

# DEVELOPMENT OF A DIGITAL, HIGH-QUALITY AND USER-FRIENDLY PLATFORM FOR FAMILIES WITH (EX-) PREMATURE INFANTS

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## Background

An emotional, difficult, stressful period starts for parents when their baby is admitted to the neonatology. Parents are looking for online information regarding prematurity and neonatal intensive care<sup>1,2</sup>. However, professionals are concerned about the quality and accuracy of this online information. Additionally, support and care for families with a premature infant is fragmented, often unknown by parents and caregivers, partly due to regional differences<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, a digital platform 'Too early' is developed for parents with (ex-) premature babies.

## Aim(s)

The objective of this platform is to bundle relevant, qualitative, reliable and evidence-based information around prematurity for parents with (ex-) preemies.

## Methods

A user-centered design (UCD) model is used to develop the platform. This iterative design process, consists of four stages: (1) understand the context of use, (2) specify user requirements, (3) design solutions and (4) evaluate. Key elements in the UCD model is active involvement of end-users, focusing on the needs of parents as well as a multidisciplinary approach.

## Results

A users' group of parents and advisory board with different experts and stakeholders was created. We explored needs of parents, based on previous research and a literature review. Existing resources for parents were mapped. The content of the platform, its priorities and functionalities were defined in a design sprint with parents. This results in a first version of the platform with following pages, validated by the advisory board: (1) homepage with general information about prematurity, (2) page 'on neonatology', (3) page 'discharge', (4) page 'peer support' with testimonials, (5) dictionary explaining medical and other terms and (6) contact page. Currently, pages on selfcare, follow-up of the preemie, feeding and financial/administrative issues are explored. An evaluation of the platform among parents is planned between October 2023-March 2024.

## Discussion

This digital platform, developed through an innovative, user-centered approach with active involvement of parents, is a unique tool to help families with preemies and guide them to the appropriate care and support, thereby bundling relevant information and resources about prematurity.

## Implications and future perspectives

Although the co-creation approach optimizes the conditions for a successful implementation, efforts are needed to promote and sustain the platform, in order to become the reference platform for prematurity in Belgium.

## References

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