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To explore the use of an android app to promote adherence to adjuvant endocrine therapy following breast cancer

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Introduction: Adherence to adjuvant endocrine therapy (AET) following treatment for breast cancer is sub-optimal resulting in increased recurrence and mortality. Smart-phone and internet ready devices such as apps are a novel approach used to improve medication adherence. They are constantly accessible, involve and educate the patient, and provide a repository for patient- and medication-specific information. This study aimed to explore the feasibility and possible content for an app to inform and support women taking AET and promote adherence.

Methods: Two focus groups with women (n = 15) and five individual telephone interviews with women aged 43 to 79 years who are prescribed AET following breast cancer. Women were recruited through the UK charity Breast Cancer Care. A thematic analysis was used to analyse transcripts.

Results: Computer literate women were positive about the use of an app. Women suggested the content of the app could include an electronic diary to record side effects, provision of information on managing side effects and alternatives available, provision of links to evidence-based information, links to online forums, reminders to take medication, and reminders for repeat prescriptions. Data have informed the development of a prototype app which is being further evaluated with women.

Conclusion: Modern technology such as apps is transforming the way we approach healthcare. Women taking AET were positive about the idea of using an app to self-manage AET, and their views have informed the content of this app. Future studies will explore whether the app assists in improving adherence, support and quality of life.