



Evaluating the Impact of the MomConnect mHealth Platform on Early Antenatal Care Initiation Among Primigravid Women in Tshwane, South Africa: An Intervention Study

Pieter van der Merwe¹, Thandiwe Nkosi², Lerato Mokoena²

¹ University of the Witwatersrand

² Durban University of Technology (DUT)

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Correspondence: pmerwe@aol.com

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Author notes

Pieter van der Merwe is affiliated with University of the Witwatersrand and focuses on Medicine research in Africa. Thandiwe Nkosi is affiliated with Durban University of Technology (DUT) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa. Lerato Mokoena is affiliated with Durban University of Technology (DUT) and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

In South Africa, many primigravid women initiate antenatal care after the first trimester. Mobile health interventions such as the national MomConnect platform aim to improve maternal health behaviours, but their specific effect on early antenatal care booking among first-time mothers requires evaluation. This study aimed to assess the impact of the MomConnect mHealth platform on the proportion of primigravid women initiating antenatal care within the first trimester of pregnancy in Tshwane, South Africa. A quasi-experimental, controlled intervention study was conducted. Primigravid women attending public health facilities were recruited and allocated to an intervention group (enrolled in MomConnect) or a control group (receiving standard care). Data on gestational age at the first antenatal visit were collected from clinic records and analysed using comparative statistics. The proportion of women initiating antenatal care within the first trimester was 68% in the MomConnect group, compared to 44% in the control group, a difference of 24 percentage points. This difference was statistically significant. Enrolment in the MomConnect mHealth platform was associated with a substantially increased likelihood of early antenatal care initiation among primigravid women in this setting. Programme managers should strengthen promotion and support for MomConnect enrolment specifically for first-time mothers. Further research should investigate the platform's long-term effects on subsequent health-seeking behaviours and pregnancy outcomes. mHealth, MomConnect, antenatal care, first trimester, primigravid, South Africa, intervention study This study provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of a national mHealth platform in improving a critical maternal health behaviour, informing policy and programme scale-up.

Keywords: mHealth, antenatal care, primigravid women, Sub-Saharan Africa, intervention study

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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