Competitive Analysis:
Menstrual Cycle Tracking Apps

Clue

Overview
- 11 million monthly active users
- Raised $30 million in funding
- 60 Employees
- Founded and led by women

Positioning
"Clue helps everyone who menstruates to understand their bodies—and to be empowered by that knowledge."

"Our vision is to enable women and people with cycles to live in tune with their biology, not in spite of it."

Primary Audience
- Women
- People with cycles

Key Features & Differentiators
- Offer a free version and a paid version called Clue Plus: subscribers get a monthly email with cycle stats, exclusive content, and access to discounts and giveaways of menstrual products
- Released a sponsored podcast called Hormonal
- Users anonymized data is used by menstrual health researchers around the world
- Focus on countering period shame and stigma that negatively

SWOT Analysis
Strengths
1. Well-known app with millions of users
2. Homepage ('Your current cycle') is clear, uncluttered, and easy to interpret
3. Doesn't use gendered language or stereotypically feminine visual design
4. Ability to exclude individual cycles from future predictions
5. Ability to hide fertile window

Weaknesses
1. Navigation menu icons are confusing
2. UI looks cluttered when many symptoms are tracked
3. The amount of data tracked and provided can feel overwhelming
4. Visual design and branding somewhat bland and unmemorable

Opportunities
1. Clarify navigation icons by adding labels or better indication of what they represent
2. Update branding and visual design to be more engaging
3. Improve calendar view navigation (filter icon is not obvious and changing views feels unintuitive)
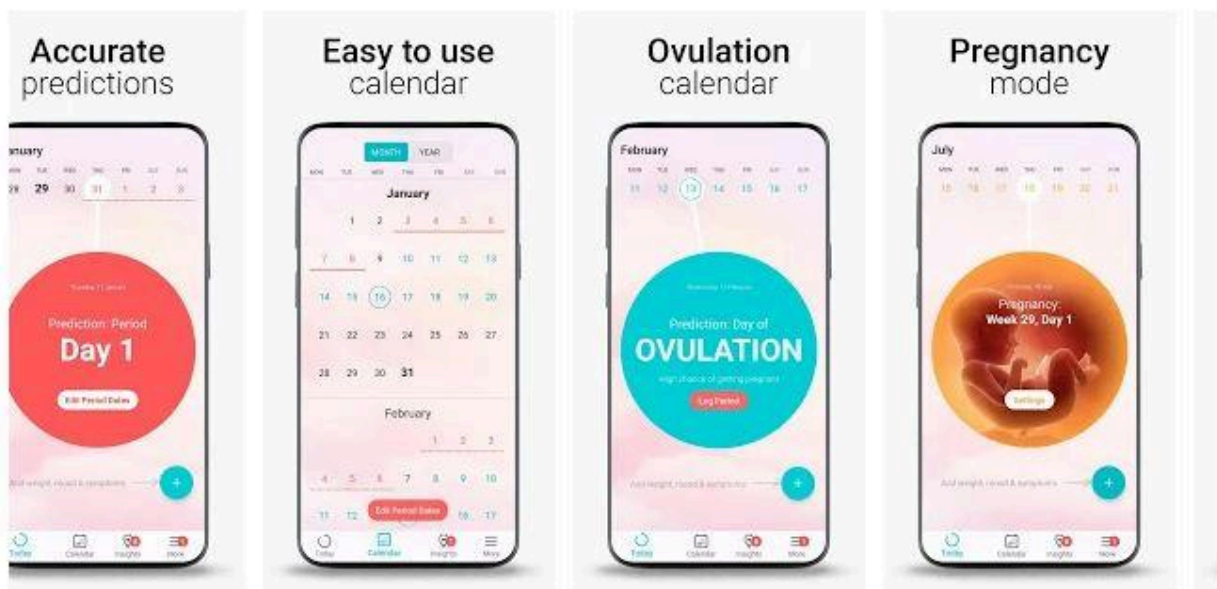
Threats
1. Competitors with stronger brand identity
2. Competitors that have a stronger focus on fertility and pregnancy (for users who want these options)
3. Competitors offering a simpler product with less data collection

Overview

- Released in 2015
- Most downloaded health app in the App Store
- 30M monthly active users
- 100M downloads
- 160+ employees

Positioning

"#1 mobile product for women's health."

"Our mission is to seamlessly elevate women's health by leveraging the essential need for period tracking."

"Flo is an AI-powered health app for women that supports them during an entire reproductive period, encompasses accurate cycle predictions, personalized daily health insights and safe community of experts and peers."

Primary Audience
- Women
- Women who are pregnant or trying to conceive

Key Features & Differentiators
- Pregnancy and post-pregnancy modes available in the app
- Virtual health assistant so users can engage in a chat about different health topics
- Offers video courses about different health topics

SWOT Analysis

Strengths
1. Most popular period-tracking app with millions of users worldwide
2. Evidence-based approach with all content reviewed by a medical board
3. Ability to make unique notes as part of daily symptom tracking
4. Calendar view is simple and straightforward - offers monthly or yearly view

Weaknesses
1. Visual design, branding, and iconography is very feminine - this could alienate users who don't identify as women
2. Default pop-up health notifications are kind of annoying
3. No option to track collection method for menstrual flow
4. Privacy issues — sent users' health data to Facebook without informed consent in the past

Opportunities
1. Add ability to track collection method
2. Update default visual design and branding to be less feminine (app background can be changed in settings but the default is very pink)
3. Be better about managing users' health data

Threats
1. Competitors that make an effort to be more gender neutral
2. Competitors that offer a simpler product without excessive information like health courses and chats
3. Competitors who have not had issues with selling their users data

Overview
- Initial release: March 12, 2014
- Free with subscription options
- Focus on social good and fighting period stigma
- Small team, 2 founders
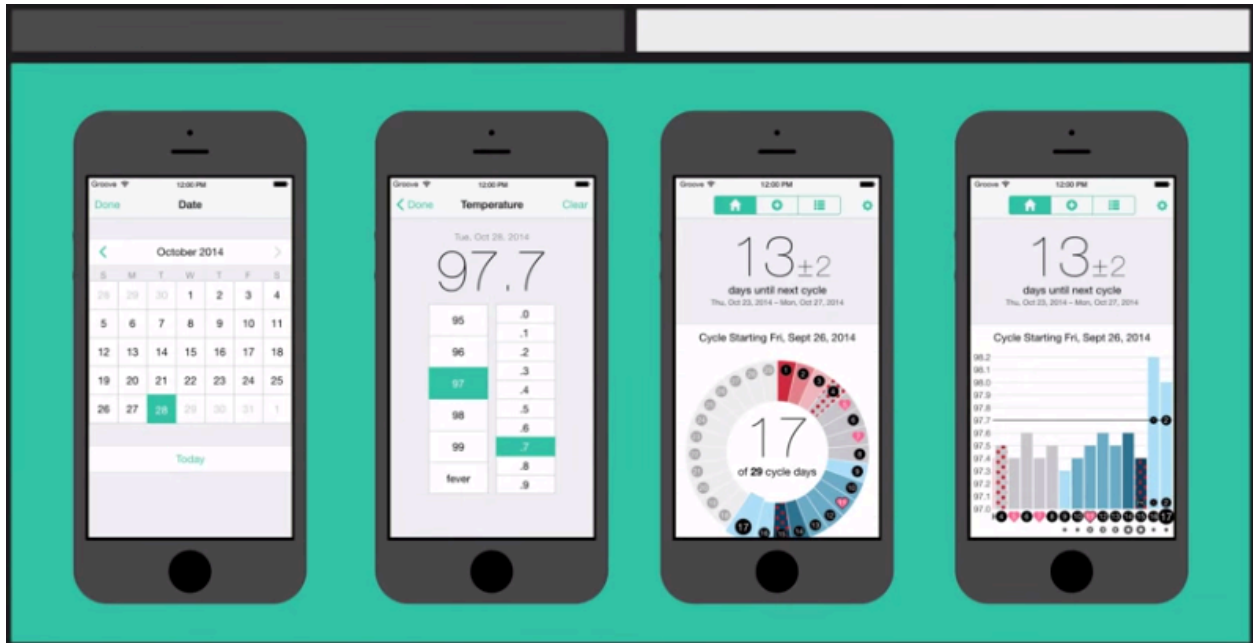
Positioning
"Period tracking with purpose."

"Groove tailors your app experience for your unique body, preferences, and goals. No assumptions. No gender stereotypes. No flowers. Just perfect."

"We're on a mission to redefine what it means to be a women's health company, and we're committed to empowering people with education and tools to help them learn about and manage reproductive health and fertility."

Primary Audience
- Humans with periods

Key Features & Differentiators
- Social focus
- Groove store sells eco-friendly and sustainable period products

SWOT Analysis

Strengths
1. Visual design is muted and gender neutral
2. User can choose their goal (get pregnant, avoid a pregnancy, or track my cycle)
3. Ability to exclude abnormal or missed cycles from predictions

Weaknesses
1. If users forget to track for one cycle or more, the interface becomes crowded and hard to use
2. App hasn't been updated since 2017
3. Limited ability to customize what is tracked (can toggle sex tracking, but that's it)
4. Top bar navigation is hard to reach

Opportunities
1. Add more customization opportunities for users to track different symptoms
2. Change app navigation to make it usable with one hand
3. Increase the size of touch targets on the cycle circle (especially if a cycle is missed and the number of targets doubles)
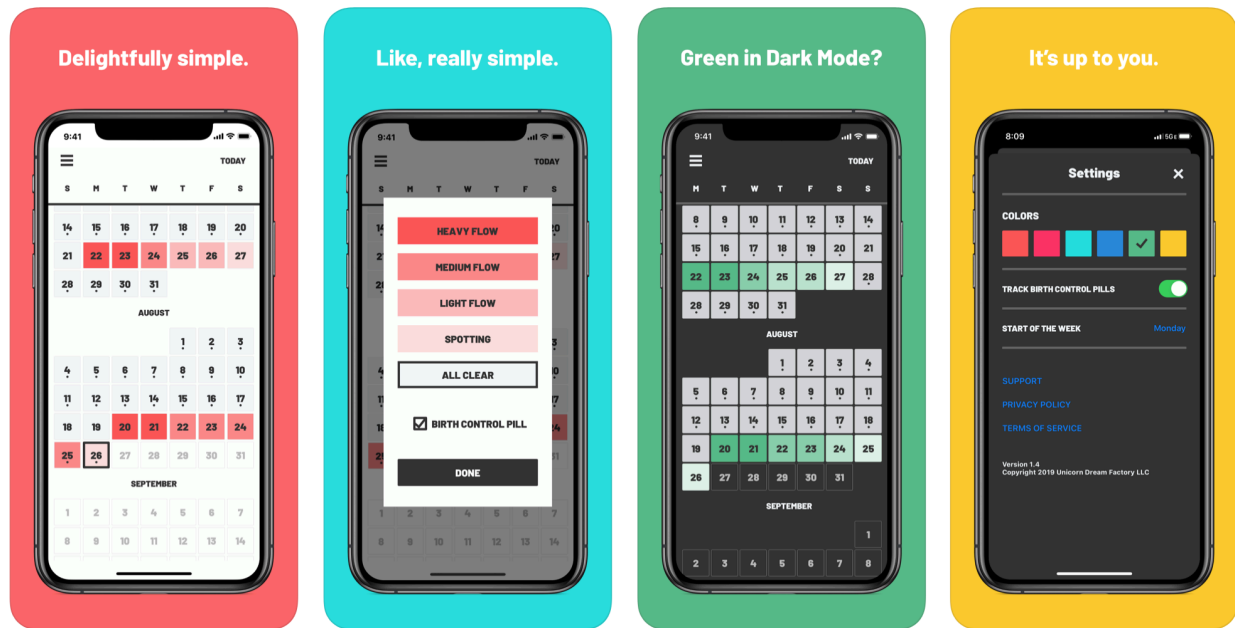
Threats
1. Competitors with more users
2. Competitors that are still pushing updates of their apps
3. Competitors that offer users more ability to customize their cycle tracking
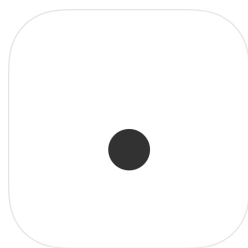
Period Menstruation Tracker

Overview
● Initial release: August 28, 2019

Positioning
"Period is the easiest way for anyone with a period to track it."

"We don't sell ads or use your data. In fact, your data stays on your phone, in your pocket or purse."

Primary Audience
- People with periods

Key Features & Differentiators
- Can be used without creating an account
- Ability to customize the color of the UI
- Simplicity - users can only track menstruation and birth control pill usage

SWOT Analysis
Strengths
1. Simplicity and ease of use
2. Custom color options for UI
3. Doesn't store or sell user's health data

Weaknesses
1. Doesn't predict future cycles
2. Users can only track menstrual flow and oral contraceptive use, no other symptoms can be tracked or notes made
3. Users have only one view of their cycle data - a calendar

4. Simplicity of the app feels somewhat limiting

Opportunities
1. Add more options for tracking (ie. collection method, sexual activity)
2. Offer users another view of their cycle data aside from a monthly calendar
3. Offer users the ability to take custom daily notes

Threats
1. Competitors who enable tracking of more symptoms
2. Competitors who provide information about fertility and pregnancy
3. Competitors who provide predictions for upcoming cycles

Summary:

A quick search for "period tracking apps" or "menstrual cycle tracking apps" in the App Store reveals what feels like hundreds of options. Despite the overwhelming number of options, the clear leaders in terms of number of downloads and active users are Clue and Flo. Their popularity and widespread adoption are why I chose to include them in this analysis along with two other apps that aren't as well-known or widely used but are designed with a stronger focus on inclusivity: Groove and Period. All four apps have strengths and weaknesses, but there is room in the market for an app that offers more customization and prioritizes the experiences of non-binary, gender non-conforming, and transgender people who menstruate.

Unlike many period-tracking apps, Clue doesn't use gendered language or stereotypically feminine visual design. It positions itself as an app for "everyone who menstruates," and it generally succeeds in not being overtly feminine. However, it falls short in a few areas and makes some assumptions about its users (options for tracking sexual activity include "Unprotected," "Protected," and "Withdrawal," which all make the assumption that there's a penis involved). The visual design is gender-neutral but it's somewhat bland and uninspiring. Users are able to track a lot of data (and customize what they are tracking by adjusting their settings), but the UI can feel cluttered and overwhelming if a lot of data is actually tracked.

Flo, on the other hand, is overtly feminine and very much branded to appeal to women. There is a strong focus on fertility and conception, which includes a separate pregnancy mode for the app. There is nothing inherently wrong with their stereotypically feminine approach to branding and marketing, however, it might be alienating to some users, particularly those who don't identify as women. Flo has also had issues regarding user data and privacy in the past.

Groove and Period are much smaller operations without millions of downloads like Clue and Flo. Both make an effort to be inclusive with gender-neutral branding and an emphasis

on simplicity. Period takes simplicity to the extreme and only enables users to track their period's flow and birth control pills. Groove works well, but becomes nearly unusable if a cycle is missed because the interface becomes too cluttered. Period doesn't require users to create an account, so there's no potential privacy issues related to data collection. On the flip side, this means that user's data is not secured on their personal devices. Groove does require account creation, and supports a free and unpaid version. Unfortunately, the app hasn't been updated since 2017.

Despite the prevalence of period-tracking apps, a new competitor could find success in the market with the right focus on inclusivity and the right combination of features. A new app should take into account the varied experiences of people who menstruate and should acknowledge this diversity of experience with more customizable features.