Olytico | Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association

Irish Women's Health in Their Own Words
A Year of Online Conversation

2025 - 2026

Introduction

Who Olytico are and what we do

Olytico is a Dublin-based **social media analysis agency** that helps organisations understand public conversation and turn it into clear, actionable insight.

Since 2009, we have delivered **research and reporting** that summarises what people are saying, the themes that matter most, and how those discussions change over time.

Our work has supported **peer-reviewed health research**, including studies that used Olytico to collect and analyse large volumes of public social media data.

Olytico has been cited in medical literature such as *Regional Anesthesia & Pain Medicine* and *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, reflecting the credibility of our methods and outputs.

- *Sharing the pain: an observational analysis of Twitter and pain in Ireland (link)*
- *Tanning bed burns reported on Twitter: over 15,000 in 2013 (link)*

For the **IPHA Conference 2026**, we have produced a bespoke piece of analysis on **women's health in Ireland**, including an overview of the key topics and themes across **11,750 mentions on Reddit**.

About the r/IrishWomensHealth Subreddit

Olytico analysed over 11,750 mentions on this subreddit across a 12-month period

Reddit is one of the world's largest online discussion platforms, with over **116 million daily active unique visitors** worldwide as of Q3 2025.

Conversation occurs within **top-specific communities** known as "subreddits." These communities allow people to share experiences, ask questions, and seek peer-to-peer advice on a wide range of subjects.

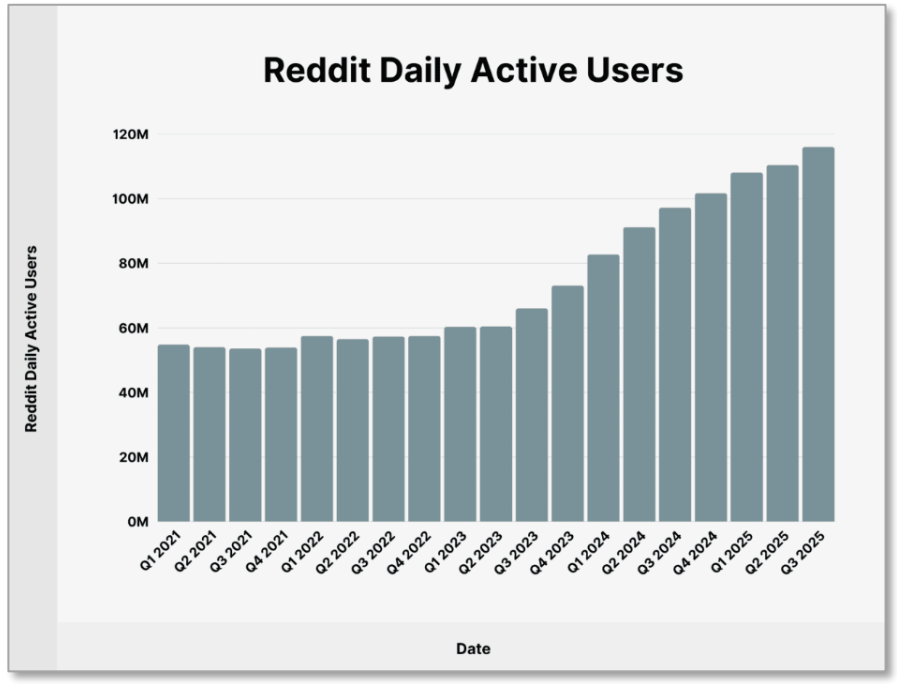
Olytico currently tracks over **400 Irish-specific subreddits**, including spaces specifically dedicated to health.

r/IrishWomensHealth is a growing subreddit dedicated to women's health issues in Ireland which currently has **14,000 weekly visitors**.

The community provides a space for **open discussion** around topics such as reproductive health, menopause, contraception, fertility, chronic conditions, and navigating the Irish healthcare system.

Members use the forum to **share personal experiences**, seek support, and exchange information about services and treatments.

Olytico analysed over **11,750 mentions** within r/IrishWomensHealth between February 2025 – 2026.



Three key themes identified within the analysis

Learnings from analysis of over 11,750 mentions of women's health.

Olytico analysed and categorised all of the content, and the top 15 topics ranked by volume of mentions are included in this report.

Common to all of these categories are three key themes:

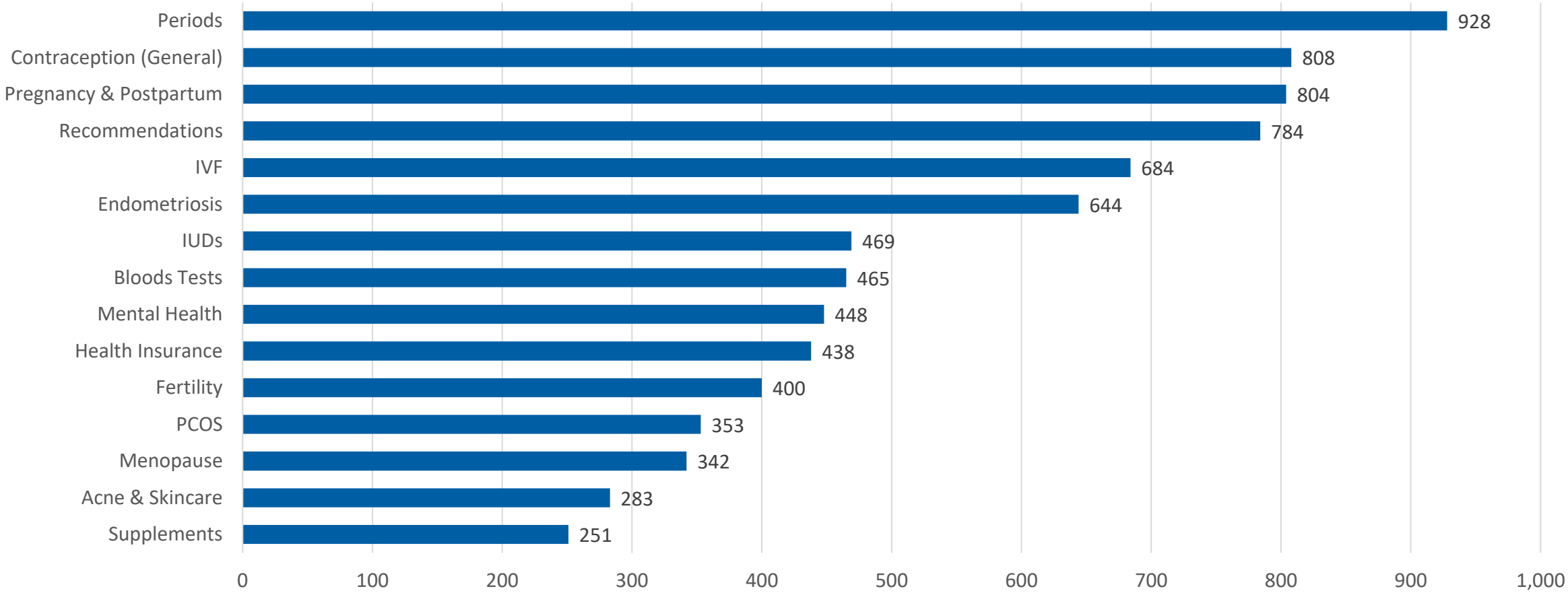
1. Women frequently discuss **the overwhelm in health information from video-based platforms**.
   - *"I'm inundated with TikTok ads for supplements"*
2. The subreddit is attracting those **looking for recommendations on multiple areas of health**, including specialists, products and lifestyle decisions.
   - *"My question to this group is has anyone ever lowered their cholesterol naturally? What did you do and how long did it take?"*
3. Users of the subreddits are **connecting over shared experiences and struggles** (instead of over shared conditions)
   - *"I'm sorry you're going through this, I know it can be scary and upsetting and a real knock to your self esteem, but it will be okay"*

Categorised Topic Analysis

- Ranking of most frequently mentioned topics
- Topline insights from most prevalent topics

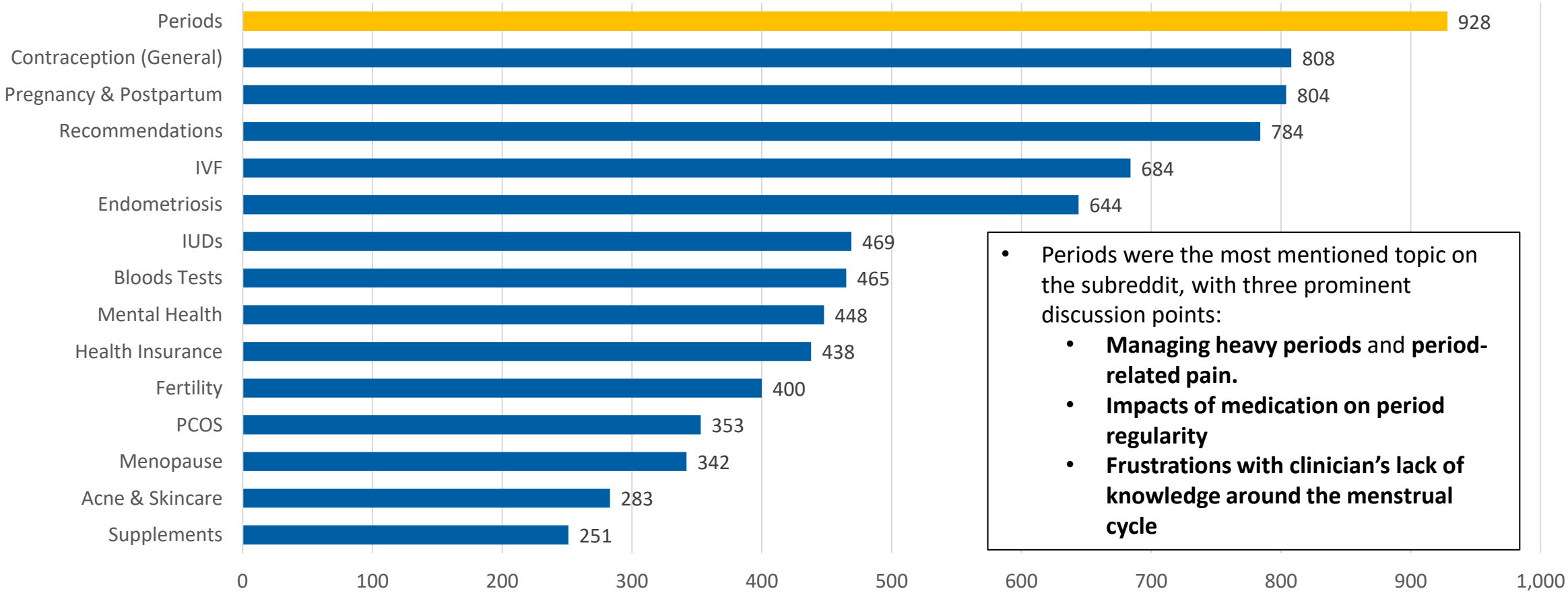
Over 11,750 women's health conversations analysed

Based on a years worth of conversation on the r/IrishWomensHealth subreddit



The menstrual cycle was the most mentioned topic

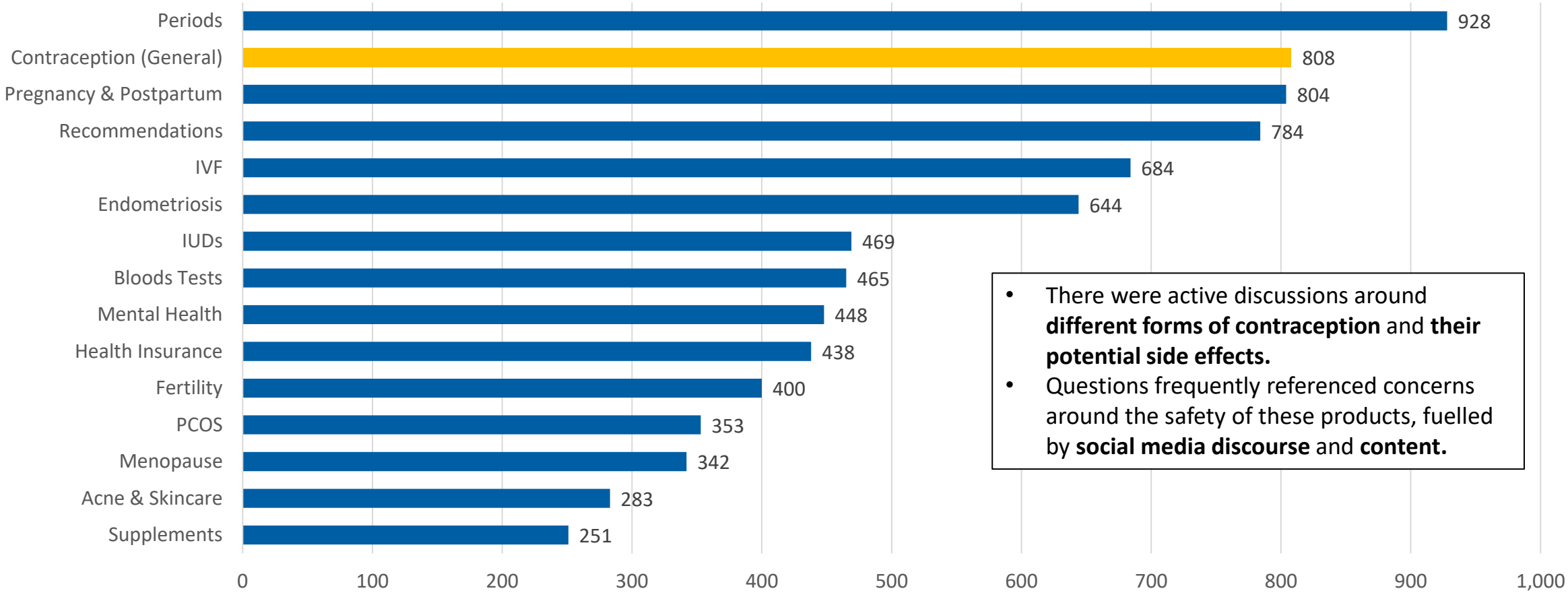
Based on a years worth of conversation on the r/IrishWomensHealth subreddit



- Periods were the most mentioned topic on the subreddit, with three prominent discussion points:
  - **Managing heavy periods** and **period-related pain.**
  - **Impacts of medication on period regularity**
  - **Frustrations with clinician's lack of knowledge around the menstrual cycle**

Side effects of contraception were a key driver of discussion

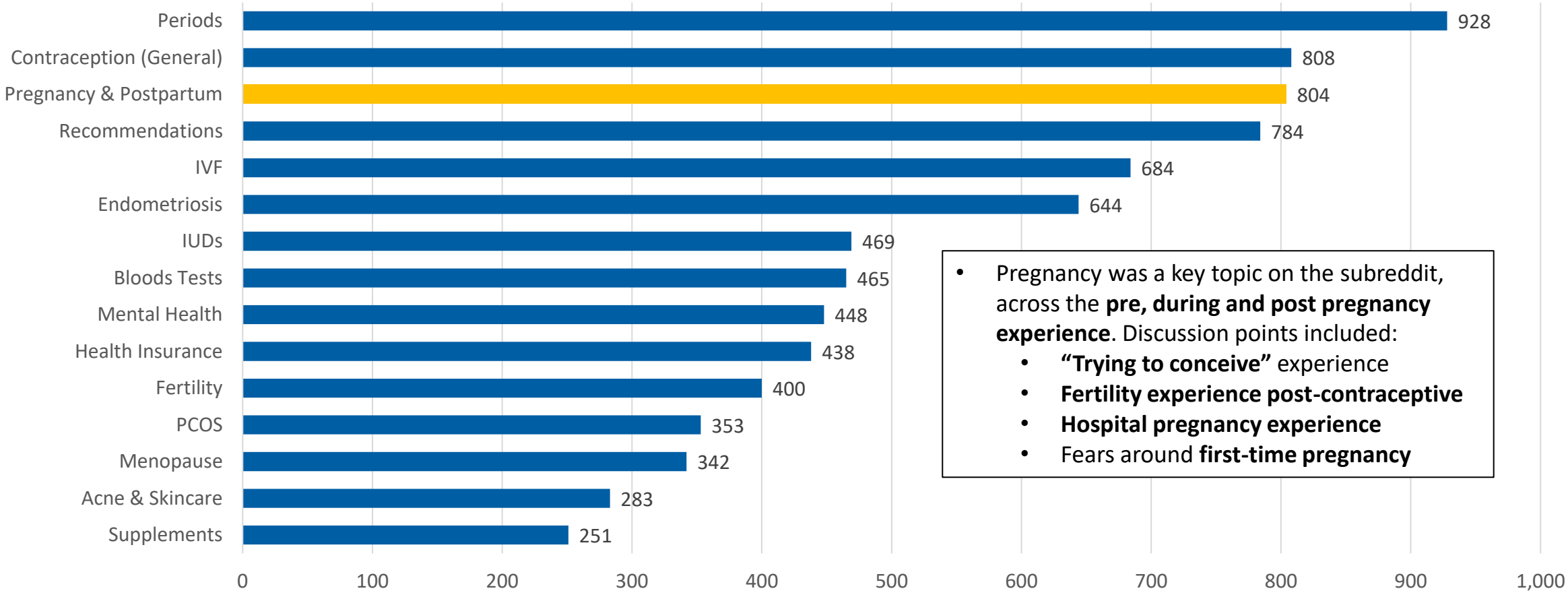
Based on a years worth of conversation on the r/IrishWomensHealth subreddit



- There were active discussions around **different forms of contraception** and **their potential side effects.**
- Questions frequently referenced concerns around the safety of these products, fuelled by **social media discourse** and **content.**

The first pregnancy experience drove questions

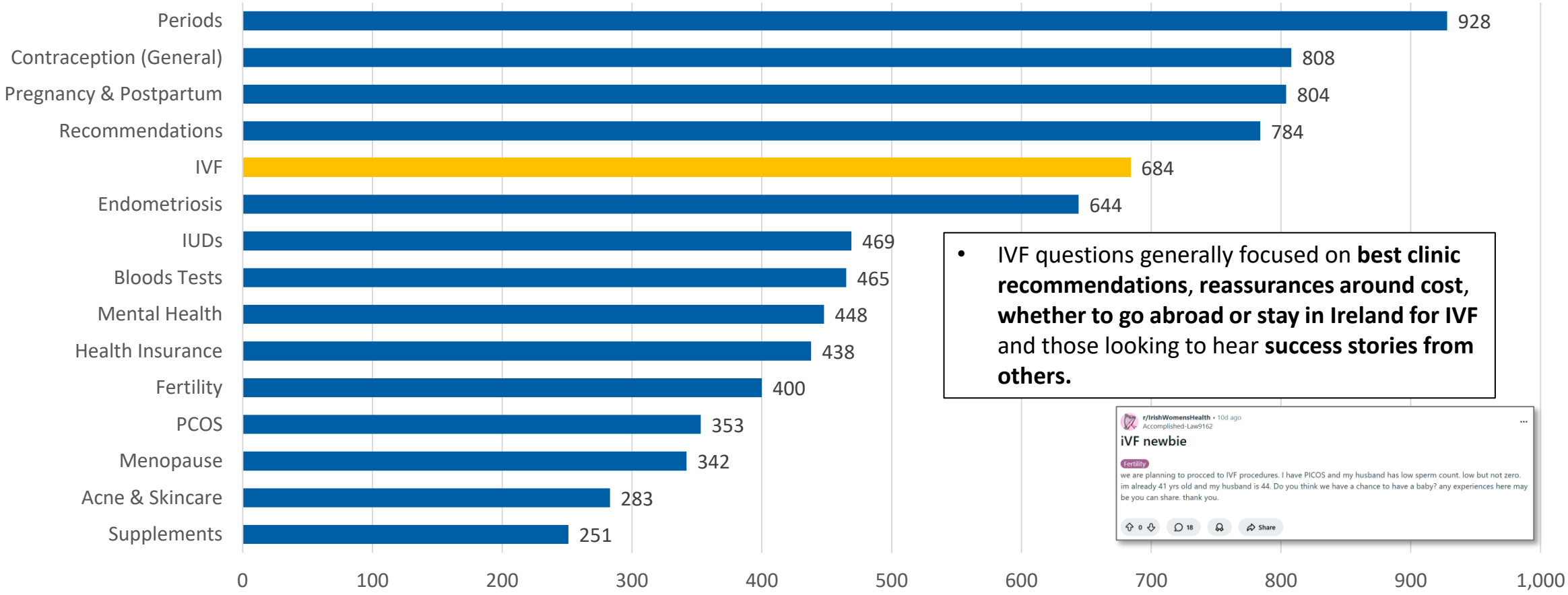
Based on a years worth of conversation on the r/IrishWomensHealth subreddit



- Pregnancy was a key topic on the subreddit, across the **pre, during and post pregnancy experience**. Discussion points included:
  - **"Trying to conceive"** experience
  - **Fertility experience post-contraceptive**
  - **Hospital pregnancy experience**
  - Fears around **first-time pregnancy**

Those considering IVF sought recommendations

Based on a years worth of conversation on the r/IrishWomensHealth subreddit



- IVF questions generally focused on **best clinic recommendations**, **reassurances around cost**, **whether to go abroad or stay in Ireland for IVF** and those looking to hear **success stories from others.**

r/IrishWomensHealth • 10d ago
Accomplished-Law9162
iVF newbie
Fertility
we are planning to procced to IVF procedures. I have PICOS and my husband has low sperm count. low but not zero. im already 41 yrs old and my husband is 44. Do you think we have a chance to have a baby? any experiences here may be you can share. thank you.
0 18 Share

Thematic Analysis

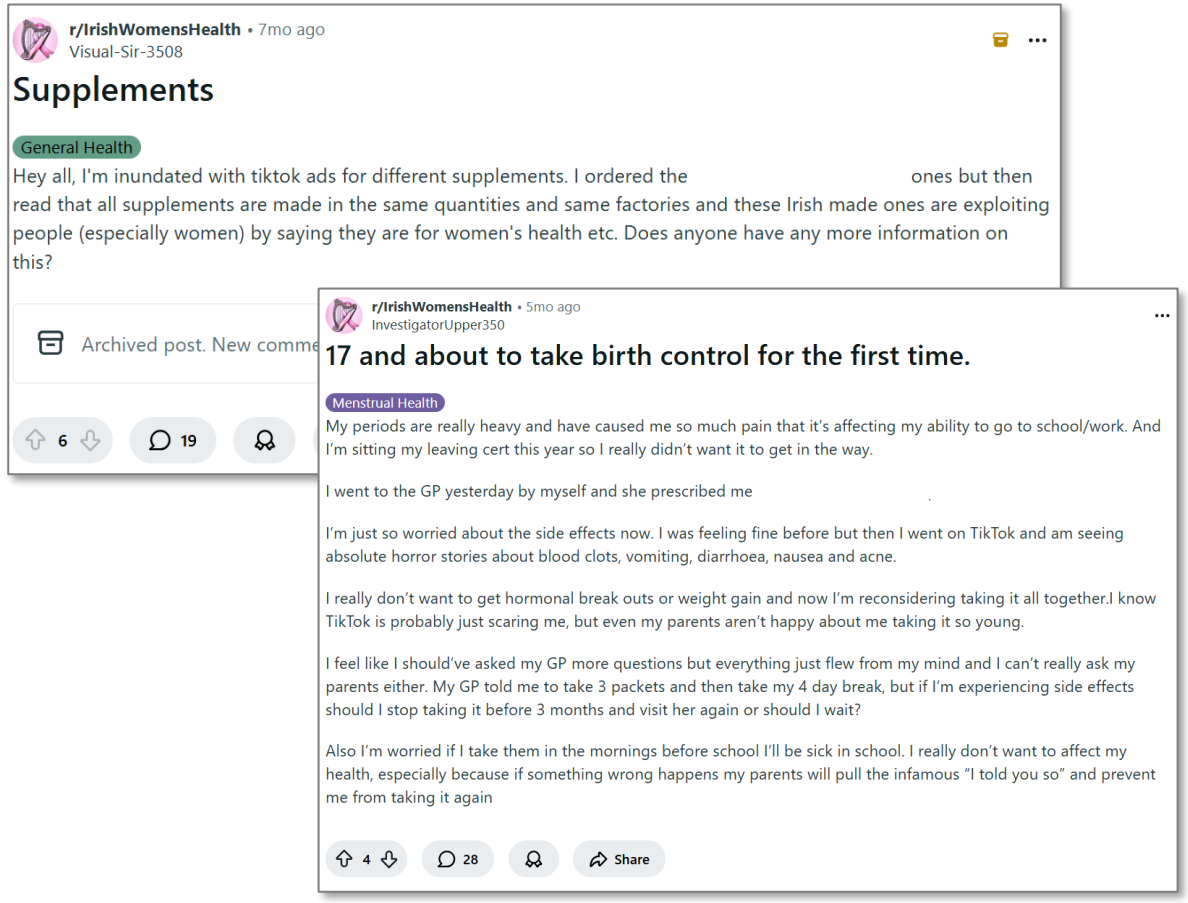
- Overwhelm by health content
- Looking for the reality of a health experience
- “Safe space” to ask questions
- Emotional impact of ill-health (hair loss)
- How do I get support? (Endometriosis)

Overwhelmed by health content and seeking community

Posts are referencing the overwhelm of health advice shared on video-focused platforms.

A recurring theme across a wide number of posts is **a feeling of being overwhelmed by health advice**, particularly from social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

- Many posters come to the subreddit to look for peer support and to leverage community-driven knowledge around health decisions for women.
    - For many women on the subreddit, **trust in social content promoting health and wellness products is low.**
- The subreddit is viewed through a more community lens – rather than being served promotional content, these posters are asking for various opinions from their community.
- This is an important element of how social media impacts health decisions – algorithmic feeds are driving awareness but also overwhelm, while more user guided spaces are fostering connections around shared experiences.

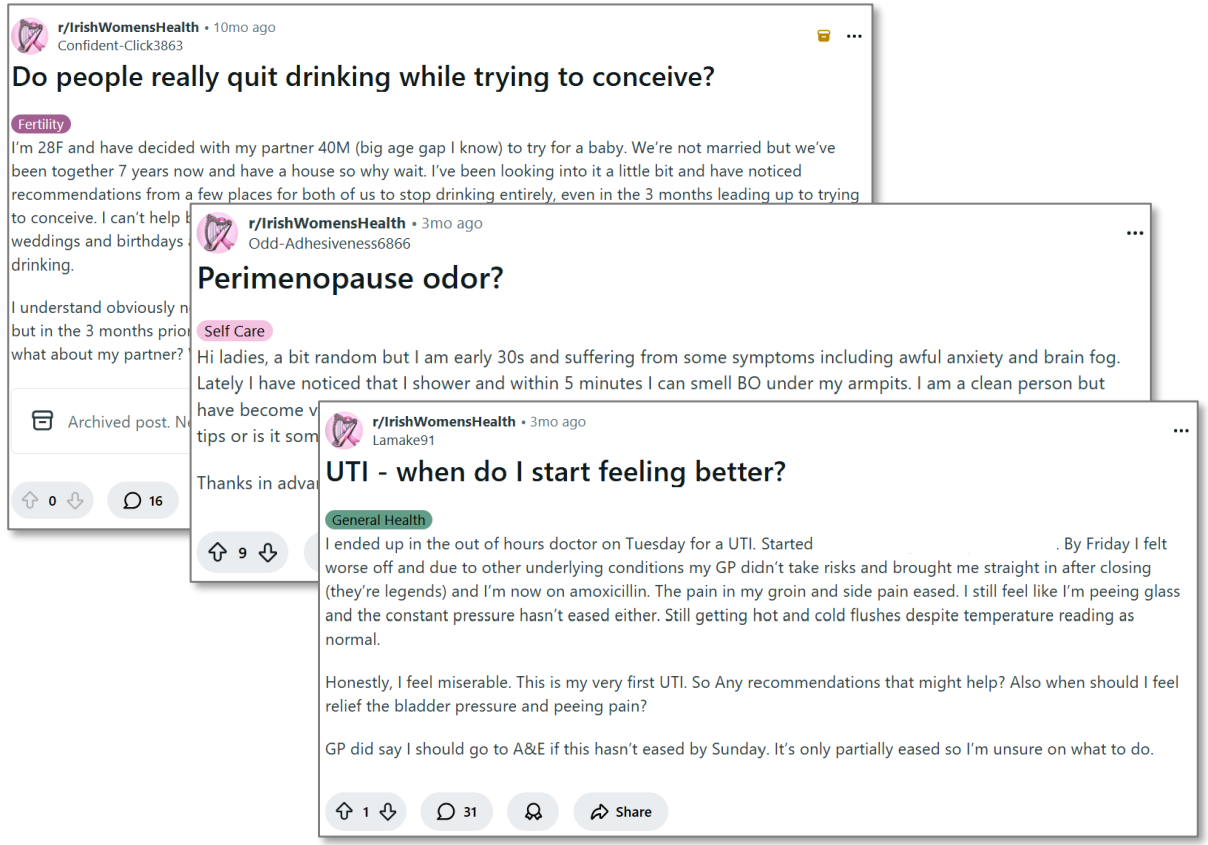


What is the reality of this experience?

Peer support is a key aspect that drives discussion on the subreddit

The subreddit is often utilised as **a sense check for medical advice** or **as a sounding board for a medical experience.**

- Women experiencing a range of conditions took to the subreddit to ask questions and to look for those who have had similar experiences.
- This highlights the appetite for information about the realities of women's health – not the advice of a doctor or medical professional, but **the lived experience of a peer.**



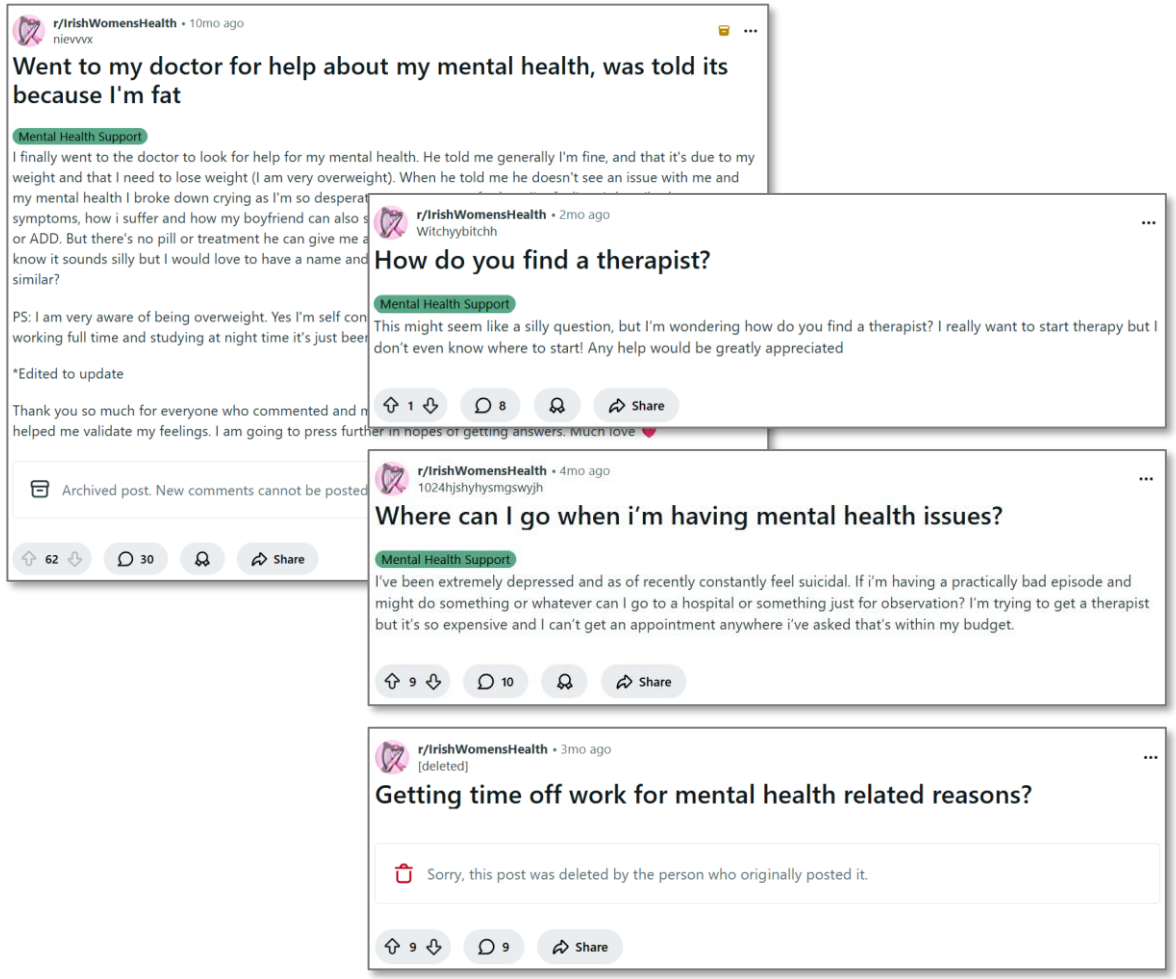
A safe space to ask about difficult topics (Mental health)

Users came to the subreddit for advice and guidance around mental health support

Some of the most active discussion topics on the subreddit reflect subjects **that can be difficult or daunting to bring up offline** (e.g. mental health, postpartum, fertility, menopause).

For example, discussions about mental health frequently highlighted **difficulties accessing services**, **impacts on work**, **medications side effects** and **the social effects of mental health difficulties.**

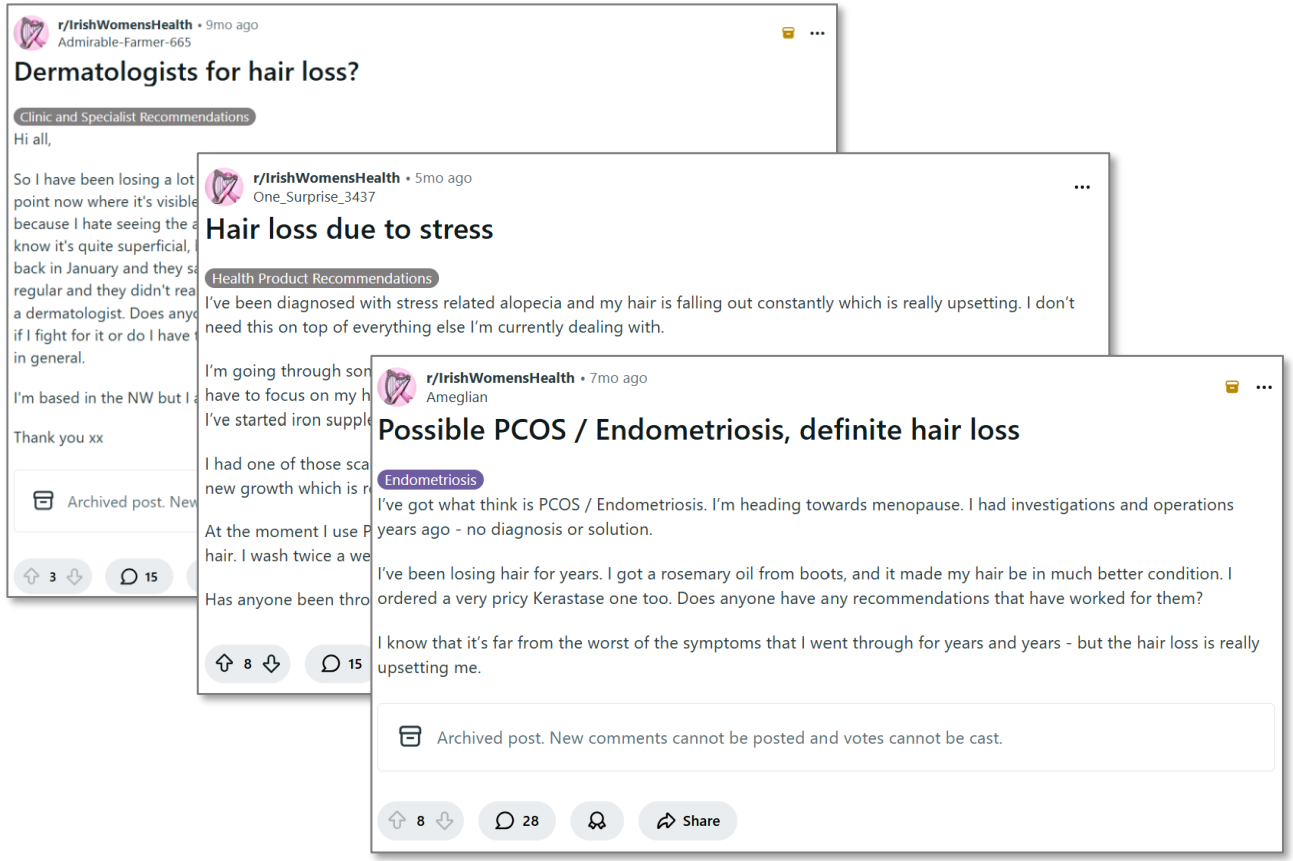
- The subreddit provides **a low-stakes setting** to ask questions and broach these topics outside of an individual's social circle.



Emotional impact of hair loss

Patients are going online to access peer support when confronted with difficult side effects and conditions

- A frequently referenced topic during the period was **the impact that hair loss has on women.**
- These posts refence multiple root causes for hair loss (PCOS, stress, dermatitis, alopecia, pregnancy) but are **unified by a shared emotional experience around the symptom:**
  - *"I've been diagnosed with stress related alopecia and **my hair is falling out constantly which is really upsetting**"*
  - *"**I'm scared to wash my hair or brush it because I hate seeing the amount that comes off**. I always had lovely thick hair that I got lots of compliments on, and I know it's quite superficial, but **it's damaging my self esteem**."*
  - *"I know that it's far from the worst of the symptoms that I went through for years and years - but **the hair loss is really upsetting me**."*
- These posts highlight **a need for peer support when women are confronted with hair loss, which is increasingly being met online.**



Endometriosis – how do I get support?

Patients are working together to define the best pathways to treatment.

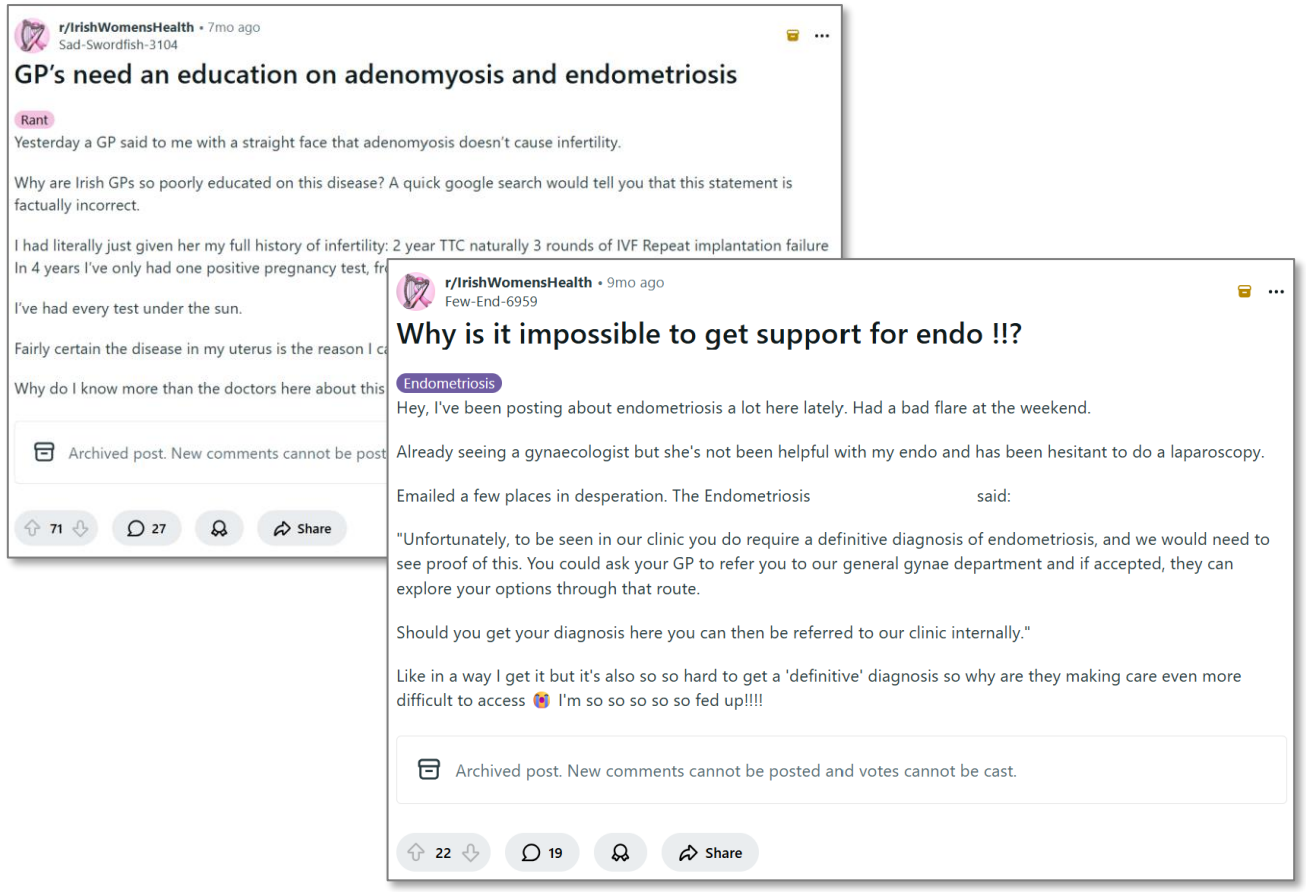
Endometriosis was one of the most talked about medical conditions on the subreddit during the time period analysed.

Posts on the condition reveal **a feeling of fatigue around the need to self advocate within the healthcare system.**

- This was paired with a **frustration directed at medical professionals** who were perceived to be poorly informed about the condition.

The discussions about the condition highlight the reliance on peer knowledge and community support in **navigating the healthcare system**.

In the absence of a clear roadmap to treatment and support for the condition, **patients are working together to figure out how best to access support and treatment.**



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