Major anti-vaccine misinformation disseminators: Pregnancy apps

For generations of parents, Heidi Murkoff's 1984 pregnancy guide "What to Expect When You're Expecting" has been a trusty companion, offering calm, scientifically informed advice for a nerve-wracking nine months.

These days, of course, there's an app for that: What to Expect's "Pregnancy & Baby Tracker," which offers personalized articles, videos, graphics of your baby's development, and other features based on your due date.

But parents who've used What To Expect's app say they also offered something they weren't expecting: a "community" section rife with scare stories, conspiracy theories, and outright falsehoods about the safety of vaccines, posted by other users and surfaced by the app's search functions and email notifications.

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While social media giants like Facebook and YouTube have faced heavy pressure to crack down on misinformation during the pandemic, smaller apps have also struggled to police their platforms and rein in falsehoods. Apps aimed at first-time parents, who often face an overwhelming volume of new decisions, have proved particularly vulnerable to users looking to promote all types of vaccine hesitancy.

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Widespread misinformation linking the coronavirus vaccine to infertility and pregnancy complications has been blamed for low vaccination rates among pregnant individuals.

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.