

New self-administered digital health tool helps women assess risk for premature delivery

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Dr. Avi Patil, founder, Nixxi Credit: Nixxi

Women who are intending to become pregnant or who have just found

out they are pregnant can quickly learn of their risk for preterm birth with a noninvasive, self-administered digital tool called PopNatal.

Dr. Avi Patil is the founder of [Nixxi](#), a [women's](#) health care startup. The Phoenix-based company is founded on innovations developed at the Indiana University School of Medicine, where Patil previously worked. He said the PopNatal assessment is completed online via a mobile device or computer and typically takes less than 15 minutes for most patients.

"PopNatal identifies nearly 10 times more women who may be at risk for [preterm birth](#) than the current standard of care—history-based screening—in early [pregnancy](#)," Patil said. "Knowing the chances of having a preterm [birth](#) helps a woman and her health care provider guide the next steps in her pregnancy care."

PopNatal uses an innovative chatbot interface to conveniently screen and efficiently collect data. Women register on the [Nixxi website](#) to receive access to PopNatal.

"Most women should be able to complete the self-assessment in 10 to 15 minutes; there is no need for [blood samples](#) or any other invasive procedures," Patil said. "The report will be provided within 72 hours to the health care provider designated by the user. The report can be for discussion and to create a personalized care plan for the patient."

"We encourage patients to discuss their interest in preterm birth screening with their provider, though they are able to order the testing directly from Nixxi if they choose to do so."

Nixxi's platform includes a second product, PopNatal Insights, which is a customized report to physicians of evidence-based guidelines and treatment options based on a patient's specific medical history. It is intended to serve as an additional resource for [health care providers](#) to

respond to a PopNatal result and formulate a tailored pregnancy care plan. PopNatal Insights is currently in a trial phase, with a wide release expected soon.

"The guidelines are tailored to a woman's [risk factors](#) for preterm birth," Patil said. "The report functions as a roadmap to guide care of pregnancies with risk factors from the very beginning of gestation. By reviewing the PopNatal Insights document with their health care provider, women will have a greater understanding of medical issues that may affect their pregnancy and steps that can be taken to mitigate those risks."

Nixxi has licensed part of its technology from the IU Innovation and Commercialization Office, which translates IU intellectual property to commercialized products and services for the market. Nixxi's platform of technologies, including a soon-to-be-available blood test, confirms its interest in pursuing a population health strategy for addressing and reducing preterm birth rates.

"Preterm birth is a public health issue that impacts all levels of society, including women without obvious risk factors," Patil said. "Nixxi has developed a cost-effective platform to screen an entire population and pinpoint pregnancies at the highest risk of preterm birth, allowing resources to be focused on those who need it the most. Our goal is to empower women and enable health care providers to achieve the healthiest pregnancies possible."

Provided by Indiana University

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