and involved awareness. And, and so, so I think it, and even simply with that, it's gone less from like, like almost a place of judgment to a place of, of, uh, compassion and understanding. Um, I, yeah, I, I feel like without seeing first-hand just how much is actually going on, just how much the hormones are jumping and shifting and switching and, you know, just, just how much change, uh, is going on at any one given time, it's given me a greater, um, empathy, I think for my partner and what she's going through and, and what the body's, what the body's going through. Um, and you know, when I compare hormonally what happens, it's sort of, there's a point of difference between the two of us. There's such a significant shifting of, of, you know, the environment with her from week to week. Um, and yeah, so I think I have, um, greater patience, greater, um, yeah, I said empathy before, but, but it's allowed me to be more accepting, I think, of, uh, the different spaces and places that she might be in.</p>	<p>Has greater empathy for what partner and her body is going through, seeing first-hand just how much is actually going on, how much the hormones are jumping and shifting and switching and how much change is going on at any given time.</p> <p>When he compares what goes on hormonally, there's point of difference between men and women. There is such significant shifting with her from week to week.</p>	<p>Contrast</p> <p>Normalizing devices</p>	<p>Using normalizing devices, emphasises the contrast of before the app 'objective, removed, judgment, and now, with the app as 'involved, subjective, awareness, compassion, understanding, empathy.</p>
<p>Hormones Fluctuations</p> <p>Body</p> <p>Hormones</p> <p>Gender difference</p> <p>Fluctuation</p>	<p>002: Uh, it has, changed my awareness. I guess it's gone from, from, uh, sort of an objective removed awareness to, um, a bit more of a, a subjective, um, and involved awareness. And, and so, so I think it, and even simply with that, it's gone less from like, like almost a place of judgment to a place of, of, uh, compassion and understanding. Um, I, yeah, I, I feel like without seeing first-hand just how much is actually going on, just how much the hormones are jumping and shifting and switching and, you know, just, just how much change, uh, is going on at any one given time, it's given me a greater, um, empathy, I think for my partner and what she's going through and, and what the body's, what the body's going through. Um, and you know, when I compare hormonally what happens, it's sort of, there's a point of difference between the two of us. There's such a significant shifting of, of, you know, the environment with her from week to week. Um, and yeah, so I think I have, um, greater patience, greater, um, yeah, I said empathy before, but, but it's allowed me to be more accepting, I think, of, uh, the different spaces and places that she might be in.</p>	<p>The app has allowed him to be more accepting of the different spaces and places she might be in.</p>	<p>Biomedical discourse</p> <p>EFC</p> <p>SP: the supportive partner</p> <p>Subject distinction</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p> <p>Biological essentialism</p> <p>SP unstable woman</p> <p>Normalizing devices.</p>	<p>The app allows for the supportive partner, using biomedical discourse to justify his position, recognizing hormones as acting agents 'shifting, jumping, switching', causing so much change at any given time (EFC).</p> <p>Drawing on biomedical discourse to make claims about gender differences, biological essentialism, constructing the SP unstable woman</p>

INT: Mm mm . All right. Thank you so much. Um, If, if you felt like we've, we've covered everything you wanted to say, uh, I'll switch the recording off now.

002: Okay. Yeah, that sounds good. Thank you for your time.

<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>TRANSCRIPT - JARED</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
Emotion Intention	<p>INT: So I can see that on the timeline, on the vertical axis, you've, uh, kind of added your own measure</p> <p>003: Where I added neutral, you mean?</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Yeah. . Do you want to speak to, uh, how you, how you interpreted the timeline?</p> <p>003: Yeah. I mean, it's pretty straightforward. I just added neutral because I would, <b>wasn't necessarily a question of being unhappy</b>, uh, wasn't necessarily the, the, the impetus for downloading the app, you know. Um, there wasn't like, uh, necessarily a particular issue that caused me to download it, you know, so that's why I added neutral.</p>	<p>The intention for starting to use the app wasn't necessarily a question of being unhappy</p>	<p>Assumption/disclaimer?</p>	<p>Pointing out that it wasn't necessarily that he was unhappy as reason for downloading the app. Could be an underlying assumption that the common intention for the use of this app is being unhappy?</p>
Aware Intention	<p>INT: And at the bottom I can see you've also added 'unaware of partner's cycle'. That relates to the horizontal axis, is that right?</p> <p>003: Um, Yeah, I mean I added that more as like a sort of intellectual exercise for myself though that's not actually true for, in my case, um, that I, um, I was quite aware of my partner's cycle prior to downloading it. I downloaded it for, um, other reasons. Yeah. We'll, we'll get into that, I guess as, as we go with your, your questions, uh, yeah.</p>	<p>Was quite aware of partner's cycle prior to downloading the app.</p>	<p>Psychological attribute?</p>	<p>Good identity = being aware of partner's cycle.</p>
Partners Awareness Sharing PMS Period	<p>INT: Okay. Um, so maybe do you want to start, uh, with the first, first point? If we follow the timeline as, as it goes across time, so the first point of any significance there to you that you'd like to speak to.</p> <p>003: Um, yeah, I mean, I guess as a starting point, um, my, I don't know, my, uh, situation may or may not be, um, different to many other, um, <b>partners who are interested in their, their partner's cycle</b>. Um, I have an <b>abundance of awareness</b> of my partner's cycle because she, uh, speaks to it a lot, um, each month, um, starting with, you know, the potential <b>onset of PMS, into the period, and all the details of, you know, how she's</b></p>	<p>His situation may or may not be different to partners who are interested in their partner's cycle.</p> <p>Has an abundance of awareness because she speaks a lot to it each month.</p>	<p>Category entitlement</p> <p>Psychological attribute?</p> <p>List &amp; completer</p>	<p>Working up the category of male partners, who are interested in their partner's cycle, those with good &amp; preferable identity</p> <p>Good identity = has abundance of awareness</p>

Symptoms	feeling and how much bleeding there is and all that stuff. So, you know, I've been acutely aware of that for, for years. Um, but yeah, so the first time I, um, heard of a period sharing app, I thought, yeah, I mean, I tend to,	Partner shares a lot, details like the potential onset of PMS, period, feelings, how much bleeding, and all that stuff.	Emphasis – acutely, for years	Using list (period, feelings, bleeding) and a completer (all that stuff), supporting the factuality and completes of his abundant awareness
Background	I tend to be quite, I think in my family, we're not as, my mom and my sister didn't really share much about their experiences each month of their cycle. And so now	In his family (mom & sister) wasn't much sharing of experiences about the cycle, and now his partner is very vocal.	Contrast	Contrasting used to emphasise the current situation over the past experience; growing up, information hasn't been shared, with now, where his partner is very vocal and shares all the details. Using EFC (all the details, every month) to emphasise the frustration
Sharing	with a partner who is very vocal about, um, her cycle, that tends to put me off a little bit. Like it frustrates me somehow to, to, um, have to hear all the details every month, if you will [laughs]. And I thought maybe the app might remove that, [pauses] might somehow shift my awareness by having a third party, like, remind me of certain things and maybe make me more sympathetic. Um, unfortunately, as you can see on my timeline, I was pretty disappointed in the features available in the app. Um, there's actually, the app doesn't provide really any information other than, uh, PMS and period. . And as we know, a woman's cycle isn't, uh, doesn't happen like, uh, exactly the same every month, right? There's kind of, there's changes. PMS may or may not be a certain number of days. The period and bleeding may or may not be a certain number of days. So yeah, I found the app generally very, very lacking and, uh, in detail in terms of, in terms of what it shares with the partner, you know? My partner is able to, uh, the app provides the part, my partner, a chance to put all this data in there about bleeding, about emotions, about all these things. But that is not shared with, with me.	His partner being vocal puts him off, frustrates him to have to hear all the details every month.	Emotion category EFC	Wishing for the app to serve as technologies of self, a 'third party', to help shift awareness, help be more sympathetic.
Frustration		Initial intention/hope for the app was to help build more sympathy, by removing the personal sharing and involving a third party.	Psychological attribute 'sympathetic' Technologies of self	The app did not align with the wishes to use it as technologies of self, met with disappointment.
Intention		Unfortunately, was very disappointed with the app features, it doesn't provide any information other than PMS, period, is very lacking.	Assessment Emotion category	Making a claim that everybody (we all) know that the female cycle is different every month.
Sympathy		As we know, the female cycle is different every month, there is changes in the length of period & PMS.	Generalising - we all know	
Disappointment				
Information				
Cycle				
Access	INT: Mm-hmm. .			
	003: Yeah. So I think as an overall impression, um, yeah, I, I found the app extremely lacking.	App is extremely lacking.	EFC extremely	Extent of disappointment emphasised using EFC – extremely, very very
	INT: Mm-hmm. Can I go back a little bit? Uh, just before you started using the app, you've mentioned, uh, that you had some hope for what the app might provide for you. Can you just speak to that a little bit more? What, what were your hopes?			

Shared space	<p>003: Yeah, so I think, you know, in a, in a partnership, in a relationship where you live with somebody in you're, you know, , um, <b>sharing space, literally sharing space</b>. Um, in my case, I've, I find that each, each month when my partner's cycle, when my partner's going through the, like, especially, um, in my partner's case, not so much the PMS, but the period part and the cramping and the, the pain. Um, she experiences acute pain that, uh, I think has been <b>diagnosed</b> as as more painful than the average, or the average person going through a period and she shares a lot of that with me and it causes, it causes a bit of like subconscious, it's not that I'm aware of it and get like consciously frustrated, but I think subconsciously it, it causes some <b>frustration</b>. So I thought the app might be useful and that it's not my partner constantly telling me about what she's experiencing, but then, you know, having the app remind me, uh, you know, <b>without my partner being involved, reminding me</b>, your partner's experiencing, for example, extreme bleeding along with extreme pain, and then that <b>being reminded by a third party could potentially remove some of that subconscious frustration</b> and remind me via third party, like, 'Hey, look, you know, your partners right now experiencing some severe pain because, you know, they clicked on this and put this data in there', and then I could then see that in the app and potentially be more sympathetic because there's a third party reminding me, 'Hey, your partner is suffering right now. Um, maybe you should do ...', you know, and then, then I could maybe think, 'Oh, <b>maybe I should do this or that to try and, you know, relieve some of that stress from the pain and whatnot</b>'. Um, but none of that data is, is shared with me. None of it. Yeah. So I think that, that's where I was a bit, you know, kind of disappointed in the sharing feature.</p> <p>INT: Mm, yeah. Mm. Can hear that the first impression of the app was, uh, fairly disappointing.</p> <p>003: Uh, yeah, I kept, I kept waiting for the app to, to give me like, you know, something like, uh, you know, where my, my partner clicks, you know, the, all the</p>	<p>In a relationship when living with someone you are literally sharing space and when partner experiences symptoms which have been diagnosed as more painful than average, she shares a lot of that with him, which makes him feel subconsciously frustrated, he's not consciously aware.</p> <p>Thought the app might be useful in that instead, the app would be telling him and reminding him what his partner is experiencing, removing that subconscious frustration and potentially being more sympathetic and maybe do different things to help relieve the stress from the pain and whatnot.</p>	<p>Repetition, emphasis</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p> <p>Emotion category Managing accountability</p> <p>Technologies of self</p> <p>SP: the self-regulated man &amp; the supportive partner</p>	<p>Speaker explaining the circumstances that lead him to feeling frustrated, managing his accountability for feelings of frustration towards his partner being very vocal about her symptoms. He uses repetition with emphasis 'sharing space, literally sharing space', leans on biomedical discourse 'acute pain diagnosed as more painful than average', and by pointing out that he gets frustrated not consciously, but subconsciously.</p> <p>The app serves as technologies of self to curate the response to the symptomatic partner, in this case to help be more sympathetic, which fits onto the SP self-regulated man. With having more sympathy, the man can then step into the SP supportive partner, and do different things to help.</p>
Symptoms				
Diagnosis				
Sharing				
Frustration				
Too much				
Remind				
Intention				
Self-regulation				
Access				
Disappointment				
Disappointment				

<p>Intention Sympathy</p>	<p>options that are there for the partner to click in terms of details on, you know, their emotions and, and their pain levels and all that, but none of that is that shared via the feature.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Um, do you believe that, uh, if the app was offering, um, more of the sharing features that you would be making, uh, more use of it?</p> <p>003: Yeah, I think so. Um, because, you know, like I mentioned, for me, I would like to be more sympathetic, if you will. Um, but the app hasn't provided that, that opportunity to be more sympathetic because all it says is, all it, all it shows me is a timeline that that's your, it's your partner's period, or your partner's PMS, you know? Um, uh, But I already know that. Right. So it's not giving me anything that I don't already know.</p>	<p>Would like to be more sympathetic, but the app isn't giving him anything he doesn't already know, so the app hasn't provided that opportunity to be more sympathetic.</p>	<p>Technologies of self The promise of the good life? Subject distinction</p>	<p>Agency is given away to the app, the technologies of self, with hope that it will act as if 'on behalf' and provide the opportunity to be more sympathetic with the vision of attaining a better life, failed promise of the good life</p>
<p>Information Disappointment</p> <p>Disappointment</p>	<p>INT: Mm. So when we, when I go back to the timeline, uh, can you describe to me how the process went, uh, from the time that you first opened the app and, how long did you use it for before you felt disappointed, and um, are you still using it today at all?</p> <p>003: Yeah. Yeah, so I think when I first opened it and, you know, clicked on the, well first it took me a while actually to figure out where the, uh, sharing thing is because, um, for that you have to actually go up to the right hand corner, click on the more, uh, more info or whatever and find the sharing feature there. Whereas on the bottom there's all those buttons, but those are actually for your own tracking, your own period. Right? And so it actually takes me, it took me even like three or four, five times into opening the app. I had to like really search for finding the, the button that was sharing my partner's details. Um, so that's not very self-evident. The first several, um, uses of the app. Um, but at first when I, Okay, I clicked to connect, and I see the timeline showing my partners, uh, PMS and period, um, I thought, okay, and then I thought maybe more information would be provided as my partner clicks on the different, uh, different details of, you know, how</p>	<p>Setting up the sharing feature is not very self-evident, it took about three, four, five times opening the app, had to search for the button.</p>	<p>Assessment – not self-evident Lists – three, four, five times</p>	<p>As part of feeling disappointed about the app, it is also assessed as not self-evident in setting up, using lists 'three, four, five times' to emphasize the claim.</p>

<p>Testing</p> <p>Disappointment</p>	<p>they're feeling and, you know, how heavy the bleeding is, et cetera, um, their sleep patterns and things like that. I kept waiting for that information to, to become available to me. And then I, after a few uses, I realized that's not actually shared. So, um, you know, and that I even double check with my partner, like, have you clicked on some of these things? Why isn't it sharing it with me? And so we sat together and she actually clicked on a few things to see if it would then share it with me and it didn't. Mm. Um, and so I think <b>that's when I realized that, you know, this app doesn't really have a whole lot for me.</b> Yeah.</p>			
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>INT: How long did it take, uh, before you realised this technology is not for you?</p>			
<p>Disappointment</p>	<p>003: Let's, let's say two, like two cycles cause the first one was more experimental to see it. And then I was waiting to see if the second time this for her second cycle that if, if more information would be available as the app like collected it. Um, and then when I realized that <b>it wasn't ever gonna share any of that.</b> Um, and then <b>on top of that,</b> um, the app was, uh, before I changed the settings on my phone, the app was sending me all kinds of notifications that were basically advertisements, you know, trying to get me to pay for this or that. And, uh, I'm not the type of person who's too keen on having a whole lot of notifications on my phone or advertisements [laughing]. So <b>that, of course, takes, takes away from the user experience as well.</b></p>	<p>On top of that, the app was sending him all kinds of notifications for advertisements trying to get him to pay for this or that. That takes away from the user experience as well. He doesn't like having a whole lot of notifications on his phone or adverts [laughing]</p>	<p>EFC – on top of, all kinds of Vagueness - this or that</p>	<p>Working up the level of disappointment in experience – this time speaking of receiving notifications and advertisements – using EFC ‘on top of, all kinds of, this or that’, and affect display in laughter, implying the irony of the situation; he doesn't like adverts/notifications, yet this app kept sending them.</p>
<p>Experience</p>	<p>INT: Um hmm mm. . So hypothetically speaking, if the app, uh, if it provided that information that you would've ideally wanted, how do you think this app could, uh, help the relationship? Or how, how could a relationship benefit from using this, this technology if it was more detailed or interactive?</p> <p>003: Yeah, I mean, hypothetically, I think if, if there were certain, let's say if you could disable all the settings that were notifying you of different ads and, you know, paying features and this and that, but if you could enable, um, notifications where while your</p>		<p>Affect display</p>	

Sharing Information	partner is going through their cycle, and the, and your partner is, you know, clicking on these different, different options that give a bit more detail on information on how they're feeling, um, and then that is then, you know, sent to, sent to the partner to me and I, and I get a notification of, you know, that my partner has used the app and, and has, uh, you know, clicked on, for example, lack of sleep or, you know, extreme pain and cramping and things like that, if, if the partner were then notified of that, kind of removing, removing the, the, the relationship, the, the discussion between partners and having a third party remind me as a			
Relationship	partner, you know, that my partner is suffering, that might, in my own space, that might provide me like a time to reflect and think, okay, maybe I ought to, you know, be a bit more sensitive. Maybe I should, you know, do a couple of extra things around the house or, you know, get the hot water bottle, you know, things like that. You know, just kind of a reminder for us less sensitive creatures [laughing] to, to, to do something a little extra, um, to, to make the partner, you know, feel like you're, you know, that you're aware of what they're going through. Um, I think that could, that could really benefit, um, certain couples, certain partnerships. Yeah.	Hypothetically, imagines that receiving notifications about partner's symptoms kind of removes the relationship and the discussion between partners. Hearing it from a third party may remind him that his partner is suffering, and allow him space to reflect, think, and be more sensitive, potentially doing a few extra things around the house, or get the hot water bottle.	Technology of self SP: the self-regulated partner, and the supportive partner	The vision is that as technology of self, the app as third party helps regulate behaviour, potentially enabling the SP supportive partner. Using list (do couple extra things, get the hot water bottle) and a completer (things like that), supporting the factuality and completeness of the supportive partner identity/tasks he can do.
Third party		Just kind of a reminder for us less sensitive creatures to do something little extra to make the partner feel like you're aware what they're going through.	Lists & completer – do couple extra things, get the hot water bottle, things like that.	Generalizing that male partners are less sensitive creatures (compared to women), supporting the necessity of the app as technologies of self to help the SP self-regulated man & the SP supportive man.
Self-regulation			Pronouns, footing shifts, generalization?	
Support				
Men?				
Sympathy				
Benefit	INT: Mm mm.			
Background	003: I mean, uh, I don't know. I'm also coming from a certain perspective, maybe cultural or otherwise, where, you know, to me it's, uh, it's obvious that a partner should be aware of that their, that their partner's, um, on their period or, you know, their period is approaching. Like to me that's a, that's a given. And so the app, to me, the app was only useful in so far as it could give me more than.	Coming from a certain perspective, cultural or otherwise, where it's obvious that a partner should be aware of their partner's period or when it's approaching, that's a given.	Script formulation	Formulating a script about certain cultures in which it is a given that a man is aware of partner's menstrual cycle, as if standard. Working up the category entitlement about cultures (or otherwise) where the awareness is given, identifying with it, and from that position, evaluating the app as not useful.
Awareness Partner	INT: Mm Yeah. Mm mm. Do you open the app now at all or have you stopped using it completely?		Category entitlement	
	003: Uh, I opened it a few times just, just to see if it was, um, um, recording and sharing more information. But every time I open it, all I see is that, um, uh, at some future point on the timeline, it says, you know,			

Disappointment	<p>'period'. And to me that information's really not all that useful. Mm. Um, because I'm, I'm already aware of that, um, more or less. So, and I don't, and you know, as far as the PMS goes, I don't know that that's, you know, even the, the period, it's not really. . It's not a, it's not an act, it's not a science since, you know, it's not, the period starts at the same time every month, or that the PMS is only x number of days long. You know that, that's, that's different every month and it's, you know, different for every person as well. I have a feeling, I don't know cause I don't have multiple partners that are sharing their, their cycle with me, but I assume it's, it's giving the same length of time for PMS and for period for, for all the users. Um, And I don't think that's really that helpful either, because PMS is, is different for everybody. It lasts maybe more than three days, you know?</p>	<p>PMS and menstruation, it's not science in that it differs every month and for every person and ... [the app tries to inaccurately predict women's periods and PMS on the basis of science ?]</p>	<p>Biomedical discourse Hedging 'I don't know, you know'</p> <p>Unsaid</p>	<p>Here the speaker is using hedging 'I don't know, you know, well I don't know because, ..but', to help manage his accountability in speaking up against biomedical discourse surrounding the app and the female cycle 'it's not science'</p>
Symptoms				<p>The rest is left unsaid, one can assume the speaker would have been trying to say that the app tries to inaccurately predict women's periods and PMS on the basis of science?</p>
Inaccurate	<p>INT: Mm mm. Do you think that, uh, you tracking your partner's cycle, with or without the app, or uh, maybe even the fact that you have given this technology a go, um, do you think that says anything about your relationship?</p>			
Relationship	<p>003: I mean, uh, I think it, I think it's, uh, I think it's kind of natural, um, that, that partners are discussing all kinds of things and how they're feeling on a daily basis. So I don't find it odd, odd at all that I'm, you know, that my partner is telling me, you know, about how she's feeling. And I don't find it odd at all that, that I'm aware of that to me, that's kind of normal and, uh, if there's a partnership out there where the, where the, um, the partner is not aware of the basics of, of their partner's cycle, then to me that's, that's a bit strange. Right? Um, so I don't know. I don't think it says much about our relationship other than that we communicate [laughing].</p>	<p>Thinks it's natural and not odd at all that partners are discussing all kinds of things and how they're feeling on a daily basis, and where the partner is not aware of the basics of partner's cycle, then that's a bit strange.</p>	<p>Assessment Contrast Script formulation</p>	<p>Formulating a script about relationships, that it's natural for partners to discuss all kinds of things, assessing it as natural and not odd, in contrast with men not being aware of their partner's cycle, assessed as strange.</p>
Awareness	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Yeah, you mentioned that you would find it strange for a, a man, uh, in a relationship to not be aware of the partner's cycle or communicate about it. Well, my follow up question was to be, uh, whether</p>			
Communication				

Background Contrast	<p>you think, um, it says anything about the kind of man that you are?</p> <p>003: Yeah. Mm. I mean, no, I don't think it says anything about me as a man. It might say something about me as a person and <b>what my own, you know, upbringing was like</b>, uh, you know, like I said, uh, for me there's just a, there's a big <b>contrast</b> in how my partner communicates about her cycle versus how I, the household I was raised in, or my, with my mother and my sister, who were far less communicative about their experiences during their cycle. Um, but at the same time, you know, Um, I'm coming from a, a, a <b>western background where, um, perhaps talking about these things, uh, related to the cycle and the period are not so taboo</b>. And on top of that, I, you know, I went to schools where it was part of the curriculum to, to, you know, we were, we were taught about, about periods and about PMS and about bleeding and about how it affects sleep and emotions and all that. So, you know, I've been aware of that as far as I can remember, um, those kinds of details. Um, so no, I don't think it's as much about me as a man, no. But maybe just my own life and experiences.</p>	<p>Maybe using the app says something about his upbringing, he sees a contrast in how his partner communicates versus how his mother and sister were far less communicative.</p> <p>At the same time, coming from a western background where talking about these things related to the cycle and the period are not so taboo.</p> <p>On top of that went to schools where they were taught about periods and about PMS and bleeding and it's effects and those kinds of details.</p>	<p>Contrast</p>	<p>Contrasting his upbringing vs his partner in communicativeness about the cycle.</p>
Background			<p>Script formulation</p>	<p>Formulating a script about the western world, where the topic of the menstrual cycle isn't so taboo, as if routine.</p>
Taboo			<p>Lists 'on top of that'</p>	
Background/education	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Hmm. Have you shared with anybody that you've, uh, tried using this app?</p> <p>003: I don't think so. No.</p> <p>INT: Would there be anybody that you wouldn't tell that you've use it?</p>			<p>Listing and compiling the evidence 'on top of that' to make his claim that using the app says something about his background, to make it seem more factual.</p>
Taboo	<p>003: No. No, not at all. I, um, and quite the opposite actually. You know, Um, I, if, if it ever came, if it ever came up in conversation, <b>I'd be very, uh, very open to talk about it with whoever. Um, I don't, cuz to me none of this is a taboo, taboo subject</b>, you know? And I do find myself, you know, with friends or you know, whoever mentioning, for example, that my partner's on her period. And I can tell that, you know, even my partner sometimes might be like, you know, automatically, put off by that because it is still by so</p>	<p>He is very open to talking about using the app with whoever, to him, none of this is a taboo subject. Even his partner sometimes might be automatically put off when he talks about her as on her period.</p>	<p>Contrast</p>	

<p>Generic/inaccurate</p>	<p>many people considered a bit taboo. Um, but to me, maybe one, one of my missions in life is to make people uncomfortable in, in certain ways [laughing]. And I think, you know, people should, shouldn't, it shouldn't be something taboo. It's something that, you know, half the world's population goes through every month. So, um, not talking about it or shying away from using the word period or bleeding or whatever is ridiculous to me. And that shouldn't be, it shouldn't be taboo.</p> <p>INT: Hmm. Um I think we've covered everything. Thank you so much for, um, sharing all this information with me. Um, before I switch off the recording, do you, uh, is there anything you'd like to add that you think is relevant, or any concluding remarks?</p> <p>003: Um, No, I guess I'd be curious to know of, in your, uh, research, have you come across any other apps that, that, uh, are more extensive in the information that they share with partners? Or is this kind of the best that's out there?</p> <p>INT: Um, there is, uh, one app that has got a different structure. It's, uh, one that, um, keeps track of, uh, four seasons, uh, of, the cycle, like the four different weeks, and every time the week flips over, uh, into the next phase, uh, like the luteal, the follicular, menstruation, or ovulation, the partner gets an email and they're quite long, informative emails covering things like what to do together, what to expect, cognitively and behaviourally from the partner even like when, when to have sex and what kind of sex works best and diet and, yeah. But I don't know if this information updates with, uh, every month or if every month you get the same email, that I'm not too sure about, but it's definitely more detailed.</p> <p>003: That sounds like generic, generic information. Not, not necessarily tied to data being input by your partner.</p>	<p>It shouldn't be something taboo, it's something that half of the world's population goes through every month, so shying away from speaking about the menstrual cycle seems ridiculous to him.</p> <p>Sounds like generic information, not tied to data being input by partner.</p>	<p>Modal verb</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>Assessment</p>	<p>Uses contrast of his partner sometimes being put off, to emphasise his openness towards to subject.</p> <p>Uses modal verb 'shouldn't', to insist that the subject should not be taboo, assessing the alternative as ridiculous.</p>
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INT: Yes. So there is a long way to go for all of these apps to uh, to develop, Yeah. To, to meet people's needs. Like say your, your needs from what you've described. Uh, it would need a lot more data sharing.

003: Hmm. No, that's, that's it for me. I think, uh, there's nothing extra that I would add.

INT: Okay. Thank you so much. Uh, switching recording off.

Generic information, not tied to partner's actual data possibly assessed as undesirable.

<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>TRANSCRIPT - KYLE</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
<p>Perspective</p> <p>Understanding</p> <p>Experience</p> <p>Prepared</p>	<p>INT: So please do tell me about the first point on the timeline.</p> <p>004: So I think the first point was when, um, uh, when my girlfriend told me that she was tracking her, her period, and I found it a bit weird that she was using all the apps and tracking everything. But then about, I think a few months into our relationship she showed me that the, the sharing feature. So I downloaded the app and it was interesting, even though I had been tracking her period in my head very loosely, with the app, I could see that there is a cycle. I was never taught at school or I had no idea. My previous partners never shared anything with me. So even though it was kind of strange at first, it was a window into a woman's cycle where I could understand some emotions and she was more open talking about it. So I think that overall it was a positive experience.</p> <p>INT: Okay. Um, so at which point did you start using the sharing feature?</p> <p>004: So it was about four months, five months after we started seeing each other. So I would say a year ago. Yeah, I have not been tracking it religiously, but now I know how long my girlfriend's cycle is, or knowing when, uh, when her time is so I can be prepared, buy her some chocolate or knowing what she needs. She usually tells me that she needs more, um, uh, not doing anything active. She is always very tired, so, and I'm a planner. I like planning things, so I make sure that I don't plan any big trips for that time.</p>	<p>Found it weird that she was tracking everything including her period</p> <p>But when he downloaded the app, he found it interesting and could see that there was a cycle.</p> <p>Previous partners never shared with him or never was taught it at school.</p> <p>So even though it was kind of strange, it was a window into a woman's cycle - he could understand some emotions and she was more open talking about it.</p> <p>He now knows how long his girlfriend's cycle is, knows when her time is so he can be prepared, buy her some chocolate or knowing what she needs, makes sure he doesn't plan any big trips.</p>	<p>Assessment EFC</p> <p>Normalizing devices</p> <p>Optimized living SP: the prepared partner</p>	<p>Uses EFC 'all the apps and tracking everything' to emphasise his assessment of her behaviour as 'weird'</p> <p>Before perceived it as 'weird, strange', former partners never shared, never taught anything at school. This is now re-evaluated and compared to now – it's a window into a woman's cycle, finds it interesting, can see there is a cycle, has more understanding.</p> <p>Fitting onto the narrative of optimal living and the subject position of the prepared partner, who is prepared for when her time is and then acts accordingly.</p>

<p>Perspective</p> <p>Advantages</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. Mm. So if I can take you back to when, when you first started using the app, what was the first impressions, if you recall?</p> <p>004: Well, my very first impressions when I saw her using it was, this is stupid. And thinking, why don't you live more naturally? Why do you need to track this? This doesn't make any sense. You are a bit OCD. That's what I thought. She was tracking everything. When I was using it, I obviously had to use it as a woman, so there's not much, the app that she uses and shares with me, there is not an option for a partner or for a man to use. And so the first, the first, uh, impression was a bit, yeah, I wasn't sure what to think about it, but yeah, with time I started to see the, the, the, uh, advantages of having it, of being able to see that.</p>	<p>First impression was that her tracking everything was stupid, why doesn't she live more naturally, doesn't make any sense, she's a bit OCD, wasn't sure what to think about it, but now that he uses it, can see the advantages.</p>	<p>Normalizing devices Assessment</p>	<p>First impression was 'stupid, unnatural, doesn't make sense, OCD, now reassessed and compared to the current impressions = can see the advantages.</p>
<p>Awareness</p> <p>Background</p> <p>Taboo</p> <p>Partnership/sharing</p> <p>Closer</p>	<p>INT: Hmm. So can you talk to me a little bit more about, uh, your journey from, uh, thinking the app is stupid, through to how you've come to think of it as useful?</p> <p>004: Yeah, yeah. It was also, when, uh, we started talking about having a family, so every now and then I check it or knowing when she had her period, then I look at the app a few times a month. I will check it so I can get a picture where things are, when is her ovulation, or she obviously taught me all that, I had no idea, we don't, we didn't have sex ed at school where we would be taught these things. So it was, it was really, it was really useful. I think it's also the openness about it that it's not a taboo. It always, it was always a taboo growing up and now realizing that menstrual cycle is not a taboo and that we should talk about it, and then the partnership, it's, that makes absolute sense to, to be able to know where the, the partner is to, to share these things. So I, I feel it made me, that it made us become closer. . So I felt, I felt more connected to her because I could understand certain things.</p> <p>INT: Hmm. So I hear that, uh, using the app in some way has, uh, maybe allowed for some conversations between the two of you and brought you, uh, bit closer.</p>	<p>When they started talking about having a family, checked it every now and then so he can get a picture of where things are at, when is her ovulation.</p> <p>Obviously she taught him all that, didn't have sex ed at school.</p> <p>It was really helpful, the openness and that it's not taboo because when growing up, the menstrual cycle was a taboo topic, and that one should talk about it, especially in a partnership, it makes absolute sense to know where the partner is at, to share these things.</p> <p>It made him feel closer, more connected, because he could understand certain things.</p>	<p>Optimized living</p> <p>Contrast Assessment</p> <p>Technologies of self</p>	<p>Using the app to potentially optimize sex life accordingly to achieve a successful pregnancy.</p> <p>Contrasts and assesses the lack of awareness and taboo surrounding menstruation with the openness and obviousness of being open and sharing especially in a relationship.</p> <p>The app as technologies of self provides understanding and as such makes him more connected to his partner.</p>

Relationship Depth	<p>Can you just speak to that a little bit more or is there any other ways in which this app has, uh, impacted on your relationship?</p> <p>004: I think it <b>deepened it</b> because you start Yeah. You see the person, there is more depth and, uh, knowing that, uh, some parts when she would be more closed off or crying like before I'd think, 'Oh, she's on her period', but actually learning that for her it's before she has her period, she's going through some emotional turmoil, so for me as a guy, what I can, <b>it taught me to be a better partner for her</b>. And, uh, because I know she would do the same for me and I want to learn about what she needs, what she wants, and understanding it, <b>I think it prevented a lot of miscommunication and assumptions that would otherwise happen</b>; that I don't take things personally or when she is more emotional. . I don't see it in a negative way, or I don't, and I don't think it's directed towards me.</p>	<p>The app deepened the relationship, because you can see the person in more depth. For example he realized that she experiences most emotional turmoil before her period, rather than during her period.</p>	Technologies of self	The app as technologies of self helps observe patterns, and thus helps see the person in more depth, leading to the deepening of the relationship.
Awareness	<p>INT: Hmm. So you've mentioned, mm, it makes you a better partner. , can you, uh, be a little bit more, is there something specific that you have in mind about what makes a, a better partner?</p>	<p>It taught him to be a better partner for her, he wants to learn about what she wants and needs, and to understand it.</p>	Technologies of self SP: the supportive partner	The app as technologies of teaches him to become the SP: supportive partner
Support Communication Prevention	<p>004: Mm, <b>understand better and be more thoughtful</b>. Um, . Growing up I always had problems showing emotions. I was never told how to express emotions, how to show them. And with her, I'm learning how to do it and with my, like, the way I show <b>love is giving and, uh, trying to make, make her feel happy, whether by bringing her her favorite chocolate or blueberries or something</b>. It makes me, I don't know how to, how to describe it, but saying that <b>I'm more alert at different times of the month</b> is more negative, but it gives me a, . I, I suppose it gives me, it gives me guidelines for how to do, how to be, and that's very useful, knowing what to do. Often I would like to do something for her, but I dunno how to or what to do. What exactly. And I know that <b>sometimes she's, willing to, or she doesn't want to say what's wrong because it's her emotional turmoil and I just know that 'Yeah, a bowl of blueberries will solve everything for her'</b> [laughing].</p>	<p>The app prevented a lot of miscommunication and assumptions that would otherwise happen, such as that he doesn't take things as personally or doesn't see her being emotional in a negative way, or as directed towards him.</p>	Technologies of self SP: the self-regulated partner	The app as technologies of self helps him become the SP: self-regulated man – he doesn't take things personally, doesn't view her emotional turmoil as directed towards him
Thoughtfulness	<p>To be a better partner is to understand and be more thoughtful.</p>	<p>Growing up he never learnt how to show emotions, and now he is learning how to do it.</p>	Technologies of self	The app helps him be a better, more thoughtful partner, and is teaching him how to show emotions.
Expression Support	<p>He is more alert at different times of the month, the app gives him guidelines on how to be, and that is very useful, knowing what to do. Often he'd like to do something for her, but doesn't know what exactly.</p>	<p>Building up the SP of the self-regulated partner who is alert at different times of the month thanks to the app he knows how to be and what to do (SP: the supportive partner).</p>	SP: the self-regulated partner & the supportive partner	Building up the SP of the self-regulated partner who is alert at different times of the month thanks to the app he knows how to be and what to do (SP: the supportive partner).
Prepared Sharing	<p>Sometimes she doesn't want to say what's wrong because of her emotional turmoil, and he just</p>	<p>Knowing how to be and what to do (getting her a bowl of blueberries) can help with her emotional</p>	Optimal living discourse EFC	Knowing how to be and what to do (getting her a bowl of blueberries) can help with her emotional

<p>Prepared</p>	<p>INT: So can I ask how often you engage with the app?</p>	<p>knows that yeah, a bowl of blueberries will solve everything for her [laughing].</p>		<p>turmoil – using an EFC to (will solve everything for her) to defend the effectiveness in his claim.</p>
<p>Awareness</p>	<p>004: I'd say a few times a month. Every, at least, every week maybe, sometimes, it depends because I look and I'm good at making a timeline, so I get an idea of, I, I look once and I get an idea of how the month goes. Or when I see her struggling or emotional, I, I go and go check the app if it's that time of the month.</p>	<p>Looks at the app once every week and then is able to make a timeline of how the month goes. Or when he sees her struggling or emotional, he goes to the app to check if it's the time of the month.</p>	<p>Optimal living discourse</p>	<p>The app is a tool that fits in within the optimal living narrative – he can use it weekly to help him keep a timeline of where she is at, or can use it to check if he suspects that it's the time of the month. The optimization is in the <i>knowing</i> or further in the optimization of behaviour, through SP's self-regulated/supportive partner.</p>
<p>Prepared</p>	<p>INT: So if there's some cues, uh, that it might be the time of the month, you go and check</p> <p>004: Yeah. Yeah.</p> <p>INT: Mm. Okay. Um, it sounds like you've had quite a positive experience with the tracking feature.</p>			
<p>Disappointment</p>	<p>004: Yeah, I think so. I, I wish there was, maybe it's coming, but having a sharing feature for a partner. Because she showed me that she, she shares it with other girlfriends and it's great, but she is in an intimate relationship with a guy, with me, and there is no option in the app to share it with a partner. So that, that would be more useful I think. Mm. Having that access to information from the perspective of a guy.</p>	<p>Wishes there was a sharing feature exclusively for a partner, to see things from a perspective of a guy. She shares the same information with her girlfriends as she does with him, yet she is in an intimate relationship with him, with a guy.</p>	<p>Category entitlement</p>	<p>Working up the category of male partners as someone who should have a privileged access to partner's data that is different (see categories like her energy levels, emotions, cravings), from the type of information that she shares with her girlfriends, on the basis that he is in an intimate relationship with her.</p>
<p>Access</p>	<p>INT: What is something that you'd like to see in the feature that is, uh, specifically developed for male partners?</p>			
<p>Access</p>	<p>004: Um, well being able to see what she tracks in all the time, in all the categories like her energy levels, her emotions, her cravings, for instance. I don't see that. You can't see that in the sharing app. In the sharing app, you don't see that. So I think it's limited in that way.</p>	<p>He would like to see what she shares in the categories like energy levels, emotions, cravings, etc. He doesn't see that, so the app is limited in that way.</p>	<p>~</p>	
<p>Disappointment</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Yeah. Do you consider that, uh, a downside of the feature?</p> <p>004: Yes.</p>			

<p>Gender</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Fluctuations</p> <p>Better person</p> <p>Body Fluctuation</p> <p>Support</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . . Is there any other limitations that you can think of in regards to this technology?</p> <p>004: Um, I can't think of any at the moment.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Okay. Um, wondering if the app, uh, has in any way changed the way that you think about your partner's cycle?</p> <p>004: It made me, I know it sounds simple, but us guys, we never track a cycle, we don't have a cycle. We are not, things don't repeat for us. So for us, everything is the same pretty much all the time. Uh, So I've realized with the app, I realized that women are going through these quite different states of energy levels and um, and emotions. And it actually helped me with my employees because I work with women and it helped me understand why one day they are acting this way and the other day they feel completely differently. And I think it made me not just a better partner, but also a better, uh, colleague and employer, more understanding. Um, and yeah, the app is sort of like a black and white tool that makes you see it, that it's not just talking. You see it in front of you, you see the, the, the cycles changing and you start seeing the patterns. And that was really helpful.</p> <p>INT: So, not only have you learned about your partner, but you've also been able to take this knowledge outside of the relationship, that it's been useful to you in your work as well. Has the app, uh, changed in any way, uh, how you think about your partner's body?</p> <p>004: Mm. I've noticed, uh, that she might be, she might retain more water during her period and it's, it's, it's incredible how it changes from day to day. . So, and I know that she might struggle with her body image during that time. Being more compassionate is . . . , and showing her and telling her that she's beautiful or, uh, every day or helping her see that it changes every month and I can see the change. But that's, uh, just the natural process that happens.</p>	<p>Them guys, they don't have a cycle, nothing repeats, everything is the same. So the app helped him realize that women are going through different stages of energy levels and emotions.</p> <p>The app helped him be a between employer and colleague, as he works with women employees, helps him understand why one they act one way, and another day they act completely differently.</p> <p>The app is a black and white tool, it's not just talking about it, you see it in front of you, the cycles changing and seeing the patterns.</p> <p>With the use of the app, he noticed that her body retains more water during the period, finds it incredible how much it changes from day to day. Knows she might be struggling with body image, so is more compassionate at this time, tells her she is beautiful, helping her see that it changes quickly.</p>	<p>Category entitlement Consensus</p> <p>Technologies of self SP: the confused man</p> <p>SP: the researcher</p> <p>SP: researcher</p> <p>SP: the supportive partner</p>	<p>Continues to work up the category entitlement of male partners, using a consensus to make a claim about all men as not having a cycle, nothing repeating for them, never track a cycle.</p> <p>The app helps him become not just a better partner, but a better colleague and employer. Here, the SP of the confused man is also being constructed, one day, the women are acting one way, then the other day they feel completely differently. Luckily, the app can help demystify this conundrum.</p> <p>The app is like a research tool for the SP researcher, it's not just talking about it, he has data</p> <p>The app and data has helped him study how she retains more water during her period</p> <p>The supportive partner is compassionate and compliments her when she's struggling with body image.</p>
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Closer	<p>INT: Mm. . Hmm. Has sharing this intimate data impacted on your relationship in any way?</p> <p>004: Overall, it was definitely positive. Mm. Because, as I said, it deepened the relationship and brought more understanding. Open conversations, uh, helped me talk more about my problems because it allowed me to see that we can talk about these things that they are not taboo. So it allowed me to be more open as well.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Hmm. Amazing. Mm. Do you think using this technology, uh, in your relationship and tracking your partner's cycle, using it, uh, says something about your relationship?</p>	<p>Has positive experience with the app; it deepened the relationship, brought more understanding, opened conversations, helped him talk about his problems, because it allowed him to see that talking about these things isn't taboo.</p>	Technologies of couples	<p>The app as technologies of couples, deepens relationships by bringing understanding, opening conversations about feelings, dismantling taboo topics And overall helps him feel closer to his partner.</p>
Closer	<p>004: I think it says that we are . . I never used it with other partners, and I definitely feel closer to my current partner. I don't know whether it's because of the app, but I think it helped because it's the level to which we talk and what we consider normal, as in normal conversation topics, and we normalize things that before used to be taboo or not talked about, and just seeing into each other's lives more, it deepens the, the connection.</p>	<p>Feels closer to his partner, the app helped with what they consider as 'normal' things to talk about, which in the past used to consider as taboo.</p>	~	
Normal Conversations	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Hmm. Do you think it says anything about the kind of man that you are?</p>			
Better boyfriend	<p>004: Hmm. I think it makes me, I hope so, a good boyfriend. Uh, somebody who is understanding and who is there for her. Yeah.</p> <p>INT: Mm. Do people in your life, uh, whether it's family or friends, know that you are using this technology?</p> <p>004: I don't think so. I don't talk about it with other men or haven't yet. Not that I try to avoid it, but it's just the opportunity to talk about it wasn't there.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Mm-hmm. would, would there be somebody that you wouldn't tell that you were using it?</p> <p>004: Hmm, Maybe, but I think I would talk about it with most people.</p>	<p>Hopes using the app makes him a better boyfriend, understanding, somebody who is there for her.</p> <p>He wouldn't avoid talking to other men about it, but the opportunity just wasn't there yet.</p>	<p>Promise of the good life Technologies of self</p> <p>Modal verb</p>	<p>Hope that the app, as technologies of self, will make him a better partner in line with the narrative of the good life – the idyllic partner is someone who is there for her.</p> <p>'Wouldn't' implicates speakers intention to openly talking about the sharing feature, should the opportunity arise.</p>

INT: Hmm. Okay. I think we've covered all the questions that I've had for you, uh, today. Do you think that there is anything to add? Anything that we didn't cover? Anything relevant?

004: I don't think so. I can't think of anything.

INT: Mm-hmm. . Okay. Well, if, uh, that's everything that I'm gonna switch the recording off.

xi. Transcript Analysis – Developers

OBJECTS	TRANSCRIPT - GREG	WHAT	HOW	WHY
<p>Excitement/cool</p> <p>Convenient</p> <p>Access</p>	<p>INT: Can you tell me about the decision to add the sharing feature to the menstrual tracking app?</p> <p>001: It was very simple ma'am, I created the mobile application, it was for just women. Maybe sometimes I thought how could I share it with my partner and wouldn't it be cool if I could use it myself and I could see this, what my partner has and so that I don't have to ask her all the time to share</p>	<p>It would be cool for him to use his partner's menstrual tracking app and see this. Then he would not have to ask her</p>	<p>Pronouns – it</p> <p>Assessment – cool</p> <p>EFC – all the time</p>	<p>Referring to menstrual cycle by pronoun. Too sensitive to label it?</p> <p>Making a case for adding a sharing feature – without it, he has to ask her all the time to share (EFC to demonstrate investment), assessing the idea of sharing as 'cool' – sense of excitement?</p>
<p>Convenient</p>	<p>INT: Oh right okay, so you are using the feature yourself?</p> <p>001: Oh yes for sure.</p> <p>INT: So how do you find it to be able to track your partners cycle?</p>	<p>It's convenient not having to ask.</p>	<p>Assessment – convenient,</p> <p>Script formulation 'have to ask'</p> <p>EFC – always</p> <p>Pause/hesitation</p>	<p>Having to ask constructed as frequent (always), routine, and normal.</p>
<p>Symptoms</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Information</p>	<p>001: I mean it's convenient, so that I don't have to ask always, and I can check the... mmm I forgot what you call it ... where basically the woman has the symptoms when she is not feeling good around her ovulation or period. So, this is small things, but you see it upfront, then you can make a flower, or be especially nice, or plan a trip, so you can just, yeah, without asking your partner always if you make something that makes them really happy just based on information.</p>	<p>He himself can then check and see upfront when the woman has symptoms or not feeling good around ovulation or period.</p> <p>Having this information available, he can then do small things to make them really happy.</p>	<p>Minimization</p> <p>Constructing identity</p> <p>Emotion category : really happy</p>	<p>Pauses and hesitation when speaking about ovulation, menstruation, symptoms – sensitive to speak about these things?</p> <p>The taken for granted ideas about women, menstruation, symptoms, and not feeling good.</p> <p>SP: the supportive partner, he optimizes his behavior and makes a flower, plans trips, or is especially nice when she's on the period, resulting in making her really happy.</p>
<p>Excitement/awesome</p> <p>Information</p>	<p>INT: So what made you want to start using the feature yourself?</p> <p>001: Yeah mainly because I thought okay, it would be awesome if I could see this information about my partner if she would like to share it, and then I would</p>	<p>Having this information would be awesome</p>	<p>Assessment : awesome</p>	<p>Expressing sense of excitement about the idea of seeing partner's information</p>



Convenient	<p>option to send to the partner, or it's a sync feature. Also talking a little bit to a trusted data base and such things, but wasn't a big hack</p>	<p>Sharing feature which is simple and most convenient is preferred</p>	Assessment	Simple and convenient is preferable
Love	<p>INT: When you decided to add the sharing feature to the app, did you envision a particular kind of person, particular kind of man to use it?</p>	<p>Inclusion of sharing feature is relatively easy; involves choosing between emails or sync feature and involving a trusted database.</p>		
Love	<p>001: Nothing in particular, just for a <b>man who loves his woman</b> [sighs and laughs softly].</p>	<p>The user of this app is a just man who loves his woman.</p>	<p>Emotion category: love Constructing identity Affect display</p>	<p>SP: the supportive partner, the man who loves his woman also tracks her cycle. Personal experience?</p>
Convenience	<p>INT: Aha, yeah! Did you so far get any feedback on the sharing feature?</p>			
Positive	<p>001: Oh for sure ma'am, several times, things like "It's awesome" or "I like it", but mainly it's questions when <b>something doesn't work</b>. That's usually when users write you back, asking how to do it. But if it's commentary, then it's <b>usually positive</b>.</p>	<p>Users usually provide positive feedback on app, or reach out when something doesn't work.</p>	Contrast	<p>When something doesn't work, it's inconvenient in contrast to the preferred simple and convenient app</p>
Predictability	<p>INT: Are you able to share with me a little more what specifically the users find useful or good about it?</p>			
Intimacy	<p>001: As I said, I think it's especially that you can <b>see the upcoming ovulation and period</b>, period maybe if you'd like to be intimate, and ovulation it's good if you want to have babies so you know you can go for it at this time.</p>	<p>The app offers predictability for when it's possible to be intimate (outside of period), and for ovulation when wanting to have babies.</p>	<p>Promise of predictability</p>	<p>The app supports optimized living, one can predict and plan ahead of time if wanting to be intimate or have babies.</p>
	<p>INT: Are you able to share with me the percentage of app users that make use of this particular sharing feature?</p>		Agency	<p>Also, the app is in a way as the judge for the couple, allowing/determining when the couple should and should not be intimate?</p>
	<p>001: No, I cannot share that, I do not have special tracking for that.</p>			
	<p>INT: Okay, no problem. So, you talked about some of the benefits of this feature, are you aware of any weaknesses or downsides of this feature?</p>			
	<p>001: Hmm, I mean if you make it through sync, then there is a partner change and sometimes by accident</p>			

<p>Convenience</p>	<p>and the other doesn't know it and there is confusion. So sometimes I even had cases where one partner deleted by accident the data thinking that he didn't need it, but he forgot that his partner's data got also deleted. So mmm ... this is small things that can happen, but it's not so often, I hope so.</p> <p>INT: I see, yeah! I asked you this question personally, but I am wondering on your thoughts in the role as developer – do you think this feature can enhance a relationship in a heterosexual couple?</p>	<p>The sync feature carries with it the risk of confusion when there is a partner change, or deleting other person's data.</p> <p>These are small things that do not happen too often.</p> <p>I hope so.</p>	<p>Contrast</p> <p>Minimization of risk</p> <p>Personal interest</p>	<p>Contrasting view of the preferred simple &amp; convenient app to the app that causes confusion among partner change &amp; accidental loss of personal data between users.</p> <p>The risk of these occurrences is downplayed 'small things, not so often', although unsure about the statement 'I hope so', also points to personal intentions and wishes, that this does not occur, having best interest at heart.</p>
<p>Predictability</p> <p>Stress/duty</p> <p>Convenience</p>	<p>001: Yeah, that's what I meant in my former answers, that the <b>man can plan ahead</b> and a <b>woman can be relieved of stress, or not always having to think about "Oh I have to tell my partner, I have to tell my partner"</b>. She can let go and say "okay, he has possibilities now to access it and trust him with it, and it keeps her head free".</p>	<p>The app can enhance a couple in that the man can plan ahead, and the woman is relieved from stress of thinking about telling her partner. She can let go, keep her head free, when he has the possibility of accessing it himself and trusting him with it.</p>	<p>Promise of predictability, optimized living discourse</p> <p>Script formulation, EFC, repetition</p> <p>Promise of the good life.</p>	<p>Promise of predictability, certainty, 'the man can plan ahead', makes it look easy, reliable.</p> <p>Constructs the idea of sharing without an app as a chore/duty 'I have to tell', scripting the woman using EFC as always having to think about telling him, emphasized by repetition, as if this how her thoughts sounded in her head.</p>
<p>Trust</p>	<p>INT: How do you think that this feature maps onto the current gender relations?</p>			<p>The app takes away this stress 'she can let go and keep her head free', because the app does the duty/chore for her. Promise of the easy, stress-free life.</p>
<p>Gender</p>	<p>001: I mean this feature is in that case <b>just for two beings</b> I would like to say, who has the opportunity to share this, whether the other person is woman or man, another gender, or other possibilities that we have, it is actually not important. Just the possibility, <b>a practical feature to share information</b> with someone else, to have some <b>benefit</b> out of it.</p>	<p>The app can be used by any two beings, regardless of gender.</p>	<p>Idea of feature's users</p> <p>De-emphasis</p>	<p>Envisioning idea of the feature's users, in which gender is de-emphasized, while main emphasis result focused – 'having some benefits out of it'.</p>
<p>Convenience/Benefits</p>	<p>INT: Hm, fantastic. Do you think that this feature allows for your app to stand out from others?</p>	<p>As long as there is benefits.</p>	<p>Refocus &amp; emphasis of benefits and possibilities</p>	
<p>Competition</p>	<p>001: No, I mean every feature that's good stands out a little bit, but I am not comparing myself with other applications too much. It's simply because I started this and marketed in 2008, there was no other mobile period/ovulation calendar and then after this for sure I got myself competition. Whenever I make something new, it gets copied within a week, so I gave up on the idea because when it came out, the challenge that I had was that we'd have to copy their</p>			

	<p>features and it would be just a run after the other ones, and usually I like to create new and innovative things. That's why I came with the application so early, I created the application on Android and saw that iPhone doesn't have anything, and then creating new features, that was my fun. But now the market is so crowded, there is so many other applications available. Apple itself even implemented some feature into the iOS system. So, we will see, there will come more things in the future, I am very optimistic here, but now I think I missed the question, sorry [laughing].</p>	<p>New apps copy each other's features, competing among one another and making the market for apps crowded.</p>		
Hope	<p>INT: No that's fine, thank you for sharing that. When I searched I only found 7 apps that currently offer some form of partner-share feature. You mentioned that adding this feature into the app was quite personal for you in that you wanted to share with your partner, right? Do you think other apps differ in their purpose of launching this feature?</p>	<p>Optimistic for more things coming in the future</p>	<p>Emotion category</p>	<p>Personal investment, hopeful and optimistic about more things coming in the future.</p>
Support	<p>001: Honestly, I cannot say what was the reason when I created the app in 2008. I was a programmer for thirty years and then mobile phones came out and I wanted to create something to play around with, some apps for kids and creating. But then I had a teacher who said to create something to support women. And I thought Okay, and looked what was there on the market and there was nothing there, there was very little for women to try. It was something like Excel sheet, or not an excel sheet, it was a list, where you can add the start of the period and then it adds another list. But it wasn't a calendar, and it had no other feature. So, I thought, that is cool for women, it's practical, it is very liked and I can make it better most important ... I can make the calendar, I can add features like to add tracking for fertility, sex, or , whatever. So I thought something like a calendar, yeah okay, I can do that. So I thought I can do this, and then I thought I can add other service, like service for the woman and the partner. And then it was advertising free for the first two years, so it wasn't about money. Then when I</p>	<p>The idea to launch a period tracking app was in aim to support women, as there was very little for women to try.</p>	<p>Personal intentions EFC: nothing there</p>	<p>Constructs rationale behind launching a period tracking app as 'in support' of women. Passes judgment on the lack of support available at the time 'nothing there' EFC</p>
Innovation				
Convenience		<p>Despite being basic, these apps were very liked by women. He thought it was cool, practical, and could make them better, including by adding a partner share feature.</p>	<p>Narrative structure: rationale for launching  Assessment</p>	<p>Rationale cont.: Innovation and betterment of these apps and features are in line with supporting women: they are liked, cool, and can be made better, then women can track fertility, sex, or whatever, and share with partners.</p>

<p>Monetization Engagement</p>	<p>thought about monetizing it and I added advertising, I saw that the user engagement went immediately down because they don't like to see advertising. But at the same time, I had to realize that ultimately I will have to pay for advertisement-free. So that's an interesting aspect of it, 99% of monetizing is the advertising, because very few people like to spend two dollars, and then they keep on the advertising and then complain about it. So this is something, I had to say to myself <b>Okay, I can only do my best here</b>. But yeah, I am now working on some new ideas that can hopefully benefit. I don't like to make it too public, but it is new technologies and let's see, the space of the mobile market is very interesting.</p> <p>INT: I respect that you like to keep private your latest developments, but are you able to share with me if what you are working on has anything to do with a partner-share feature or if you intend to develop this feature further?</p> <p>001: I am thinking about something more underlying that opens possibilities in more directions, but then also things like partner-sharing. As I said, it's a very early development.</p> <p>INT: Okay, well I have exhausted the questions that I wanted to ask you, thank you so much for your time.</p>	<p>First two years weren't about money, it was made available for free.</p> <p>Most users enjoy the tracking app when it's free and without adverts, otherwise user engagement goes down because very few people like to spend two dollars</p> <p>He can only do his best</p>	<p>Contrast</p> <p>Stake inoculation</p>	<p>Contrasting the preferred convenient and practical app to the inconvenience of advertisements and monetization</p> <p>Expressing personal investment, in doing his best.</p>
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<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>TRANSCRIPT – LIAM</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
User experience	<p>INT: So tell me please a little bit about how this all came about.</p> <p>012: Uh, well, I'm not sure how it started exactly. Anna [pseudonym] contacted me because she had an idea to build that kind of an app. Uh, she already had the designs for them, and I think there might even have been a, uh, first prototype or something. And it was, uh, originally a school project, I think, for her. And she contacted me to help her build it, because back then I was a software engineer, and, uh, yeah. So I was, we met and we, and we talked and, and seemed like, you know, we could really enjoy working together and seemed like a really cool idea. So, uh, you know, I, I got on board with that.</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. So, um, you were, the part that you were playing in this was, you were developing the app, the technicalities of it?</p> <p>012: That's right. Yeah.</p> <p>IT: Um, so what was the process like to, uh, to get this app up and running?</p> <p>012: Well, um, let's see. So we never actually got to the point where it was fully deployed and operational. So I think what was happening is that, um, she was finishing her studies. I was doing my Masters at the time, and um, I started, you know, we started building it together with her and, uh, we got to a prototype, so it was, you know, your regular product work, right? Where, um, you meet you, you discuss how some features are gonna look like, uh, <b>what it should feel like to the user, what the user experience should be.</b> And then I was, uh, coding it up and at the end by, by the time we kind of, well at least, I'm not sure if Anna stopped working at it on it at the same time, but I've stopped working at it about the same time when, when I, um, reached the end of my master's program. It, uh, you know, it was like a working prototype, um, that they could test out and, and kind of kind walk around.</p>	<p>Launching a sharing involves discussing what user experience, what it should feel like to the user.</p>	<p>Modal verb – should As part of a rationale?</p>	<p>The modal verb ‘should’ implicates the app developer’s intention for launching, simultaneously constructing the person who uses the app, how they should feel and what their experience should look like.</p>

<p>Successful Business Cool Values Practical/useful</p>	<p>INT: Mm-hmm. . So was there any particular reason why the app, uh, never launched or is it because, as you mentioned, you both reached the end of your studies?</p> <p>012: I'm not sure why exactly. What was the rationale on Anna's side? Uh, on my side, my, um, circumstances have changed a bit, so I kind of was leaving the States for a while, uh, going to another country and, uh, doing, basically I was doing other work at the time, so, we kind of, you know, agreed that I wouldn't be able to continue doing that work anymore. Um, and so that was that for me.</p> <p>INT: Okay.</p> <p>012: Um, yeah. And then, and then, and then, you know, Anna kind of what, whatever, whatever she was doing after that, that was, Hmm. I'm, uh, I'm not entirely certain.</p> <p>INT: So as a, um, as a software, uh, engineer or developer, which was your role, if I'm correct? Um, what was the, in your mind, what was the business viability of this app?</p> <p>012: Oh, I think, um, further events kind of shown that the, the viability was, was there, right? Because there's, I think, at least a couple of successful apps that are doing this right now, that have grown into, uh, you know, full businesses, like full businesses. So as a, as a, as an engineer, I wasn't necessarily there to judge business viability of, of the thing. I liked the idea personally, I thought I was kind of cool. I, I enjoyed the challenge of building it. Um, back then I did not know anything or almost anything about business/ Uh, so, you know, I, I was looking at it from a, from two sides, right? First purely engineering perspective, building it. Second is kind of a values, um, perspective, right? Whether I would, I could see this app doing good or whether I could see this app being useful to somebody. And I kinda like that idea as well. So, that was, that was my take on it.</p> <p>INT: Can you speak to that a little bit more? Uh, your words that you found it kind of cool and that you liked it personally. Uh, can you develop that thought a little bit more? What was it that you liked?</p>	<p>At least a couple of sharing apps have grown to full businesses, having success.</p> <p>Thinks it's a cool idea, likes it.</p> <p>Enjoyed building it on the basis of values perspective, envisioning the app as being useful to somebody.</p>	<p>Assessment – successful Repetition, emphasis?</p> <p>Emotion category – like Assessment – cool</p> <p>Personal values</p>	<p>Repetition emphasises the magnitude of the business potential of these apps, assessing them as successful and viable.</p> <p>There are personal motivations, emotions, and values involved in launching a sharing app, got to like it and/or think it's a cool idea, got to align with one's values – in this case, envisioning that the app would be useful to somebody.</p>
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<p>Benefits</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Understanding</p> <p>Empathy</p> <p>Awareness</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Understand</p> <p>Perception</p> <p>Sexuality</p> <p>Connect</p> <p>Gender/women</p> <p>Gender/men</p> <p>Ignorant</p> <p>Inclusivity</p> <p>Benefit</p> <p>Sexuality</p> <p>Careful</p> <p>Honesty</p> <p>Accurate</p>	<p>012: Sure. Um, so the idea of the app was helping, um, a partner or partners in a couple, kind of, [laughs] well better communicate to, uh, on the, on the, on the subject of, you know, monthly periods. Right? And especially help men better understand what women are going through regularly. And hopefully, at least that was my take, help them be more empathetic and sensitive, uh, in those times and, and overall to kind of raise the awareness and hopefully provide some educational value there as well, although that was not the, the primary focus, right? Um, and, and just kind of be there to explain and to help men understand what's actually happening because not a lot, my perception is that not, you know, some, well, at least some don't really understand and the topic is somewhat taboo. Right? So that was, that was the idea.</p> <p>INT: Hmm, hmm. So, uh, from what you're saying, you envisioned a heterosexual couple using this app?</p> <p>012: Um, well, To be honest with you, that was at the time my primary vision, or not vision, but perception. Um, and I, I think the reason for that being that, um, and those are just my assumptions, right, at the time, that, uh, in a homosexual couple there is hopefully, or, or there, in my kind of view at the time it appears, I, I think there's more connect on that topic and more understanding, um, in, in, in, uh, women to woman relationship. Right. Uh, or, uh, whereas men, once again, from my perspective, sometimes are more, could be more ignorant on the subject and so, you know, even if our app would be, end up, would end up being used by, you know, all kinds of couples, which would be great, I think the primary value of it would be felt in a heterosexual couple. . Sorry, I'm trying to be, [laughing] I'm trying to be as careful with wording as I can as well.</p> <p>INT: Yeah. Uh, you can, uh, I can assure you, you can relax. There is no, no judgment whatsoever. It's, I'm not here to grill you or to judge you [laughing].</p> <p>012: That's okay. I'm just, I'm just genuinely trying to express my, um, you know, thoughts on the, on the matter as, as ac as accurately and, and, and, and, you know, kind of correctly as possible. Right?</p> <p>INT: And that's great. That's exactly what, uh, what I'm after. Yeah. Thank you so much. So, um, with the vision of the app</p>	<p>The idea/purpose behind the app is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Help better communicate about periods,</li> <li>- Especially help men better understand what women are going through regularly, help them be more empathetic and sensitive.</li> <li>- To raise awareness and provide educational value, although not primary focus.</li> <li>- Help men understand what's actually happening because not a lot of men, or some men don't and the topic is taboo.</li> </ul> <p>Primary vision -&gt; perception that app is intended for heterosexual couple.</p> <p>In a female homosexual couple there is more connect and understanding on the topic.</p> <p>Whereas men could be more ignorant on the subject.</p> <p>While app is inclusive to couples of different sexualities, primary value would be felt in a heterosexual couple. Trying to be careful with wording.</p> <p>Trying to express thoughts on the subject genuinely, accurately and correctly.</p>	<p>Building a rationale</p> <p>Psychological claim about relationships</p> <p>Psychological attribute claim about men</p> <p>~</p> <p>~</p> <p>Reframing from not a lot of men to some men, using disclaimer 'my perception is'</p> <p>Reframing vision to perception</p> <p>Disclaimer 'those are just my assumptions'</p> <p>Claim about gendered characteristics</p> <p>Disclaimer 'from my perspective'</p> <p>Claim about gendered characteristics</p> <p>Vision</p> <p>Affect display – worried, careful</p> <p>Trouble of speech</p> <p>Just – disclaimer?</p> <p>Trouble of speech</p>	<p>The rationale for building such an app is based on these problematics: that couples may lack the ability to communicate well on the topic that men don't understand well what women are going through monthly that men lack sensitivity and empathy that men are lacking awareness and education on the topic that most men generally don't understand what is happening largely due to the taboo nature of the topic Mitigating potentially negative interpretations of making a claim about men by making a disclaimer that it is 'my perception', also by reframing from not a lot of men to some men – makes it seem more probable? Minimising the perceived investment in the matter by reframing from vision to perception, mitigating potentially negative interpretations of making claims about sexuality 'those are just my assumptions'</p> <p>~</p> <p>Genealogies – women are more understanding, while men are more ignorant</p> <p>Vision for the app to be most valuable in heterosexual couples</p> <p>Makes it dangerous to talk about sexuality, one needs to be careful when doing so.</p> <p>Mitigating potentially negative accusations of doing anything else but being genuine, accurate, and correct.</p>
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<p>Uneducated Perception Men Connect  Support  Connect Closer  Couple</p>	<p>users being a, a heterosexual couple, did you envision a particular kind of user? When it comes to men?</p> <p>012: Uh, what do you mean by a particular kind of user?</p> <p>INT: Mm-hmm. . Did you maybe, uh, was there like a target audience, uh, among men that you would be, that you envisioned would be using this app? Say in terms of, uh, age or ethnicity, or . ?</p> <p>012: Oh I see. To be honest, I'm not in a great position to answer that because, um, [long pause] I think would, I didn't get to a point where it would matter, so we were, or I was building the kind of the base version of the app right? Where, um, without necessarily having, having to tailor it to different social or social demographics or, uh, other, you know, different ages, occupations, whatever. So the, the first task that I was working on was building the base version of it, Right. The MVP.</p> <p>INT: Okay. Mm. So if we, if we come back perhaps to your mm, personal perception of, of this feature, of this app, what do you think, uh, could have been some benefits or are some of the benefits for, for couples or for men particularly?</p> <p>012: Um, so those are, I'm very uneducated on the topic, right? So those are just my kind of innate preconceptions and . I think that it, firstly, and, and, and mainly I think it would help, uh, men in, in, in, in such couples to, um, be on the same wavelength, I wanna say, with their partners and uh, hopefully help them kind of understand if there are such moments where their partner need slightly more support or maybe, you know, um, a little more attention. And through that improving, or not improving, but like, , you know, facilitate or, or, or, or just get close, grow closer in that relationship. Right? So that's my, that, that's like the very general kind of idea that I get right now thinking about it, right? So if I was in a couple having an app like this, I think that - and I've never, by the way I, after that I haven't used such an app . .</p> <p>INT: I was going to ask, yeah, I was curious if you used it yourself.</p> <p>012: I, I didn't get to, Not really. Um, and, uh, but if I'd used one, right, I imagine that it would help me to kind of, to, to maybe</p>	<p>Uneducated, but having preconceptions that the app would help men to be on the same wavelength with their partner, and help them understand if there are moments where partner needs more support/attention.</p> <p>As such, the couple grows closer together</p>	<p>Disclaimer – just my innate preconceptions</p> <p>Trouble of speech Constructing identity</p> <p>Narrative structure</p>	<p>Mitigating potentially negative interpretations of making generic claims about men.</p> <p>SP: the supportive partner – the app can help them in picking the moment to be supportive and attentive</p> <p>If – then. If the couple uses the app, they grow closer together.</p> <p>As if missed out on? Wishes to have done so?</p>
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<p>Opportunity</p> <p>Understand Condition Communication Discomfort Understanding</p> <p>Conversation</p> <p>Consent</p> <p>Appropriate</p> <p>Conversation Decision</p> <p>Enable</p> <p>Conversations Relationship Transparency Understanding</p>	<p>understand some of the things about my partner or her condition that, um, she might not necessarily want to talk to me about, or she might not necessarily feel comfortable talking to me about and, and, and that, but, but, but still would like me to know, you know if that makes sense, or to take into account. So, so that's what I think, yeah, about that.</p> <p>INT: Mm mm. So in practice, perhaps, if we speak a little bit more specifically about the, the benefits, or using your words 'being on the same wavelength', what would that actually look like?</p> <p>012: Right. So I think, I think to, to start to even start using such an app, there needs to be a, a conversation in the beginning, right? Where, where we decide, like, I, I hope, and I def like, I don't think it's a great situation, for example, we're in a couple and I'm starting using that app without your knowledge [laughing]. That would be strange. . . And, and I don't think that's, that's appropriate. However, if we have that conversation and we're like, 'Oh, you know, there's, there's this cool app, it does this and this. How about, why don't we try it out?' and we decide that we, um, are gonna go ahead with it. Um, First of all, getting into that conversation already, I think, gets the ball rolling in a way, right? It kind of gets us to the point where we're like, 'Okay, but why would we use, why would we use it?' Right? So we start discussing then like, what are the benefits, or why would, why do I think, or why would she think we should [unclear, maybe 'why we should use the app?'], right? So it's, it's a whole another discussion, which already I think is pretty . . . like in general, the more discussions we have in, in a relationship, you know, the, the more open it is, hopefully the better we understand each other. Right. But that's, so, so this is as my, as far as I can go in terms of guessing. Right. I'd have to like actually use it to, um, to be more educated on the topic.</p> <p>INT: Mm mm So you've, uh, referred, speaking of the benefits, you've re referred to some ways in which it can actually enhance, uh, the relationship, uh, between the couple. Is there anything else that you have in mind? Uh, how, um, how this app could enhance a relationship?</p> <p>012: I mean, what, well. Number one is the one I've mentioned, right? Where it just builds, um, it creates conditions to have a</p>	<p>Didn't get to use the app himself.</p> <p>Imagines it would help him understand his partner and her condition. There are things that she might not be comfortable talking about, but would want him to know or take into account.</p> <p>The app can help with this.</p> <p>A conversation precedes the use of the app.</p> <p>Strange and inappropriate for a man to start using app without her knowledge, laughs.</p> <p>In a shared conversation, the couple negotiate and brainstorm together whether or not to use it, what would the benefits be, why use it, etc.</p> <p>Conversations like these (and in general) facilitate openness/transparency, understanding.</p> <p>App enables open conversation.</p>	<p>Psych claim – didn't get to</p> <p>Medicalization</p> <p>Taboo genealogies</p> <p>Constructing the app</p> <p>Modal verb – needs</p> <p>Assessment Affect display Constructing identity</p> <p>Narrative structure</p> <p>Narrative structure Personal preferential claim 'hopefully'</p>	<p>Reference to menstrual cycle as 'condition'</p> <p>Drawing on the genealogy of menstrual cycle as taboo, woman as uncomfortable as speaking about it</p> <p>The app is positioned as doing things, helping</p> <p>Important for these conversations to be had, the couple bares the responsibility to do so</p> <p>SP: the creepy man who uses the app to track her cycle without her knowledge = strange &amp; innappropriate</p> <p>Using the app facilitates transparency and understanding in a couple, by virtue of a process – shared conversation, brainstorming, negotiating, bringing about openness &amp; understanding.</p> <p>The ideal perceived scenario</p>
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<p>Enable Conversations Education Body  Physiology  Knowledge Lack of  Condition Awareness Reminder  Thoughtful Feelings Aware</p>	<p>more open discussion, right? Second one I think is, it educates. So, right, so, uh, if I understand better what, um, how your body works, how my partner's body works. Um, I think that's a, that's value in itself. If we knew, you know, each other's, you know, physiology better, I think that would be a benefit. And, and, um, my, my, my view on this is that that doesn't happen very often, apparently. I think it's getting better, but it doesn't happen very often still in, in relationships. Mm. So that's two. Um, well, I mean, I don't know three is just basically kind of hopefully a consequence of that as well. Right. And it kind of feeds into the first two as well is if it kind of, and, and I don't know if it's actually an issue, but, but for example, where, if my partner's feeling down or something and I'm somehow preoccupied with something else to notice it myself, maybe there are some cues that the app can give me to, to kind of, to, you know, to, to remind me that I, I might, you know, I might want to, to remind me that, um, you know, there's other considerations in, in, in a relationship besides my own, you know, feelings. There's another person who might be feeling down who might not be necessarily ready for, um, a particular kind of, I dunno, emotions tonight. Right. So, so those, those I would say would be the, uh, examples.</p> <p>INT: Mm. Fantastic. Thank you. Um, so if we flip the coin around, do you think there is any, uh, downsides or perhaps risks to using this app in a couple?</p> <p>012: Oh, [phew], never really thought about it. If I, if I were to think about it right now, I mean, um, assuming the app is securely implemented and it doesn't collect any unnecessary data or like anonymizes data, hopefully, you know, it doesn't get leaked or it doesn't, you know, the app itself, I mean, the data that the app is using, doesn't, um, get compromised and, and, and lead to some, you know, some, basically doesn't lead to a result that, that would like, um, embarrass somebody or just, you know, it's basically the same thing as, it's kind of, it's kind of, it could be close to something like, uh, you know, working with medical data in a way, Right? It's very personal data, I think. And so if it's securely implemented, then hopefully there's no risk of that. But you know, there's always that consider. In terms of like a relationship in a couple. So once more, right? If there's a set, uh, of like a, a kickoff conversation, so to speak, right [laughs]? Where we first discuss what, you know, is there place for such an</p>	<p>App educates about the body, and understanding each other's physiology is beneficial, valuable, which doesn't happen very often in relationships.</p> <p>If she is feeling down and he is too preoccupied to notice, the app can give cues to remind him about considerations and feelings other than his own.</p> <p>Making sure the app is secure: doesn't collect unnecessary data, and data doesn't get leaked or compromised, leading to someone's embarrassment as this is very personal data, like medical data.</p>	<p>Narrative structure</p> <p>Technologies of self</p> <p>Technologies of self</p> <p>Making a conditional claim</p>	<p>The app works as technologies of self to better self and the relationship through education of others' physiology</p> <p>The app works as technologies of self, reminds him to be more attentive in pursuit of the desired SP of the supportive partner?</p> <p>There is a lot at stake – leakage of very personal data &amp; someone's embarrassment, all hinging on secure implementation – if - then hopefully there is no risk.</p>
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<p>Conversation</p> <p>Transparency</p> <p>Safe</p>	<p>app in our relationship, and it's, it's, it's, you know, done in, in an open and, and, and kind of honest manner, you know, I, I think it should be fine. So there's not necessarily any risks that spring to mind right away. Not, not that there aren't, It's just that I can't, I, I haven't thought about it for a long time, and I'm not sure if there are any.</p>	<p>Security also involves the couple having that honest and open kick off conversation – then it should be fine.</p>	<p>Hedging?</p>	<p>Risk level also placed in the hands of the couple, who are accountable for holding an honest conversation, then it should be fine.</p>
<p>Control</p> <p>Data</p> <p>Share</p> <p>Certainty</p> <p>Security</p>	<p>INT: Maybe if I go back to the first point that you mentioned, uh, was there anything that you had to think through in terms of developing the app, like how much data would be shared with the partner, if there'd be any exceptions of sharing or . . . ?</p> <p>012: So, yeah, so, um, and once again, right, this was a very early prototype, but yeah, definitely we were building in, uh, mechanisms to first, for a woman in a relationship to um, very granularly select what kind of data she is willing to share out of, well, first she's willing to share with the app, right? Let the app collect it. And secondly, willing to share with the, with her partner. Um, and since I was doing my Master's in cybersecurity at the time, I was really hell bent on building a as, as secure of an app as possible for it to, to, to stay that way. Right. So if, if some, if, if the data was shared with the app to make sure that it wouldn't go anywhere, or as sure as we can be, that it wouldn't go anywhere beyond that. Right. So, yeah, so there was, we definitely tried to account for those considerations. Mm-hmm. , once again, we never really got anywhere that would include actual data collection besides like testing it for, you know, with, with like dummy data.</p> <p>INT: Mm mm, but the idea was that, uh, the woman would have control over what she would share?</p> <p>012: Yeah. That the idea because I mean, it's, it's, once again, it's a very private thing, right. So, and I'm a firm believer in, in having control over your data, actually, no matter how private it is, like I like to have control over my, over my, like, you know, whatever email data or at the ads data or whatever. So, and this is much, much, much more private than that. Right?</p>	<p>The woman granularly selects what data she wants to share with the app, and then what she wants to share with her partner.</p> <p>Data included in menstrual tracking is a very private thing. Believes in having control over personal data, no matter how private it is. This is much much much more private than email data.</p>	<p>Narrative structure</p> <p>Agent distinction</p>	<p>The woman is given agency and power over information. She has control over what she wants to share, in the sequence of firstly – with the app, secondly – with partner.</p>
<p>Private</p> <p>Control</p> <p>Data</p> <p>Private</p>	<p>INT: Hmm. Thank you. Um, the next question, I'm just going to leave it open for your interpretation. . Um, how do you think that, uh, an app such as this one, maps onto the current gender relations?</p>		<p>Personal values claim</p> <p>Repetition</p>	<p>Emphasis on control, agency, privacy.</p> <p>Expressing the magnitude of</p>

<p>Dangerous</p> <p>Unsure Gender Positive</p> <p>Hard Gender /Sexuality</p> <p>Benefit</p> <p>Strain</p> <p>Communication Control</p> <p>Transparency</p> <p>Benefit</p>	<p>012: Oh God. This is like a minefield, isn't it? ? [both laughing]. Um, I, I, I don't know, man. I think, um, first of all, I don't, I'm not sure what current gender relations even means anymore. Not, it's not a bad thing, it's just that it's so varied, and everybody's doing their own thing. And I think that's amazing that everybody can do their own thing, but it's also [pause], you know, it's, it, it, it also sometimes can be hard for other people that are used to putting those relationships in boxes or labelling them in a certain way. Right. So, um, yeah, I don't, I, I, I think that there are apps that do something similar to that right now I think that they have their user base, hopefully they benefit from it and they choose to use it because it's useful to them and it doesn't, you know, and, and it's very, um, uh, how do I phrase this? The, well both partners in that relationship benefit from it. And, and that's it. And that, and that's great. I think that that those couples, um, that, that they, you know, enjoy, enjoy such opportunities. I don't, hopefully, you know, it doesn't put any kind of pressure or strain on any other relationships to, you know, to, to kind of conform to that as well. Um, I. . That's, that's that, I think [giggles].</p> <p>INT: Okay, thank you so much. Um, I have exhausted the questions that I've had, uh, in mind for you. I'm just wondering, um, before we finish off, if you had any comments or concluding remarks that you think might be relevant to this, um, piece of research?</p> <p>012: Um, I think, I think the core idea behind this was to promote communication in a relationship in a, in a very kind of granular sort of way, but still, right, that was, that was like the, the, the overall idea and which, I am a firm believer, right, so I think like, hopefully any relationship should be as, um, should have as open communication and it as possible. And if we ended up deploying it, it would be pretty exciting to see what, you know, if, if it would end up helping at least, you know, several couples. So, so yeah, that was the, that was the, the kind of the, well, I don't wanna say mission or anything, but that was, that was like the overarching idea. Right.</p> <p>INT: Fantastic. Thank you so much, uh, unless you have anything else to add, I'll switch off the recording?</p>	<p>Talking about this is like a minefield, laughing.</p> <p>Unsure what gender relations means anymore. Everyone is doing their own thing, it's not a bad thing, thinks it's amazing. But it can also be hard for people who are used to putting relationships into boxes or labelling them.</p> <p>As long as both partners benefit from it and doesn't put pressure or strain on the relationship.</p> <p>Core idea was to promote communication in a relationship in a granular way.</p>	<p>Affect display Metaphor</p> <p>Assessment</p> <p>Contrast Categorizing Script formulation</p> <p>Agent distinction Rationale Conditions Technologies of self</p> <p>Rationale</p>	<p>Talking about gender relations is dangerous, like a minefield, one never know where they will get caught out, lethal</p> <p>It's perceived positively that everyone is doing their own thing. Contrast used to explain difficulties for other people, constructing the category of people who are used to putting relationships into boxes or labelling them, as if routine, not unusual</p> <p>The couple is agentic in deciding whether or not the app would be useful. Emphasis on benefits in technologies of self, where any pressure or strain is undesirable</p> <p>Building rationale about launching sharing app, based on assumptions of lacking communication between couples on the topic.</p>
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	012: Go ahead.			
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xii. Transcript Analysis – MyFlo emails

<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>MYFLO – MENSTRUATION</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
Trust?	Dear	Author addresses reader as someone ‘dear’, establishes closeness, trust? between writer and reader	Chosen adjective displays an emotion category	Makes the reader feel dear to the author, creates a trusting relationship
Knowledge /predictability	What you need to know about her Body on	The confused man, he ‘needs’ to know	‘Need’ – sense of urgency Biomedical discourse Constructing the ‘confused man’	Prescribes the practices of the confused man.
Hormonal body	Hormones This Week	Also a technology of self – attaining the knowledge about fem body in an aim to ...?		Biomedical discourse and the promise of predictability (on basis of historical discourse about the ‘unpredictable woman’?)
Hormonal body	Her Body on Hormones This Week	The female body is ‘on hormones’,	Subject distinction - She is not autonomous, but subjected to hormonal effects and control	If a woman is controlled by hormones + medicine has knowledge about hormones = the woman is predictable within medical realm. Biomedical discourse is the dominant discourse = trustworthy, taken for granted.
Hormonal body	With all the hormone levels coming down to their lowest concentrations this week, this not	Hormone levels not only trigger physical bodily processes (menstruation), but also allow her cognitive abilities, i.e. being factual, determining course of action, being strategic, inwardly focused – the rational, strategic, action-orientated woman – sounds like traits associated with masculinity?	Subject distinction - Biomedical discourse positions woman as subject – the woman is not agentic, it is the hormones that allow what she may or may not think/do.	Biomedical discourse reinforces the genealogy of / taken for granted thinking about the female psyche as in the clasps of the wondering womb/fluctuating hormones
Menstruation	only triggers the lining of her uterus to shed, but it also allows her to have the most		Script formulation	Biomedical knowledge now makes it possible to predict her cognition/behaviour.
Cognition	conversation between the right and left	Hormones are in control, they allow certain cognitions	Subject distinction	Since hormones are associated with women’s bodies, is it possible that the “lowest concentrations [of all hormones] this week” theoretically make her more like a man? “Best conversation between left and right hemisphere, synthesizing facts of the situation, determining best course of action, being strategic, and inwardly focused” are traits generally associated with masculinity.
Cognition	hemisphere of her brain. This means she best		This section is loaded with assessments and ECF’s : ‘all, lowest, most, best able, best, most’.	
Cognition	able to synthesize how you feel about situations with the facts of the situation and			
Behaviour	determine the best course of action. She’s at			
Cognition	her most strategic and inwardly focused			
Hormonal body			Subject distinction – hormones in control	Biomedical discourse links into the practice of healthism - hormones act as determinant of menstrual health, making them the focus of

Health/norm	time. Depending on <b>what is going on with</b>	Hormones determine whether menstruation is healthy and normal, or otherwise.		healthism practice in an aim to achieve a healthy menstruation.
Menstruation	<b>her hormones</b> , her period could be <b>healthy,</b>	Healthy and normal period is red and lasts 3-5 days. In contrast to anything that deviates, which is therefore deemed unhealthy?	Script formulation - what does healthy period look like	Biomedical discourse constructing and circulating ideas about what a healthy period looks like, and that a healthy period is the only acceptable one ( <b>should</b> ).
	<b>normal</b> - 3-5 days, red or it could be a few	The norm is to have a healthy menstruation.	Script formulation – <b>should</b> be the first (healthy and normal)	Not only can we work on ourselves now, but we can take a quiz now to determine the health of our loved ones. <i>Tech of couples</i>
Knowledge	other colors, lengths, and intensity with bleeding and cramping. It <b>should</b> be the first,	Male partner is invited to learn more about whether his girlfriend's cycle is healthy using a quiz = tech of couples	Technologies of couples	Drawing on historical discourses, reinforces the idea about what a menstrual week looks like, 'is very symptomatic' – whatever those symptoms are however is left unsaid; as such the mere presence of any and all symptoms is problematized. The biomedical discourse finds, again, blame in the hormones, but this time in those that are out of balance. A direct link is made to the practice of healthism: taking care of hormones and diet equals balanced hormones, and therefore problem-free period week.
Hormonal body	to learn more about her FLO - go to the V-Sign quiz page on FLOliving.com. If <b>her</b>	If hormones are out of balance, period week is very symptomatic – Hormones determine what the entire week looks like.	Biomedical discourse	This constructs the subject of the supportive partner and what he should do – constructing menstruation week as a joint endeavour of achieving an asymptomatic (problem-free) menstrual week, and essentially a good life if one lives optimally.
Health/norm	<b>hormones</b> are <b>out of balance</b> , and her period week is <b>very symptomatic</b> , just be	Very symptomatic – how? Unsaid.	Subject distinction	Existing relationship discourse – doing things together and having date nights. Another dominant relationship theme is negotiating the togetherness vs separateness.
Health/Symptoms	<b>sympathetic</b> and <b>encourage her to take care of</b>	Symptomatic (unhealthy/abnormal) menstruation requires taking care of hormones, which can be accomplished by a change of diet = taking care of hormones = technologies of self in achieving asymptomatic menstruation = healthism	<u>Problematization</u>	Constructing the supportive partner he checks in.
Standpoint	<b>her hormones</b> by <b>changing her diet</b> with the	The supportive male partner - is sympathetic, encourages technologies of self.	Biomedical discourse	Constructing identity
Hormones	MONTHLY FLO program at		Constructing couple identity	
Health/Diet	FLOliving.com.			
Relationship/togetherness	What you <b>should plan</b> to do <b>together</b> / <b>Date</b>	The norms of togetherness during menstruation? (versus solo time).	Script formulation, Contrast – together vs separate (time out, space)	
	<b>Night</b>			
Standpoint/ attentiveness		The attentive partner checks in, gauges		
Separateness				

Symptoms / tired Separateness / time out	<b>Check in with her</b> to gauge if she'd like some <b>solo time</b> to <b>recharge her batteries</b> . If yes,	Menstruation associated with needing to 'recharge her batteries'. To recharge, she may like a massage, or a facial = selfcare, technologies of self?	Metaphor – recharge batteries + script formulation	Drawing on genealogical discourses of the monstrous feminine: – tired, wants space, enjoys a spa.
Relationship / Bonus points	book some <b>time out</b> with your friends and give her some <b>space</b> . <b>Bonus points</b> for booking her a massage or a facial at her favorite spa. If no, some of the same home date-night in suggestions from the luteal phase are great here. Cook a <b>healthy meal</b> - paleo style is <b>best</b> here - meat or salmon with avocado on the side and <b>chill out</b> at home <b>together</b> . She'll likely be <b>happy</b> to <b>stay home</b> and <b>relax</b> with a book or binge-watching her favorite new show. Plus, <b>absence</b> makes the heart grow fonder... and <b>there's always next week</b> .	Period week is the time to book <b>time out</b> with friends, and can <b>score bonus points</b> for booking her a spa.	Metaphors – <b>time out, scoring bonus points</b>	<b>Time out, scoring, and bonus points</b> – usually terms used in a game. Game metaphors used to talk about how to navigate menstruation week – masculine discourse?
Health / diet		Healthism – menstruation linked to health, manageable through healthy diet – technologies of self	Constructing identity for the supportive partner and associated practices + Assessment - Constructing what best, healthy diet looks like	Biomedical discourse links into the coupled endeavour of optimized living and healthism– period week calls for the supportive partner to do certain things – cook healthy food (to help balance hormones and set her free from symptoms), book her a spa.
Togetherness		Normative couple behaviour during menstruation – chill out together staying at home.	Constructing the normative couple identity. Absence in contrast to together, both is possible	Drawing on existing relationship discourse, togetherness now encompasses staying home and chilling out together during menstruation week. This is in contrast to the separateness that interweaves through this section, however they can coexist – the supportive partner can either position himself either in togetherness or in separateness, both positions are virtuous. Taken for granted ideas of menstrual symptoms
Symptoms / tired		The normative female behaviour during menstruation – staying home, relaxing with a book, binge-watching a show.	Script formulation	
Separateness			Script formulation Contrast.	
Sex	What kind of <b>sex works best?</b> / <b>Love-Making</b>	What sex works best during menstruation? Sex vs love-making?	Script formulation?	Construction of what works best (sex). Having sex and making love carries with it different connotations, sex refers to the act itself, while love-making suggests the presence of emotion – love. Both is possible
Standpoint		To have menstrual sex or not is a big question. Norm Very messy menstrual sex – the con in weighing up pros and cons. Can be prevented by laying down a towel though.	Assessment	Makes the question of period sex seem ubiquitous. Drawing on historical discourses of the undesirably messy menstrual blood, can be contained by laying down a towel.
Menstrual blood	The <b>big</b> question: to have sex or not? On one hand, it can be very <b>messy</b> . On the other		Constructing Identity	
Help		The supportive partner can help relief cramps	Constructing identity	Constructing supportive partner as 'helping' with cramps, HERO?

Equality	hand, it can help <b>your woman</b> feel better by <b>relieving</b> menstrual cramps. You have to <b>gauge</b> both of your <b>interest levels</b> . <b>Do you enjoy having sex when she's menstruating?</b>	The self-regulated partner considers interest levels of both equally	IS - capital letters	Constructing how the self-regulated man approaches the question of period sex – preferences of both are considered equally - Emphasis on being clear on her preference – on <i>equal</i> consideration – equality.
Equality		<b>IS</b> she (or is she NOT) someone who enjoys menstrual sex? Important.	It's a dry week – analogy	
Menstrual blood		Menstruation is a dry week.	Script formulation	Shameful/ embarrassing to refer explicitly to the reproductive organs and their functions, analogies used instead?
Lubrication	<b>IS</b> your woman someone who enjoys <b>that</b> ? If so, put down a towel and <b>go for it!</b> Keep in mind, <b>it's a dry week</b> here as well, so as	Lube is essential for pleasurable experience.	Script formulation	Constructions of what is essential for a pleasurable experience of sex.
Experience	counterintuitive as it may seem, lube is <b>essential</b> for a <b>pleasurable experience</b> .	Common attitudes towards menstrual sex: Her – ashamed, feels bad Him –has an issue with it = genealogy of attitudes/standpoints towards menstruation in general ?		Drawing on engrained historical discourses of gendered standpoints/attitudes towards menstrual blood – she is ashamed and feels bad about it, and he has an issue with it (in contrast to both being open to it, both is possible).
Standpoint	Another possibility - <b>you're open</b> - but she's feeling <b>ashamed</b> and <b>feeling bad</b> about having sex on her period ( <b>very common</b> ) <b>OR</b> - you have an <b>issue</b> with it ( <b>also very common</b> ). <b>Sadly</b> , we've <b>all</b> received <b>negative messaging</b> about <b>menstrual blood</b> ,	All have received negative messaging Negative messaging (attitudes) towards menstrual blood evaluated as regrettable, 'sadly' – authors challenging norms?	Extreme case formulation?	Emphasises commonality of negative attitudes
Standpoint	so if you've both never tried it with each other, try it - and <b>do your research</b> before you <b>forgo</b> what could be a very <b>pleasurable week</b> <b>lost</b> for <b>sex every month</b> . However, if <b>she is a definite no</b> , because it doesn't actually <b>feel good</b> for her - then <b>honor her space</b> .	The seductive lover – he should do his research, otherwise he might forego a week lost for sex every month. Optimal living?	Assessment (sadly, negative)	Authors position themselves as sad/disappointed in relation to the common negative
Standpoint / Menstrual blood			EFC (We've all)	Relationships involve pleasurable sex –the 'good life' narrative. Construction of the seductive lover, would not want to forgo missing out pleasurable sex.
Knowledge				
Period sex		The self-regulated man knows boundaries – 'a definite no', means he will honor her space.	Constructing identity	Self-regulated man constructed as being respectful of her boundaries
Respect				

Fertility	Fertility Factor:		Constructing identity	Constructing the self-regulated man who uses a condom.
Responsibility/ Safety	MODERATE to LOW - Though more rare, it is still possible to get pregnant on her period. So use a condom to be <b>extra safe!</b>	The self-regulated partner – uses a condom to be extra safe from possible pregnancy.	Extreme case formulation – extra safe in contrast to extra risky? Exclamation mark	Contrasting the regulated behaviour with the risky behaviour – the regulated partner who is safe is preferred over the partner who does ‘risky masculine behaviour’
Togetherness/ Conversations	Heart to Heart	Hormones linked to strategic thinking	Script formulation	Using biomedical discourse to make links between hormones and cognition
Cognition/Reflexivity	This is actually the best time for her to journal her thoughts and <b>think strategically</b>	The couple uses optimal timing to do exercises together, plan their lives together.	Constructing couple identity	Optimized couple living – they optimize their time together based on the time of the month to plan areas of their lives such as work, finance, fun, friends, exercise, food, & relationship. Promise of the good life.
Togetherness/ Planning / Exercise	about all areas of her life. You both could do that <b>exercise together - what do you want to create next month in the areas of work, finances, fun, friends, exercise, food, and your relationship.</b> Pretty <b>epic</b> to do this once a month.	Supposed to feel epic.	Assessment	Constructs optimal living as ‘epic’.
Sex	Best time of Day to have Sex	Best time of day to have sex – optimized	Script formulation	Optimized time to have sex – the good life
Equality		Up to the couple to decide when to have sex	Constructing couple identity	Couple identity – equality in decision-making
Help		has sex with her whenever she needs to relief cramps ;)	Constructing identity Winky emoji – hidden meaning or flirting	Constructing supportive partner as helping with the relief of cramps. Hidden meaning = supportive partner exists alongside the seductive lover ?

Needs	This will be up to the both of you - if you're using sex as cramp relief - then it's whenever she needs it ;)	All are driven by our hormones	Extreme case formulation, subjectifying	Within the biomedical discourse, none of us are autonomous, all subjects to biology.
Hormones		Taking care of hormones is a key to healthy life – healthism and the promise of the good life	Biomedical discourse	Medicalisation of menstruation, hormones are discourses of health. Knowledge about hormones, and looking after them, then becomes a tool for doing ‘couple healthism’.
Knowledge	Remember - We are all driven by our hormones. Knowing how they impact you	Effects of hormones on the female body linked to common and unnecessary pitfalls in relationships – the unpredictable woman & the confused man who needs a predictable map to navigate	Identity constructs + Historical discourses	Drawing on historical discourses of the mad, unpredictable woman, and the confused man – he needs a predictable map
Health Knowledge	and how to care for them is a key to a healthy life. Understanding how they affect your		Script formulation	Constructing relationship pitfalls as resulting from the effects of fluctuating hormones.
Relationship / pitfalls	partner allows you to not only avoid common	Optimized engagement – predictable map, giving her just (exactly) what she wants, whenever she wants it. Then he can win with her every week – promise of the good life and relationship without pitfalls.	Extreme case formulation	Couple healthism, joint endeavour of optimizing the hormones promises female predictability and a relationship without pitfalls = the good life narrative.
Knowledge / predictability	and often unnecessary relationship pitfalls,			
Relationship / winning	but more importantly gives you a predictable		Metaphor – win	Win – likening to game – masculine discourse?
Needs	map to plan how to engage your partner so			
Knowledge/ predictability	that you win every week with your woman, giving her just what she wants when she	Men think that they would need to be psychics in order to predict/understand women. ;)	Psychic - metaphor for sense of hopelessness, because figuring out how to be a psychic is impossible? Also contrast. Winky emoji	Could be referring to the subject position of the ‘confused man’, who feels a sense of hopelessness when it comes to hormonal, menstruating, unpredictable women. But this is now in contrast to the sense of feeling hopeful, because within the biomedical discourse exists a predictable map. Winky emoji is sometimes used to express humour.
Love	wants it. And you thought all you had to figure out was how to be psychic;)	Supporting love.	Emotion category	Men do these things in the name of love?
	Supporting your Love FLO, Alisa			

OBJECTS	MYFLO – FOLLICULAR PHASE	WHAT	HOW	WHY
Knowledge	Dear			
Hormones	What you <b>need to know</b> about her	The confused man, he ‘needs’ to know	‘Need’ – sense of urgency	Prescribes the practices of the confused man
Hormones	<b>Body on Hormones This Week</b>	Also a technology of self – attaining the knowledge about fem body in an aim to ...?	Biomedical discourse	Biomedical discourse and the promise of predictability (on basis of historical discourse about the ‘unpredictable woman’?)
Hormones		The female body is ‘on hormones’,	Constructing the ‘knowledgeable partner’	
Relationship	This week, <b>your lady</b> is in her	<b>“Your lady”</b>	Subject distinction - She is not autonomous, but subjected to hormonal effects and control	If a woman is controlled by hormones + medicine has knowledge about hormones = the woman is predictable within medical realm. Biomedical discourse is the dominant discourse = trustworthy, taken for granted.
Cycle	follicular phase. At this point in her	SP: the gentleman	Category entitlement	Constructing the identity of the couple that tracks together; “lady” carries with it the connotations of femininity. The man’s equivalent of lady is “gentleman” = manly but gentle and caring.
Hormones	cycle, where <b>hormones are at their</b>		Constructing the subject position of the man reading this article (or the couple who tracks and shares?)	
Cognition	<b>lowest</b> , with FSH just beginning to	Follicular phase linked to lowest levels of hormones.	Biomedical discourse, medicalisation of the menstrual cycle	The female menstrual cycle is medicalised, constructed using medical discourse which positions hormones as agents and the woman as subject – possible to predict her cognition (when in the month she is receptive to new things), and how tired she might be.
Hormones	rise, she’s <b>most receptive</b> to new	Hormones (rising FSH) linked to cognition/ receptivity to new things	Biomedical discourse positioning woman as subject	
Tired	things this week. Since <b>her</b>			
Relationship /excitement	<b>testosterone is at its lowest point, to</b>	Low testosterone linked to low energy	Biomedical discourse	Drawing on the taken for granted, biomedical discourse about the linkage between hormones and gender differences; testosterone (the masculine hormone) associated with energy/strength, and as such when her testosterone is at her lowest point, she is inherently tired.
Relationship Exploration Initiative	<b>get her energy up - think play, fun and</b>	Play, fun and fantasy gets her energy up	Script formulation	
Relationship Exploration Initiative	<b>fantasy.</b>			
Relationship Exploration Initiative		He is encouraged to take the initiative and try new things with her.	Script formulation	A promise of the good life, a good relationship, a good partner (an A+ partner). To achieve this though, one must live optimally and pursue technologies of self - track partner’s cycle and act

Togetherness	Try <b>new things</b> - where if you take the <b>initiative</b> and book something for <b>you</b>	Taking initiative will give him “mileage” and be an A+ partner in the relationship for a month (then he will have to do it again).	Promise of the good life, technologies of self  Metaphor 2x	accordingly. This involves him taking the initiative to do new things with her, book things, etc. (once a month, every time during a follicular phase). This will give him mileage for the whole month.  Mileage – distance travelled, usually in a motor vehicle which tend to be associated with men, masculinity. Using masculine discourse to enhance relatability to article content for reader? A+ partner – as in awarded the best mark at school. Perhaps drawing on historical discourses of the unpredictable woman and the confused man – but luckily, biomedicine makes it possible have more predictability - if he performs certain activities once a month, she will award him the best mark.
Relationship/mileage	both <b>to do together</b> , it will give you			
Relationship/A+ Partner	all month. Get outdoors and out of the house - it can be just the two of you or an outing with a close group of friends. If you can do this once a month, you’ll be an <b>A+ partner</b> .	The norms of togetherness during follicular phase	Script formulation, Contrast – together vs separate (time out, space)	Script formulation, Contrast – together vs separate (time out, space)
Relationship /togetherness	What you <b>should plan to do together?</b> /Date Night	Best way to spend time together during follicular phase is to do new things, think adventure and fun. SP: The adventurous partner	Script formulation  Constructing identity	The follicular phase is best related to from the subject position of the adventurous partner (because she is most receptive to new things) – adventure, new things, new perspective while hot air-ballooning, etc. These activities are constructed as essential to a relationship – the relationship labour reaps with the rewards of intimacy, feelings of falling in love, and refreshment, otherwise the undesirable threat of a <b>‘dating rut’</b> looms over the relationship.
Relationship /Adventure	For date ideas, <b>think adventure and fun</b> . <b>Seek out something you haven’t tried yet</b> . Get outside, go to a concert,	Doing new activities together associated with refreshing relationship, boosting intimacy, and protects it from dating ruts.	Script formulation, relationship labour	‘New activities’ are positioned as agents – they do things to the relationship, namely they <b>“build, boost, refresh, and protect”</b>
Togetherness	play, museum, or anything where <b>you’re both</b> more active and on your feet. Whether you’re getting physical	Oxytocin is the falling in love hormone.	Biomedical discourse constructing feelings	
Relationship /growth	with rock climbing, or getting a new	“Builds, boosts, refreshes & protects”		

Relationship /fail	perspective by hot air ballooning, <b>new</b> activities <b>builds</b> intimacy, <b>boosts</b> oxytocin levels (the falling in love hormone) and <b>refreshes</b> relationships, <b>protecting</b> them from <b>dating ruts</b> .	Dating ruts are undesirable, need to be protected from.	Script formulation, relationship labour (otherwise dating ruts)  “Builds, boosts, refreshes, protecting from dating ruts” subject distinction	Love and falling in love is medicalised – within the biomedical discourse, the acting agent is oxytocin.
Sex	What kind of <b>sex works best?</b> /Love-Making	What sex works best during follicular phase? Sex vs love-making?	Script formulation Contrast.	Construction of what works best (sex). Having sex and making love carries with it different connotations, sex refers to the act itself, while love-making suggests the presence of emotion – love. Both is possible
Sex/arousal	In bed, some things you can try that <b>will get her hot</b> include lots of touching, massage, nonpenetrating foreplay, and lube. As it’s a <b>dry week</b> ,	The things that will get her <i>hot</i> in bed.	Script formulation , metaphor	Hot = sexually aroused. Using familiar language to cater for intended audience? Constructing the idea of optimized sex – by following the phases of her cycle, one can predict the need for lube and the things that he needs to do in order to get her <i>hot</i> in bed
Sex/lubrication	not only is lube important, but <b>focusing on her</b> clitoral orgasm first and repeatedly is the key to getting things flowing for <b>you to join the party</b> . <b>Be generous and take your time</b> .	Follicular phase is a dry week, lube is important.  During dry week, he is encouraged to be generous and patient – this means taking his time to ‘get things flowing’, focusing on her first, before he ‘joins the party’. SP: The self-regulated man	Script formulation  Constructing identity	Also pertains to optimized sex – follicular phase calls for the self-regulated man in bed Constructing the self-regulated man as generous and focuses on her first before he joins the party
Generosity			Metaphors ‘get things flowing, join the party’	Metaphors used to keep text light hearted for the reader?
Patience				
Exploration		Encouragement to try new positions, roleplaying, letting imagination run wild and seeing what develops. SP: the seductive lover	Constructing identity	Follicular phase also calls for the seductive lover too!

Fertility	<p>been talking about trying? What about roleplaying? Let your <b>imagination run wild</b> and see what develops. ;-)</p> <p>Fertility Factor</p>	;-)	Winky emoji	<p>Constructing the adventurous partner as someone who tries new things in bed, does roleplaying, lets his imagination run wild</p> <p>Used to imply hidden meaning – letting the reader imagine the unsayable about what might develop?</p>
Fertility signs	<p>Low - this is <b>actually</b> referred to as a “<b>dry</b>” week - meaning she is not secreting any cervical fluid that enhances her fertility. <b>Of course</b>, this is <b>predicated</b> on <b>the fact</b> that she has a</p>	<p>Actually – the truth of facts</p> <p>Follicular phase = dry week = no cervical fluid = low fertility factor</p> <p>Low fertility factor during follicular is <b>predicated</b>, on <b>the fact</b> that</p>	<p>Stake inoculation</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, script formulation</p> <p>Stake inoculation</p>	<p>The paragraph is loaded with words such as “<b>actually, of course, predicated, the fact, know for certain</b>”. I assume this is because making a claim that ‘fertility factor is low’ might have implications for the authors of the article should this ‘fact’ be proven otherwise by somebody getting (unintentionally) pregnant. As such, the authors are making disclaimers by drawing on the discourses of precision, predictability, certainty, as well as on drawing on the discursive idea of ‘<b>healthy, regular, predictable cycle</b>’.</p>
Health / norm	<p><b>healthy, regular, predictable cycle, and</b></p>	<p>- she has a <b>healthy, regular, predictable cycle (norm)</b></p>	<p>Constructing norms, problematization</p>	
Knowledge /Predictability	<p><b>has been tracking her ovulation for a</b></p>	<p>- has been <b>tracking</b> her ovulation <b>for a while</b> (technologies of self)</p>	<p>Technologies of self</p>	
Knowledge/sharing	<p><b>while to know for certain where she is at, so she can inform you.</b></p>	<p>- <b>knows for certain</b></p> <p>➔ then she can inform you</p> <p>“<b>Actually, of course, predicated, the fact, know for certain</b>”</p>	<p>EFC (to know <i>for certain</i> based on using a mobile tracking app? Unlikely)</p> <p>Narrative structure?</p> <p>Stake inoculation</p>	<p>Menstrual cycle is medicalised, health is determined by a regular and therefore predictable cycle (norm). An irregular cycle is being problematized, as it is then impossible to track and predict – it then falls outside of the discourse which makes it possible to live optimally.</p>
Conversations	Heart to Heart			

Relationship/sharing		Follicular phase linked to her wanting to share her desires with you	Linking back to the premise of ‘hormones at lowest point with FSH rising – most receptive to new things’ – script formulation about her behaviour	The medicalisation of the cycle makes it possible to predict her behaviour – she is going to want to tell you about all her life desires.
Desires	She’s going to want to tell you about everything that she wants in her life			
Cognition	this month in general - she’s coming up with her new ideas, new plans, new	Follicular phase linked to generating new ideas, new plans, new desires.	Three part lists	Emphasises factuality
Support	desires for herself - what should you do to support her? Just listen and don’t problem solve.	What you should do to support her SP: the supportive partner  Just listen and don’t problem solve.	Modal verb,  Just listen (as in only listen, do not do anything else Don’t problem solve - modal verb Building on existing discourses of masculinity, while constructing new identity	Supportive partner is constructed as someone who just listens and doesn’t problem solve. Drawing on existing discourses of gendered characteristics – the woman is a dreamer, “she comes up with new ideas and desires for herself”, while he tends to ‘problem solve’ and is not particularly good at listening. However, the supportive partner (modern man?) masters this (with a little reminder and encouragement from MyFLO).
Sex				
	Best time of Day to have Sex	Best time of day to have sex – optimized	Script formulation, optimized living	
Compromise				
Hormones				
Compromise	To match her lower levels of hormones this week, early evening is good for both of you - take advantage	SP: self-regulated partner - he matches her lower levels of hormones in the evening – optimized sex	Creating identity Optimal living Contrast (to only one)	The self-regulated partner doesn’t give in to the high levels of testosterone in the morning, but he is thoughtful and waits until the evening to match her hormone levels.
Sex	of some downtime and the energy boost from dinner to have some creative, fun, playful sex.	Encouragement to have creative, fun, playful sex.	Script formulation	
Hormones		All are driven by our hormones	Extreme case formulation, subjectifying	Within the biomedical discourse, none of us are autonomous, all subjects to biology.
Knowledge		Taking care of hormones is a key to healthy life – healthism and the promise of the good life	Biomedical discourse	Medicalisation of menstruation, hormones are discourses of health. Knowledge about hormones,

<p>Health Knowledge</p> <p>Relationship / pitfalls</p> <p>Knowledge / predictability</p> <p>Relationship / winning</p> <p>Needs</p> <p>Knowledge/ predictability</p> <p>Love</p>	<p>Remember - We are all driven by our hormones. Knowing how they impact you and how to care for them is a key to a healthy life. Understanding how they affect your partner allows you to not only avoid common and often unnecessary relationship pitfalls, but more importantly gives you a predictable map to plan how to engage your partner so that you win every week with your woman, giving her just what she wants when she wants it. And you thought all you had to figure out was how to be psychic;) </p> <p>Supporting your Love FLO, Alisa</p>	<p>Effects of hormones on the female body linked to common and unnecessary pitfalls in relationships – the unpredictable woman &amp; the confused man who needs a predictable map to navigate</p> <p>Optimized engagement – predictable map, giving her <b>just</b> (exactly) what she wants, whenever she wants it. Then he can win with her every week – promise of the good life and relationship without pitfalls.</p> <p>Men think that they would need to be psychics in order to predict/understand women. ;)</p> <p>Supporting love.</p>	<p>Identity constructs + Historical discourses</p> <p>Script formulation</p> <p>Extreme case formulation</p> <p>Metaphor – win</p> <p>Psychic - metaphor for sense of hopelessness, because figuring out how to be a psychic is impossible? Also contrast. Winky emoji</p> <p>Emotion category</p>	<p>and looking after them, then becomes a tool for doing ‘couple healthism’.</p> <p>Drawing on historical discourses of the mad, unpredictable woman, and the confused man – he needs a predictable map</p> <p>Constructing relationship pitfalls as resulting from the effects of fluctuating hormones.</p> <p>Couple healthism, joint endeavour of optimizing the hormones promises female predictability and a relationship without pitfalls = the good life narrative.</p> <p>Win – likening to game – masculine discourse?</p> <p>Could be referring to the subject position of the ‘confused man’, who feels a sense of hopelessness when it comes to hormonal, menstruating, unpredictable women. But this is now in contrast to the sense of feeling hopeful, because within the biomedical discourse exists a predictable map. Winky emoji is sometimes used to express humour.</p> <p>Men do these things in the name of love?</p>
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<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>MYFLO – OVULATION PHASE</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
Knowledge/predictability Hormonal Body	Dear,  What you <b>need to know</b> about <b>her body</b> <b>on hormones</b> this week:	The confused man, he ‘needs’ to know  Also a technology of self – attaining the knowledge about fem body in an aim to ...?	‘Need’ – sense of urgency Biomedical discourse Constructing the ‘knowledgeable partner’	Prescribes the practices of the confused man. Biomedical discourse and the promise of predictability (on basis of historical discourse about the ‘unpredictable woman’?)
Hormonal body	Her Body on Hormones this week:	The female body is ‘on hormones’	Subject distinction - She is not autonomous, but subjected to hormonal effects and control	If a woman is controlled by hormones + medicine has knowledge about hormones = the woman is predictable within medical realm. Biomedical discourse is the dominant discourse = trustworthy, taken for granted.
Love. Cognition.	This week, <b>your love</b> is in her ovulatory phase. The verbal center of <b>her brain</b> is	‘Your love’ is in an ovulatory phase	Pronoun ‘Your’ + assessment ‘Love’	The premise is that the reader is in a loving relationship with her, and that he tracks out of love
Hormones. Relationship/togetherness /growth	<b>positively affected</b> by all the <b>increase</b> in <b>estrogen</b> , so it’s the <b>perfect time</b> to get out and be social with friends as well as an <b>ideal time</b> to <b>talk to each other about things that are important to your relationship’s growth</b> . Estrogen,	Brain is <b>positively affected</b> by increase in estrogen (in contrast to negative effects?)	Subject distinction using biomedical discourse – the woman’s verbal abilities are subject to levels of estrogen. Contrast.	Biomedical discourse reinforces the genealogy of/ taken for granted thinking about the female psyche as in the clasps of the wondering womb/fluctuating hormones Biomedical knowledge now makes it possible to predict her cognition/behaviour – in this instance, increase in estrogen is linked <b>positively</b> to her verbal abilities, sociability, and desirability.
Hormones. Sex/desire.	testosterone and FSH are <b>peaking</b> , and she is literally a <b>magnet for your desire</b>	Normative couple behavior during ovulation - increase in estrogen = perfect time to go out, socialize, and talk to each other about things important to relationship growth. Optimized living ( <b>perfect</b> time).  Peaking hormones make her a “magnet for your desire”  He finds her irresistible, is pulled in like a magnet	Script formulation  This section is loaded with assessments and EFC’s: ‘positively affected’, ‘perfect time’, ‘ideal time’, ‘important’, ‘relationship growth’, peaking  Metaphor ‘magnet for your desire’.  Winky face implying hidden meaning or flirting.	The couple’s social life and the way that they relate to one another (including sex and desire) is being medicalised; through optimal living (and <b>perfect timing</b> ), a couple can harness the ‘good life’ in the arena of ‘relationship growth, sex, and desire’.  The biomedical discourse medicalises sex and desire: - female desirability (as determined by hormones)

	<p>this week, you will find her irresistible, and you should not resist ;)</p>	<p>He should not resist – as driven by biological urges?</p>	<p>Modal verb - Should not resist</p>	<p>- His attraction to her is biological - pulls him in like a magnet, he has no agency, nor should he resist there biological urges. The seductive lover– he acts on the basis of his biology.</p>
Relationship/togetherness	<p>What you should plan to do together?/Date night</p>	<p>The norms of togetherness during ovulation</p>	<p>Script formulation, Contrast – together vs separate</p>	<p>Existing relationship discourse – doing things together and having date nights. Another dominant relationship theme is negotiating the togetherness vs separateness.</p>
Relationship/togetherness /planning	<p>Make time to be together this week. Make plans for dinner with friends, dress up and go out to a party, mix and</p>	<p>In the ovulation week, the couple make time and plans to be together, dress up, go out to a party, etc.</p>	<p>Constructing the couple identity, optimized relationship</p>	<p>The relationship is optimized: Key to the optimization is the ‘optimized relationship labor’ that he invests (he makes time, makes plans during ovulation phase). He also teases and flirts, in a relatively risky way – flirting across the room, making out in the back row of the cinema – all actions during which they can be caught by somebody. Taking risks is often associated with masculinity – someone who balances the romantic partner and the masculine man (another example is that he expresses that he wants to have sex with her, but makes her feel loved in one sentence), and someone who optimizes his engagement with his partner based on the phase of her cycle.</p>
Relationship/flirt.	<p>mingle and flirt with each other from across the room. Go see a movie and sit</p>	<p>He also flirts across the room, sits in the back row and makes out with her, plays footsie under the table</p>	<p>~</p>	
Risk	<p>in the back row and make out. Play footsie under the table at dinner. Send</p>	<p>Furthermore, he sends suggestive emails/texts</p>	<p>Script formulation - Constructing the identity of the masculine man alongside the romantic man</p>	
Sex/desire.	<p>her suggestive emails/texts about how much you are thinking about her and how much you want her and want to</p>	<p>He thinks about her He “wants her” He wants to make her feel loved</p>	<p>“to want someone” often used to describe to have desire for and want to have sex with someone.</p>	
Love	<p>make her feel loved.</p>	<p>⇒ Optimal living, relationship labor SP: The romantic &amp; the masculine man</p>		

Sex	What kind of sex works best?/Love-Making	What sex works best during ovulation? Sex vs love-making?	Script formulation Contrast.	Construction of what works best (sex). Having sex and making love carries with it different connotations, sex refers to the act itself, while love-making suggests the presence of emotion – love. Both is possible
Hormones	Her testosterone levels are also peaking,	Ovulatory phase linked to peaking testosterone, meaning that she is most naturally in the mood for sex Testosterone ⇔ sex	Medicalization of the fem body, of sex. Subject distinction Constructing link between sex & testosterone	Biomedical discourse medicalizes the female body and sex - her sex drive is driven by hormones. It further reinforces the constructions of hegemonic masculinity – high testosterone levels are most naturally linked to high sex drive and intense, passionate and physical sex.
Sex	so she is the most naturally in the mood for sex during her whole cycle. This is the time to have intense, passionate,	Ovulation is the time to have intense passionate sex – optimal living	Script formulation – constructing what ovulation sex should look like	Constructing what sex should look like when she is ovulating – feeds into optimal living (timing sex) and promise of the ‘good life’ (good sex). (= Optimized sex?)
Sex/passion	physical sex (however you define it and enjoy it). Think hot and passionate or	Best kind of sex is intense, passionate, hot, and physical, but at the same time it is up to him to define whatever that means.	Detail X	
Sex/attraction	whatever turns you both on and intensifies the attraction.	Whatever turns you both on and intensifies the attraction.	Vagueness	In constructing what ‘best sex’ looks like, the authors go from detail (intense, passionate, hot, physical), to vagueness (however you define it/whatever turns you on). Looks like a stake inoculation?
Fertility	Fertility factor			
Hormones		HIGH fertility factor “in fact” Hormones are designed to have her be most fertile this week	Capital letters, important “in fact” stake inoculation Subject distinction, passive tone (have her be)	Throughout the four articles high and moderate fertility factor is indicated in capital letters while low is lower case. Wonder why?

Relationship/family	<b>HIGH</b> – In fact, her <b>hormones are</b>			
Sex/Responsibility	<b>designed to have her be most fertile</b> this week, so if <b>you're</b> trying to start a family, <b>have at it!</b> But <b>don't forget to use protection</b> every time this week if you're not ready for a baby.	'Have at it' if you're trying to start a family  The self-regulated man uses protection every time if not ready for a baby.	"have at it" metaphor, often used to encourage an activity in a vigorous, enthusiastic, or aggressive way  Constructing identity	Biomedicine uses language positions hormones as active agents – they are in control, and the woman as passive agent; hormones and fertility are something that happens to her. Throughout, the article language includes contractions (i.e., you're), and various metaphors (i.e., have at it), adding a more casual, relatable feel for the reader.
Togetherness /Conversations	<b>Heart to Heart</b>	Be <i>open</i> (in contrast to being resistant to?) having conversations about your feelings.	Contrast (open vs resistant), Modal verb (be open)	Constructing the self-regulated man who uses a condom.
Conversations/feelings	Also <b>be open</b> to the fact that it's a time that <b>she's going to want to</b> have a conversation about how you're feeling	She's going to want to be having conversations about your feelings (not you).	Script formulations about gender characteristics relating to conversations about feelings	Here, the article draws on existing constructions of gendered attitudes towards talking about feelings; it's her that will want to have these conversations not him; drawing on the existing constructions of hegemonic masculinity that the masculine man doesn't normally talk about how he's feeling. As such, the article prompts the man to be open to it.
Sex		Best time of day to have sex - optimized	Script formulation	Optimized time to have sex – the good life
Hormones	Best time of day to have sex	Levels of testosterone determine best time for sex.  Testosterone linked to sex drive	Medical discourse  Script formulation about hormones & sex drive	Medicalization of sex.  Direct link between testosterone and sex.
Sex/passion	<b>Your testosterone</b> is highest right after you wake up, and <b>her testosterone</b> is the	Enjoyable to BOTH in contrast to only ONE.	Script formulation, Contrast Capital letters emphasis	On the basis of biomedicine, the article constructs when the best time to have sex is, and that normally, women don't enjoy morning sex (not enough testosterone in the mornings compared to him), but during ovulation, both enjoy morning sex = Optimal living, optimized sex, the promise of the good life.
Togetherness	<b>highest it will be all cycle. Morning sex</b> will be passionate, physical, and			
Hormones	enjoyable for you <b>BOTH</b> this week.	All are driven by our hormones	Extreme case formulation, subjectifying	Withing the biomedical discourse, none of us are autonomous, all subjects to biology.
Knowledge			Biomedical discourse	

<p>Health Knowledge</p>	<p>Remember – We are all driven by our hormones. Knowing how they impact you and how to care for them is a key to a healthy life. Understanding how they affect your partner allows you to not only avoid common and often unnecessary pitfalls, but more importantly gives you a predictable map to plan how to engage your partner so that you win every week with your woman, giving her just what she wants, when she wants it. And you thought all you had to figure out was how to be a psychic. ;)</p>	<p>Taking care of hormones is a key to healthy life – healthism and the promise of the good life</p>	<p>Identity constructs + Historical discourses</p>	<p>Medicalisation of menstruation, hormones are discourses of health. Knowledge about hormones, and looking after them, then becomes a tool for doing ‘couple healthism’.</p>
<p>Relationship / pitfalls</p>		<p>Effects of hormones on the female body linked to common and unnecessary pitfalls in relationships – the unpredictable woman &amp; the confused man who needs a predictable map to navigate</p>	<p>Script formulation</p>	<p>Drawing on historical discourses of the mad, unpredictable woman, and the confused man – he needs a predictable map</p>
<p>Knowledge / predictability</p>			<p>Extreme case formulation</p>	<p>Constructing relationship pitfalls as resulting from the effects of fluctuating hormones.</p>
<p>Relationship / winning</p>		<p>Optimized engagement – predictable map, giving her just (exactly) what she wants, whenever she wants it. Then he can win with her every week – promise of the good life and relationship without pitfalls.</p>		<p>Couple healthism, joint endeavour of optimizing the hormones promises female predictability and a relationship without pitfalls = the good life narrative.</p>
<p>Needs</p>			<p>Metaphor – win</p>	<p>Win – likening to game – masculine discourse?</p>
<p>Knowledge/ predictability</p>		<p>Men think that they would need to be psychics in order to predict/understand women. ;)</p>	<p>Psychic - metaphor for sense of hopelessness, because figuring out how to be a psychic is impossible? Also contrast. Winky emoji</p>	<p>Could be referring to the subject position of the ‘confused man’, who feels a sense of hopelessness when it comes to hormonal, menstruating, unpredictable women. But this is now in contrast to the sense of feeling hopeful, because within the biomedical discourse exists a predictable map. Winky emoji is sometimes used to express humour.</p>
<p>Love</p>	<p>Supporting your Love FLO, Alisa</p>	<p>Supporting love.</p>	<p>Emotion category</p>	<p>Men do these things in the name of love?</p>

<u>OBJECTS</u>	<u>MYFLO – LUTEAL PHASE</u>	<u>WHAT</u>	<u>HOW</u>	<u>WHY</u>
<p>Body</p> <p>Hormones</p> <p>Lady</p> <p>Hormones</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>Instincts</p> <p>Cognition</p> <p>Behaviour</p> <p>Hero</p>	<p>Dear</p> <p>What you need to know about her Body on Hormones This Week</p> <p>This week, your lady's in her luteal phase. This week has 2 distinct segments - the first 5 days are the build up of estrogen and progesterone and her energy is up. With Progesterone entering the picture, it stimulates the nesting instinct and has her focused on details. She's interested in getting things done, attending to projects and accomplishing tasks. Be her hero this week by offering to help in any way that</p>	<p>The knowledgeable partner, he 'needs' to know Also a technology of self – attaining the knowledge about fem body in an aim to ...?</p> <p>The female body is 'on hormones',</p> <p>“Your lady” SP: the gentleman</p> <p>Hormones linked to higher energy</p> <p>Hormones stimulate certain cognitions &amp; behaviour – nesting instinct, focus on detail, getting things done, attending to projects, accomplishing tasks</p> <p>Be a hero – offer her help, put up a shelf</p>	<p>'Need' – sense of urgency Biomedical discourse Constructing the 'knowledgeable partner'</p> <p>Subject distinction - She is not autonomous, but subjected to hormonal effects and control</p> <p>Category entitlement Constructing the subject position of the man reading this article (or the couple who tracks and shares?)</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p> <p>Biomedical discourse Script formulation</p> <p>Constructing identity</p>	<p>Prescribes the practices of the confused partner. Biomedical discourse and the promise of predictability (on basis of historical discourse about the 'unpredictable woman'?)</p> <p>If a woman is controlled by hormones + medicine has knowledge about hormones = the woman is predictable within medical realm. Biomedical discourse is the dominant discourse = trustworthy, taken for granted.</p> <p>“lady” carries with it the connotations of femininity. The man's equivalent of lady is “gentleman” = manly but gentle and caring.</p> <p>Medicalisation of female energy levels – biomedical discourse links energy to hormones</p> <p>Biomedical knowledge about hormones makes it possible to predict female behaviour and cognitions (vs the unpredictable woman) – progesterone is linked to the biological instincts of nesting, i.e. getting things done, attending to projects, accomplishing tasks.</p> <p>SP: The supportive man is called upon here to 'be her hero', he offers help in any way that makes sense, maybe puts up a shelf.</p>

Fun	makes sense. Maybe put up a shelf while she organizes the closet, for example. Make your time together fun by working on things that have to get	Make your time together fun	Assessment	Assessment constructs the stances that should be invoked in the interactions. Perhaps part of the optimal living narrative – in the luteal phase the couple should work together on things that need to be done and should have fun doing it. Promise of the good life?
Together	done anyway together. The second segment of 5 days is the time where	Decreased hormones – should still feel good but will need to support her energy by eating a bit more.	Biomedical discourse Drawing on historical discourses	Drawing on the historical discourses of the monstrous feminine – the notions that the PMSing or menstruating woman consoles herself by eating more than usual – bolstered by biomedical discourse ‘it’s because of hormone levels, when they hit the low point’.
Hormones	estrogen and progesterone decrease (when there has been no conception) and when they hit their low point, it triggers menstruation to start. She should still feel good, and will need to	“Hit the low point “	Colloquial language, problematization of low hormone levels?	To ‘hit the low point’ tends to carry with it negative implications. To hit a low point usually means to reach the worst moment of situation or an activity. Problematization of low hormone levels?
Energy	support her energy by eating a bit	A word about PMS, it’s not supposed to happen	Problematization	Problematization of PMS and the associated symptoms such as bloating, mood swings, acne, ‘eating a bit more’, low energy, foggy, fatigued; it is not supposed to happen. The biomedical discourse constructs hormonal imbalance as the cause of PMS (too much estrogen and not enough progesterone), and as a marker of ‘ill health’; whilst in contrast setting out the norms for what it means to be healthy – should have enough progesterone to feel focused and energised to do things. A direct link is made to the practice of healthism, prescribing the activities that one performs in the name of health, where the app serves as the technologies of self: “she’ll be
PMS	more. A word about PMS - it’s not supposed to happen, if it does happen, it will occur during this second segment of	PMS caused by hormonal imbalance	Problematization, biomedical discourse	learning how to eat to keep her hormones balanced”
Hormones	5 days, and it is caused by an imbalance of the ratio of estrogen to progesterone -	PMS symptoms : bloating, moodswings, acne, and more, foggy and fatigued.	Problematization, script formulation	
	too much estrogen and not enough progesterone. If it happens, she will	x Instead of having enough progesterone to feel focused and energized to do things	Creating norms	
Symptoms	have physical symptoms of bloating,			

<p>Cognition</p> <p>Energy</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Healing</p> <p>Support</p>	<p>moodswings, acne, and more, and instead of having enough progesterone to feel focused and energized to do things, she will be foggy and fatigued. The good news is, that if she's using her MYFLO app, she'll be learning how to eat to keep her hormones balanced and making her PMS a distant memory. As she works on that healing, be supportive and patient.</p>	<p>The good news</p> <p>Through an app she'll be learning how to eat to keep her hormones balanced and making her PMS a distant memory.</p> <p>As she works on that healing</p> <p>SP: supportive partner – supportive &amp; patient</p>	<p>Assesment &amp; contrast (good x bad)</p> <p>Healthism, technologies of self</p> <p>Technologies of self, governmentality</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p> <p>Constructing identity</p>	<p>Perhaps this section intersects with governmentality, and the notion of the 'good citizen' who engages in healthism practices to eliminate the problematic PMS – these possibilities for practice are framed as 'the good news', which sits in contrast to the 'bad stuff' (PMS) that one should strive to making into a 'distant memory'</p> <p>Working on healing – reference to PMS as an illness, which requires work – carving out a place for the supportive partner who is asked to be supportive and patient.</p>
<p>Romance</p>	<p>What you should plan to do together?/Date Night</p> <p>This is the time where planning a romantic night in will make her swoon. It doesn't have to be a big production, make her a comforting meal - something</p>	<p>SP: supportive partner – planning a romantic night will make her swoon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes comforting meal, picks fun movie, plays boardgames, quality time, just the two of you, casual, domestic, gives massage, foot rub,</li> </ul> <p>Don't try to go out or order in food</p>	<p>Constructing identity</p> <p>Modal verb</p>	<p>Living optimally calls for the supportive partner to step in during the luteal phase, constructing his identity around the things that he does and doesn't do . . .</p> <p>Normally, the romantic partner would try to take her out for dinner or order in food, but the luteal</p>

Quality	with sweet potatoes and kale - pick a fun movie to watch or pull out a boardgame to play together. Spend some quality time, just the two of you and keep it casual and definitely domestic. <b>Don't try</b>	If she's working on balancing her hormones, fixing her period	Technologies of self	phase calls for optimised romance? So these are the things he should not do in this phase.
Hormones	to go out to dinner, order in food, or invite friends over. If she's working on <b>balancing her hormones, fixing her</b>	restaurant/take out food will make her symptoms feel worse and she'll need more quiet time	Problematisation, healthism	As a good citizen, she practices healthism by working on balancing her hormones and fixing her (broken) period. Part of this endeavour is to avoid unhealthy (restaurant/take out) food, as it may cause her symptoms to worsen. Diet is framed within a medical discourse, problematizing certain ways of eating and placing responsibility for health on the individual meal choices.
Symptoms	<b>period</b> , then restaurant/take out food <b>will make her symptoms feel worse and</b>	SP: supportive partner: makes <b>organic, sugar-free hot chocolate and popcorn with coconut oil</b> , cuddle up together	Healthism	In the pursuit of the coupled endeavours at healthism practices, the supportive partner <b>makes organic, sugar-free hot chocolate and popcorn with coconut oil</b> deemed as healthy food choices
Healthy	<b>she'll need more quiet time this week</b> . Give her a massage, rub her feet, rent a movie and make some <b>organic sugar free hot chocolate and popcorn with coconut oil</b> , and cuddle up together.			
Sex	What kind of sex works best?/Love-Making	She'll still feel hot and bothered due to an additional boost of testosterone  [when testosterone boost wanes] she will crave physical and emotional intimacy	Colloquial language Biomedical discourse  Biomedical discourse, script formulation	Hot and bothered = sexually aroused. Using colloquialisms for an easy, fun, engaging read? Sexual arousal attributed to hormonal "boost"  Drawing on biomedical discourse about gendered sexual characteristics? Testosterone (the masculine hormone) associated with being hot and bothered, but without it, she is more feminine – craving physical and emotional intimacy.

Arousal	In bed, in the first 5 day segment, she'll still feel <b>hot and bothered</b> due to an	She will need some help getting out of her head (and massive to do list) and into her heart and body	Script formulation, Drawing on historical discourses	Drawing on historical discourses of the mad woman? (massive to do list). She will need some help to get out of her head.
Hormones	additional <b>boost of testosterone</b> . But in the second 5 day segment, she might not be as in the mood for sex. She will crave	SP: supportive partner: The week to heighten the romance factor, surprise her with a long passionate kiss in the kitchen, give her a big hug when she comes home and tell her how much you love her, remind her of how beautiful she is and how being with her makes you feel.	Constructing identity	Constructing the things that the supportive partner does
Help	the physical and emotional intimacy, but will need some help getting out of her	Romance – not <b>just a nice idea</b> , it's <b>actually</b> a form of foreplay that will have <b>big payoffs</b> , (will help ignite desire)	Stake inoculation Masculine discourse, metaphor The promise	'Actually' - makes it more plausible to justify being romantic
Cognition	head (and massive to-do list) and into her heart and body. So think of this as the week to heighten the romance factor. It's not just a nice idea, it's actually a form of			The justifications made are done so using a masculine discourse, promising good sex as a result; likening it to a return on investment (payoff), as in foreplay before sex (not just a nice idea), it actually ignites her desire.
Payoffs	foreplay that will have <b>big payoffs</b> . Ideas: surprise her with a long passionate kiss in			
Romance	the kitchen, give her a big hug when she comes home and tell her how much you love her, remind her of how beautiful she is and how being with her makes you feel. Approach her mind and heart this	SP: self-regulated man partner – uses condoms		Constructing the subject position of the regulated partner
Desire	week and you'll help ignite her desire.		Constructions of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If trying to conceive he wears a condom</li> <li>- If not he is timely to ensure successful conception</li> </ul>

Fertility	Fertility Factor	~ Makes sure to engage as early on as possible when trying to conceive	~	
Responsibility	MEDIUM - In the first 5 day segment, she is still fairly fertile, so use condoms to prevent pregnancy. If you're trying to conceive - <b>make sure</b> to engage <b>as early</b>	[conversations during PMS] is a big one [PMS] is often (and unfortunately and unnecessarily) the most contentious time during the month.	EFC	Drawing on the constructions of PMS being universally regarded as 'a big one' (a big topic, a big issue?) by all. Drawing on PMS constructions as 'most contentious time of the month – this is judged by authors as unfortunate and unnecessary.
Timing	on during this first segment <b>as possible</b> .	<b>Want to break it down for you and give you tools to have the love FLO (flow?) again</b>	Script formulation	Perhaps addressing the SP of the confused man, authors are using masculine discourse to help out with the confusion (break it down and give tools)
Conversations	Heart to Heart		Metaphors : Break it down for you Give you tools	
PMS	This is a <b>big one as it's often (and unfortunately and unnecessarily) the most contentious time during the month</b> . I want to break this down for	Circulating progesterone in her brain – makes her look for ways to improve things, complete things, take things to the next level, wants to share with you what's working and what isn't, wants to improve upon various areas of her life , including relationship with you	Biomedical discourse Script formulation Subject distinction	Biomedical discourse positions hormones as the active agent (circulating progesterone makes is making her), constructing the premenstrual woman as thinking and doing in a certain way
Tools				

<p>Hormones</p>	<p>you and give you tools to have the love FLO again.</p>	<p>This is a good thing</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Invoke the stance in men – to accept the premenstrual thinking and doing as a good thing, with the justification that it is all in the name of a healthy happy loving future – the promise of the good life, in which the future of a relationship is medicalised using the discourses of health (healthy future).</p>
<p>Cognition</p>	<p>The presence of progesterone circulating in her brain is making her look for ways</p>	<p>She’s moving things toward a happy loving future</p>	<p>~ and medicalisation</p>	
<p>Behaviour</p>	<p>to improve things, complete things, and take things to the next level. She wants</p>	<p>NOW is the PERFECT time for your master problem solving skills</p>	<p>EFC, capital letters SP masculine man</p>	<p>Emphasising the importance of perfect timing – the optimal living The masculine man is called upon, men and masculinity are associated with having ‘master problem solving skills’.</p>
<p>Relationships work</p>	<p>to share with you what’s working and not working and what she wants to improve upon in various areas of her life, including her relationship with you. This</p>	<p>You should not take anything as a direct criticism</p>	<p>Modal verb</p>	<p>Managing men’s obligation to not take anything as a direct criticism, because PMS is regarded as the most contentious time, he should instead learn how to de-code what she is or isn’t saying</p>
<p>Future</p>	<p>is a good thing, she’s building upon the foundation of your relationship to keep</p>	<p>What she wants is for you to say ...</p>	<p>Predictability</p>	<p>Biomedicine makes it possible to predict the once unpredictable woman – on the basis of her hormone levels one can even predict what she wants him to say at a given moment.</p>
<p>Timing</p>	<p>moving things toward a healthy happy loving future. When she tells you these things, this means is that NOW is the</p>	<p>Get into it in a constructive way with her</p>	<p>Modal verb</p>	<p>Grants permission for men to get into it with her in a constructive way</p>
<p>Problem solving</p>	<p>PERFECT time for you to come in with your master problem solving skills! Work together to figure out what solutions make sense. Remember however, that</p>			

<p>Criticism</p>	<p>you should not take anything that she is saying as a direct criticism of you. <b>if she is saying,</b> I want us to do something with the yard, <b>she is not saying,</b> you never help me with the yard. <b>What she wants is for you to say,</b> yeah, let's plan to get some new furniture for the patio - where should we look to buy it from, what color, how much? <b>Get into it</b> in a <b>constructive</b> way with her.</p>	<p>It's <b>not because</b> she has hormones this week that she isn't thinking clearly and is hypercritical.</p> <p>It's because the changes in her hormones are allowing her to be more direct and that is a good thing.</p> <p>It's a healthy, loving act in a relationship to discuss ways to make things better without it turning into a conflict.</p>	<p>Disclaimer?</p> <p>Biomedical discourse Subject distinction Assessment</p> <p>Assessment</p>	<p>Authors mitigate the potentially negative interpretations of speaking to the topic of female PMS behaviour –isn't thinking clearly or is hypercritical (the mad woman?) Disclaimer used in conjunction with a contrasting assessment of what hormones are doing (it's a good thing) Hormones positioned as acting agents, woman as subjected to hormonal control</p>
<p>Constructive</p>	<p>However, if things aren't working well in any area of your relationship, she will most need to express this to you at this time. <b>It's not because she has hormones this week that she isn't thinking clearly and is hypercritical.</b> It's because the changes in her <b>hormones are allowing her</b> to be more direct and that is a good thing. It's a healthy, loving act in a</p>	<p>PMS gets bad rap</p> <p>It's unfortunate, as <b>PMS is a correctable hormonal imbalance.</b></p> <p>Her hormonal imbalance = source of conflict,</p> <p>But not sole, your hormones also play a part</p> <p>Your hormones affect mood, energy and sex drive on a daily basis</p>	<p>Consensus</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, practices of healthism, problematization</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, taken for granted ideas</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p>	<p>Reporting as in many people are in agreement that PMS gets bad rap Using biomedical discourse, PMS and hormonal imbalance is problematized as something in need of being corrected</p> <p>Drawing on taken for granted ideas that hormonal imbalances are a source of conflict</p> <p>Medicalisation of the male body as well</p>
<p>Directness</p>	<p>However, if things aren't working well in any area of your relationship, she will most need to express this to you at this time. <b>It's not because she has hormones this week that she isn't thinking clearly and is hypercritical.</b> It's because the changes in her <b>hormones are allowing her</b> to be more direct and that is a good thing. It's a healthy, loving act in a</p>	<p>PMS gets bad rap</p> <p>It's unfortunate, as <b>PMS is a correctable hormonal imbalance.</b></p> <p>Her hormonal imbalance = source of conflict,</p> <p>But not sole, your hormones also play a part</p> <p>Your hormones affect mood, energy and sex drive on a daily basis</p>	<p>Consensus</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, practices of healthism, problematization</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, taken for granted ideas</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p>	<p>Reporting as in many people are in agreement that PMS gets bad rap Using biomedical discourse, PMS and hormonal imbalance is problematized as something in need of being corrected</p> <p>Drawing on taken for granted ideas that hormonal imbalances are a source of conflict</p> <p>Medicalisation of the male body as well</p>
<p>Hormones</p>	<p>However, if things aren't working well in any area of your relationship, she will most need to express this to you at this time. <b>It's not because she has hormones this week that she isn't thinking clearly and is hypercritical.</b> It's because the changes in her <b>hormones are allowing her</b> to be more direct and that is a good thing. It's a healthy, loving act in a</p>	<p>PMS gets bad rap</p> <p>It's unfortunate, as <b>PMS is a correctable hormonal imbalance.</b></p> <p>Her hormonal imbalance = source of conflict,</p> <p>But not sole, your hormones also play a part</p> <p>Your hormones affect mood, energy and sex drive on a daily basis</p>	<p>Consensus</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, practices of healthism, problematization</p> <p>Biomedical discourse, taken for granted ideas</p> <p>Biomedical discourse</p>	<p>Reporting as in many people are in agreement that PMS gets bad rap Using biomedical discourse, PMS and hormonal imbalance is problematized as something in need of being corrected</p> <p>Drawing on taken for granted ideas that hormonal imbalances are a source of conflict</p> <p>Medicalisation of the male body as well</p>
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Conflict	relationship to discuss ways to make things better without it turning into a conflict.	If you're not managing your own health, you'll be just as moody and contentious as you may be finding her to be	Healthism Assessment / script formulation	Medicalisation of relationships, linking into the practices of healthism - both, men and women, should manage their hormonal health – as a coupled endeavour with the promise of the good life, otherwise they both will be moody and contentious
PMS		While you both address the hormonal stuff, you can also work on something else that will help make things more harmonious	Technologies of self	Technologies of self, relationship labour – there is always more work to do on the self and the relationship, with the promise of the good – harmonious life
Hormones	The <b>bad rap</b> this week gets due to hormones is unfortunate, as <b>PMS is a correctable hormonal imbalance</b> . But			
Conflict	that imbalance is not the sole source of your conflict. Her hormones aside, your			
Hormones	hormones also play a part - as levels of testosterone and estrogen and cortisol, not to mention your blood sugar - affect your mood, energy and sex drive on a			
Health	day to day basis too. If you're not	Not having a good communication factor – not having learned how to communicate feelings directly – is a powder keg situation and something small will set things off.	Technologies of self	PMS – likened to a powder keg situation ready to explode – drawing on the historical discourses of the mad unpredictable woman
Mood	<b>managing your own hormonal health, you'll be just as moody and contentious as you may be finding her to be. While</b>		Metaphor	To prevent the explosion – one can use technologies of self, work on good communication of feelings
Relationship work	<b>you both address the hormonal stuff, you can also work on something else that will help make things more harmonious.</b>	This is unnecessary and corrosive to maintaining safe emotional space for the both of you	EFC ??	Implying the detrimental results that the combination of PMS and poor communication can have on individuals – unnecessary, corrosive, unsafe

Communication	<p>Beyond the chemistry factor, there's the <b>communication factor</b>. If you both have a good communication track record, then, she can bring things up, you can take them in and respond from an academic point of view and vice versa. If however, you both have not yet learned</p>	<p>Author enthusiastically recommends resources for improving communication skills and understanding each other</p>	Technologies of self	<p>The coupled endeavour, using technologies of selves – using tools to help improve their communication skills and understanding - to avoid the detrimental results that they might otherwise arrive at</p>
Conflict	<p>how to communicate your feelings directly then this is a <b>powder keg</b></p>	<p>Quiz which helps understand individual different ways in which you prefer to be loved by your partner - so key to know!!</p>	Technologies of self	<p>A quiz as a technology of self – knowing how one <i>prefers to be loved</i> is so key to know</p>
Safety	<p><b>situation and something small will set things off</b>. This is <b>unnecessary</b> and <b>corrosive</b> to maintaining <b>safe</b> emotional space for the both of you in a relationship. I couldn't recommend 2</p>	<p>Audiobook which teaches how to express yourself without hurting or criticising anyone you love.</p> <p>'Everything you need, amazing communication, doesn't hurt or criticize anyone you love'</p>	<p>~</p> <p>EFC Emotion category</p>	<p>An audiobook teaching how to express yourself as a technology of self</p> <p>Evoking feelings in the reader that this is essential and urgent 'everything you need to know', because they wouldn't want to hurt or criticize <i>anyone</i> that they <i>love</i></p>
Tools	<p>resources more enthusiastically to give you <b>tools to help improve</b> your communication skills and understanding of each other:</p>	<p>Plan these exercises next week during her menstrual phase</p>	Optimized living	<p>The optimized technologies of couples</p>

Understanding	1 - Take the 5 love languages quiz online - will help you understand your individual different ways in which you prefer to be loved by your partner - so key to know!!	3pm is perfect time to have sex – afternoon delight		
Learning	2 - Download and listen to the audiobook for Getting the Love you Want - will teach you everything you need to know to have amazing communication that doesn't hurt or criticize anyone you love, but that allows you to express yourself. In fact, after you have listened	Your testosterone lowering and estrogen rising = makes you more emotionally attuned to where she is and open to her feelings	Optimized sex Biomedical discourse Gender construction	Biomedicine can predict the best time to have sex. On the hour!  Drawing on biomedical discourse in that lower levels of testosterone and higher levels of estrogen associated with emotional attunement and being open to feelings – feminine traits
Exercises	to the book, plan to do these exercises together next week during her menstrual phase!	Try schedule sex on the weekend – biggest orgasmic potential not to be missed	Optimized sex EFC	Optimized sex – linked to orgasmic potential, not to be missed Orgasmic potential – implies the magnitude and makes more plausible
Together		All are driven by our hormones Taking care of hormones is a key to healthy life – healthism and the promise of the good life	Extreme case formulation, subjectifying Biomedical discourse	Within the biomedical discourse, none of us are autonomous, all subjects to biology. Medicalisation of menstruation, hormones are discourses of health. Knowledge about hormones, and looking after them, then becomes a tool for doing 'couple healthism'.
Sex	Best time of Day to have Sex	Effects of hormones on the female body linked to common and unnecessary pitfalls in relationships – the unpredictable woman & the confused man who needs a predictable map to navigate	Identity constructs + Historical discourses Script formulation	Drawing on historical discourses of the mad, unpredictable woman, and the confused man – he needs a predictable map

Hormones	The afternoon delight week - 3pm is perfect. Your testosterone is lowering and your estrogen is rising, which will make you more emotionally attuned to where she is at this phase and open to her feelings. Try it on the weekend, but do try to schedule it (biggest orgasmic potential) - is not to be missed.	Optimized engagement – predictable map, giving her <b>just</b> (exactly) what she wants, whenever she wants it. Then he can win with her every week – promise of the good life and relationship without pitfalls.	Extreme case formulation	Constructing relationship pitfalls as resulting from the effects of fluctuating hormones.
Feelings		Men think that they would need to be psychics in order to predict/understand women. ;)	Metaphor – win	Couple healthism, joint endeavour of optimizing the hormones promises female predictability and a relationship without pitfalls = the good life narrative.
Potential			Psychic - metaphor for sense of hopelessness, because figuring out how to be a psychic is impossible? Also contrast. Winky emoji	Win – likening to game – masculine discourse?  Could be referring to the subject position of the ‘confused man’, who feels a sense of hopelessness when it comes to hormonal, menstruating, unpredictable women. But this is now in contrast to the sense of feeling hopeful, because within the biomedical discourse exists a predictable map. Winky emoji is sometimes used to express humour.
Hormones		Supporting love.		
Knowledge	Remember - We are all driven by our hormones. Knowing how they impact you and how to care for them is a key to a healthy life. Understanding how they affect your partner allows you to not only avoid common and often unnecessary relationship pitfalls, but more importantly gives you a predictable map to plan how to engage your partner so		Emotion category	Men do these things in the name of love?
Health Knowledge				
Relationship / pitfalls				
Knowledge / predictability				
Relationship / winning				
Needs				

<p>Knowledge/ predictability</p> <p>Love</p>	<p>that you win every week with your woman, giving her just what she wants when she wants it. And you thought all you had to figure out was how to be psychic;)</p> <p>Supporting your Love FLO, Alisa</p>			
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