

## Mobile prenatal app shown to reduce in-person visits during pregnancy

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Using the mobile app Babyscripts reduced in-person prenatal care visits while maintaining patient and provider satisfaction, according to research published in *JMIR mHealth and uHealth* by physician

researchers from the George Washington University (GW).

"Prenatal care is one of the most widely utilized preventative health care services, however there is little research on the effectiveness of standard prenatal care," said Kathryn Marko, MD, first author of the paper and assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences. "We wanted to reevaluate the model for low-risk pregnancies and see if a mobile prenatal app could remove barriers to access and reduce the burden on patients and the health care system."

Mobile health apps have the potential to transform health care. Studies have shown [mobile technology](#) can improve disease management for diabetes self-care activities, HIV infection medication adherence, and sickle cell anemia medication adherence. The research team, led by Marko, hypothesized that mobile health apps could be just as transformative for [prenatal care](#).

The Babyscripts app was built to deliver educational content and remotely monitor blood pressure and weight. The app gave patients information on topics like nutrition and breastfeeding, but also gave patients and providers early warnings about hypertension or abnormal weight gain, which could indicate [gestational diabetes](#), nutritional deficiency, or edema associated with preeclampsia.

Eligible participants were women between ages 18—40 years and considered low-risk—a singleton pregnancy with no previous diagnosis of hypertension, diabetes, renal disease, collagen vascular disease, maternal substance abuse, or other previously documented condition that could potentially lead to a poor pregnancy outcome. A total of 88 low-risk patients were enrolled in the study. Patients who used the app saw their OBGYN an average of 7.8 times. Patients who did not use the app saw their OBGYN an average of 10.2 times. There was no statistical

difference in patient or provider satisfaction in either group.

"While the results of our study were largely positive, more research is needed to determine the connection between mobile prenatal apps and maternal or fetal outcomes," said Andrew Meltzer, MD, co-author of the paper and associate professor of emergency medicine at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences. "There is a lot more potential for use of mobile prenatal apps for both patients and providers."

**More information:** Kathryn I Marko et al, A Mobile Prenatal Care App to Reduce In-Person Visits: Prospective Controlled Trial, *JMIR mHealth and uHealth* (2019). [DOI: 10.2196/10520](https://doi.org/10.2196/10520)

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