

Opportunities for Technology Design to Support Breastfeeding

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Background

Breastfeeding brings benefits for parents and children. However, the feeding process can be challenging. Many technology interventions that tackle barriers to breastfeeding (e.g., web-based breastfeeding education) exclusively target mothers and have not explored immersing technology [3]. Additionally, there is no structural analysis of the role of technology in this space.

Aim

We set to investigate the role of technology in breastfeeding space and showcase a technology design that supports breastfeeding.

Method

Our work [4] examines parents lived infant feeding experience and their perspectives toward technology use in breastfeeding space using a mixed-method approach guided by the Integrated Behavioral Model [2]. Here, we conducted semi-structured interviews and a survey. We built upon the findings and develop a technical experience prototype to showcase technology design for breastfeeding.

Results

Analysis of the interviews (N=12) and the survey responses (N=175) shows that the lived breastfeeding experience is more complex than anticipated and is entwined with practical and emotional challenges. Parents' breastfeeding practice is heavily influenced by the society and the environment which set an expectation on how and when parents should feed their child. Here, technology needs sufficiently communicate the lived breastfeeding experience to breastfeeding stakeholders and cast breastfeeding as a collective effort rather than focusing solely on mothers.

Drawing from the outcomes of our study [4] and prior work [1,3], we developed a simulated breastfeeding experience in Virtual Reality. We will demonstrate our simulation that serves as an experience prototype to engage breastfeeding stakeholders (e.g., parents, partners, and decision-makers) in discussions about the lived breastfeeding experience and its associated challenges. Our prototype highlights the challenge in balancing realism and the technology limitations when designing immersive technology for breastfeeding settings.

Conclusion

Our work highlights the relevance of lived breastfeeding experience in technology design and explores how technology can contribute to a breastfeeding-friendly society.

References

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