

Ava AG

Founded in 2014

50 employees

100 by the end of 2018

Headquarters in Zurich

Branches in San Francisco and

Belgrade

Office in Asia planned

Ava's Fertility Tracker helps women who want to become pregnant. The wristband sensor measures a woman's body temperature and eight other physiological parameters at night and determines her fertile days. The user-friendly product is already successful in the US and Europe. Over ten new pregnancies are registered every day. The start-up also develops solutions to prevent and detect complications, has several branch offices worldwide and will engage over 100 employees by the end of 2018.

Ava's founders have proven that one's own needs can drive innovation: four years ago, their R & D manager Peter Stein met today's CEO, Pascal König for lunch: „I wanted to become a father but we thought that tracking temperature was the only way to determine the fertile days.“

The temperature method, however, has significant shortcomings as increased progesterone following ovulation can only be detected after the fact. Similarly, the ovulation test only indicates the last two days of the fertility window. „We began

looking for a more complete and accurate method,“ explains Stein. He and König reviewed the literature and identified eight other physiological parameters: including respiratory rate, heart rate, sleep patterns and movement which all change before ovulation and result in higher oestrogen levels.

The idea for a fertility tracker was born. König and Stein brought Philipp Tholen and Lea von Bidder, a marketing expert, on board to help develop the first prototype: The woman wears the bracelet overnight; it monitors nine pa-

rameters and measures changes in oestrogen and progesterone. These values and real-time algorithms determine the five fertile days in a woman's monthly cycle. Every morning the data is sent via a smart phone app to the Ava server for evaluation.

Supported by CSEM and CTI

As Stein had previously established several companies, including a sensor manufacturer, he was able to support the development of the wristband and the young start-up. CSEM and the EMPA also provid-



SWISS MEDTECH

Helping women track their cycle





Philipp Tholen, VP Product & Operations (left), Dr. Maureen Cronin, VP Chief Medical Officer, Peter Stein, VP R&D, Ava.

ed Ava with technological support. The KTI (now Innosuisse) also helped with subsidies and business strategy coaching.

The Ava cycle tracker is very user-friendly. The entire process is stress free as the bracelet is worn while the woman sleeps and she doesn't have to get up to measure her temperature at the same time every day. The device is personalised for each individual and switches itself on and off as needed. „To-date, no other company has been able to offer non-invasive detection of the fertility window in real time," affirms Stein.

Close to 90% accuracy

Clinical studies at the University Hospital Zurich and various other clinics have proven 89% accuracy in the detection of fertile days. The tracker has resulted in success for several thousand women – over

ten new pregnancies are reported daily. In addition, the woman becomes familiar with her cycle and can interpret symptoms more confidently. Her general health is also monitored by the nine vital parameters.

The US approved the tracker in 2016 and registered it as a Class I Medical Device in Switzerland and Europe. Stein finds „real world" data and regulations exciting and uses the information collected for targeted marketing purposes. Customer relationships are also encouraged. Ava provides in-depth information on new developments via hotline, a scientific blog and direct Q & A from clients.

Further indications planned

Ava's technology platform is currently being expanded for additional indications. Their vision is to accompany women through

their entire reproductive phase of life. This includes products for non-hormonal contraception, early infertility detection (ex. from polycystic ovarian syndrome) and identifying pregnancy complications and symptoms experienced during menopause. Clinical studies are undergoing and a pregnancy app has been added to the range of services. „Thanks to continuous monitoring expectant mothers will be able to relax more, and avoid unnecessary medical examinations and costs," emphasizes Stein.

Recruitment of specialists

In addition to the largest market in the USA, Asia and other developing countries also offer huge potential for Ava's products and their popularity is increasing. They invest continuously in research and the recruitment of specialists in Zurich. The start-up has created more than 45 jobs there since 2014 and plans to fill another 20 positions by the end of 2018. Their highly qualified employees come from the fields of medical or sensor technology as well as IT with backgrounds in data science, digital marketing, etc. Their Scientific Advisory Board includes gynaecologists and reproductive physicians. „Our challenge is to bring teams and people together», says the now two-fold father with a smile.

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