



## Prof. Jane Scott

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Jane Scott is a Professor of Public Health Nutrition at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. She has published extensively on the epidemiology of breastfeeding and infant feeding practices in both Australia and the UK. Her research has provided empirical evidence of the important role that partners play in a woman's decision to initiate and continue breastfeeding.

She is the principal investigator of a large randomised, controlled mHealth intervention involving 1400 expecting couples which is trialling Milk Man, Australia's first breastfeeding smartphone app designed specifically for fathers. She was a technical writer of the 2012 NHMRC Australian Infant Feeding Guidelines.

## Impact of digital technologies on breastfeeding

Digital technologies provide health professionals with an unprecedented opportunity to engage with breastfeeding women far beyond the local geographical reach of the professional. Widespread access to, and use of, handheld digital devices make mobile phones a feasible, affordable and acceptable medium for delivering breastfeeding support. The digital divide that exists between low and high income countries will determine the way in which mobile phones are used, but broadly speaking they can be used to support breastfeeding mothers through direct messaging, voice counselling and interactive media (smartphone apps and social media).

The ready availability of smartphone apps and mushrooming use of social media present both opportunities and risks for breastfeeding protection and support. For instance, while a large number of smartphone apps exist, relatively few are 'support' apps, with the majority developed to 'track' breastfeeding. These apps are designed to meet the apparent need of mothers to know exactly how much breastmilk their infant is receiving and potentially may undermine a woman's confidence in her breastmilk supply. Similarly, millennial mothers are quick and eager to share their opinions with other mothers via social media which can result in the widespread and rapid proliferation of breastfeeding misinformation.

Mobile phones are being increasingly used in mobile health (mHealth) interventions targeting pregnant women but to date relatively few mHealth interventions have explicitly

targeted breastfeeding and/or been robustly evaluated. This presentation will provide a rationale and identify opportunities for using digital technologies to support and promote breastfeeding; compare and contrast how mobile phones are being used in mHealth breastfeeding interventions in low and high income countries and; describe the best-practice development, testing and preliminary process evaluation of Milk Man, a breastfeeding support app designed specifically for fathers.