Supplementary File 4: Semi-structured interview protocol

A Bangla-language retrieval-augmented conversational agent for maternal health in a low-resource setting: design and formative evaluation

The following protocol guided the exit interviews. Interviews were conducted in Bangla; the protocol is reproduced here in English translation. Responses to the *Influence* section were not analysed separately and no findings on influence or behaviour change are reported in this article; this is noted in the Limitations.

Introduction and consent

Participants were told that the interview would take approximately 20 to 30 minutes and that its purpose was to understand their experience using the system. They were informed that responses would be anonymized, that no identifying information would be shared, that participation was voluntary, and that they could skip any question or stop at any time. Permission to record the conversation was requested before proceeding.

Warm-up and context

1. Could you tell me a little about yourself: are you currently pregnant, postpartum, or supporting someone?
2. Before this study, how did you usually find information or support for pregnancy or maternal health?

Process and usability

1. What was it like using the chatbot for the first time?
2. Did you face any difficulties using it, for example typing questions, understanding responses, or navigating the interface?
3. Were there times when it worked smoothly or was especially convenient?
4. Was there anything frustrating or confusing?
5. How does using this chatbot compare with asking family or friends, or searching online?

Understanding and trust

1. Can you recall a specific question you asked the chatbot? What did you think of the response?
2. Was the answer clear and understandable?
3. Did the chatbot ever give information you doubted or did not trust, and if so, why?
4. Did you feel reassured, anxious, or neutral after reading the answers?
5. Compared with asking a doctor or midwife, how much would you trust this chatbot?

Influence

1. Did using the chatbot change how you think about your health, pregnancy, or care?
2. Did it prompt you to take any action, such as looking up more information, speaking with someone, or changing a routine?
3. If this chatbot were widely available, do you think women in your community would use it, and why or why not?
4. How often do you think you would realistically use it in future?

Improvements and wrap-up

1. If you could change one thing about the chatbot, what would it be?
2. What is one feature you particularly liked and think should stay?
3. Is there anything else about your experience that I did not ask about but you would like to share?