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## INTRODUCTION

Families are important targets of lifestyle behaviour modification interventions focused at changing children's health behaviours.<sup>1,2</sup> As children enter adolescence, parents can benefit by being better supported to help their children maintain or adopt healthy behaviours.

## PURPOSE

To qualitatively explore what features parents would value in an app to best support their family in developing and maintaining healthy behaviours.

## CONTEXT

This study was conducted during the development of the Aim2Be mobile app (Childhood Obesity Foundation, Vancouver BC), which aims to support youth (10-17 years old) and their families in adopting healthy behaviours in four areas: healthy eating, physical activity, screen time, and sleep.

## PARTICIPANTS

Ten families (one mother and one adolescent) were invited to use an early prototype of the Aim2Be app.

Sample Demographic Characteristics (n=20)			
		Parent	Child
Age (Years)	Mean (SD)	44.8 (5)	14.6 (1.2)
Gender	Female	100%	40%
Marital Status	Married	80%	
	Other	20%	
Household Income	>\$100,000	60%	
	<\$100,000	40%	

## METHODS

Parents were asked to explore the parent companion app, which included knowledge articles and a social space, for two weeks. Parents then participated in a 75-minute semi-structured interview, separate from their child. During the interview, parents were asked to comment on the existing app features, and features or content they would like to see in an enhanced version to better understand parents' perspectives on app engagement, functionality, aesthetics, and therapeutic potential. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and qualitatively analyzed in NVivo11 software (QSR International, 2015).

## RESULTS

THEME	EXAMPLES	QUOTES
<p><b>Comprehensive Features &amp; Resources (One-Stop Shop)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-app functionalities for: setting goals, tracking progress, reflecting, and evaluation of goals (feedback)</li> <li>Resources and guides to support parents with teen challenges</li> <li>Reminders &amp; prompt to take action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recipes</li> <li>Access to local store flyers</li> <li>Habit trackers</li> <li>Rewards/points</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent 7</b> – “I get a lot of information a lot of the time but I don't always know how to metabolize information into action. I know in theory what I should do, but unless I have a SMART goal or a way to create that or a motivation to create that, it will just likely stay as information.”</p>
<p><b>Supporting Functions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated space that allows them to seek support (via the Live Coach or with other parents)</li> <li>Support interactions with other parents to learn and share</li> <li>Ability to post questions and provide advice/tips to other parents, as they realize that other parents face the same challenges as them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Live Coach</li> <li>Direct message other parents/group chats</li> <li>Social wall/ forums</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent 11</b> – “If I am, you know, seeing that my kids are getting benefit or I'm getting benefit with some of the changes I made, that I want to spread. And this is a good way that, you know, if all the moms are on the same app or, you know, parents, dads on the same app and they read. And the way I'm learning from their experience and, you know, they can get, like, some benefit out of this too.”</p>
<p><b>Tailoring to Familial Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to tailor use of app content based on individual need(s) of the family (e.g., focus on dietary behaviours rather than screen time) – may integrate assessment or searching themes/keywords</li> <li>Would like recommendations on app content that would be most applicable to their family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments/quizzes</li> <li>Prompts to app resources related to parental concerns</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent 8</b> – “...so if it gives new information that I wasn't aware of, and if it gives feedback on my own behaviour, so maybe I think that we're sitting down to dinner three times a week. But actually I keep track of it and realize that last week we didn't sit down at all. Like, oh, okay, maybe I should focus a bit more on this and maybe I can use the app to help me do that.”</p>
<p><b>Facilitating Parent-Teen Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide conversation starters to help parent connect and support their teen – without compromising their teen's autonomy.</li> <li>While parents value teen's privacy, they would like to work on the same content as their teens as they are worried their teens will not seek their support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Space for teens to message their parents via the app</li> <li>Allow teens to select whether their aims are public or private</li> <li>Conversation starters</li> <li>Friendly app challenges</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent 10</b> – “So I knew [my son] would be setting aims, but I didn't know what specific [aims]...But do I want my app to be able to tell me what goals he's set or does that need to be a conversation that I'm having with him[?]...would it shut him down if I'm, like, 'Oh, so I hear you're working on sugary drinks this week'. As opposed to 'Oh, what's your goal this week?' And him having to tell me about it.”</p>
<p><b>Supporting the Parent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information regarding their own health and wellbeing, as they recognize that they cannot support their teens, if they are not taking care of their own health/not modelling healthy behaviours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide resources to empower parents to become role models within their families</li> </ul>	<p><b>Parent 9</b> – “So [this app] actually apply to the parent as well, like, physical activity, sleeping, food and all those things...It might be a good reminder to have something to remind you to do exercise or give yourself a treat or, you know, those things.”</p>

## DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

- Parents value having a comprehensive and multi-functional app that aids them and their families to achieve a healthy lifestyle.
- These results will be used for ongoing development of the Aim2Be app and may also be useful to inform the development of future m-health and e-health interventions targeting youth and their families.

## REFERENCES

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