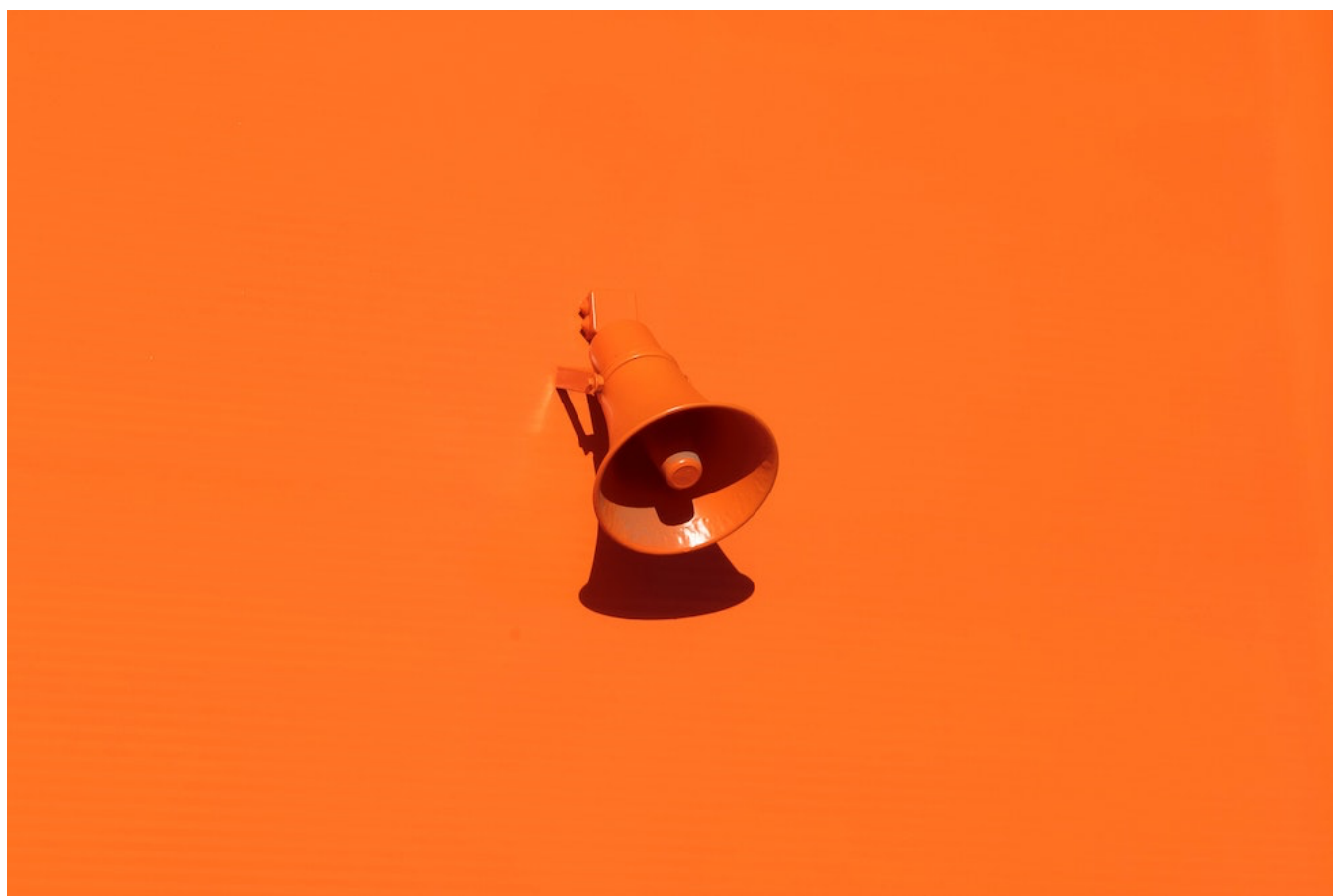


# Menstrual Blood as a Biomarker

At the start of each week we share a quick “best of” from the week that was with our Inner Circle members. **What’s trending in the Femtech Insider community and beyond?** We’ve got you covered! In this week’s brief we talk about...

- **Menstrual Blood as a Biomarker**
- Femtech **Investment Round-up (Nov 2022)**
- **Startup Spotlight:** Selfely, Samphire & Lumino
- And more!



## Menstrual Blood as a Biomarker

Many of you reading this newsletter will be familiar with the unfortunate stigmatization of women’s health, that has hindered research, funding, and public discourse. Due to this taboo-ization many areas in women’s

health are under-researched today. Menstrual blood is one of them.

A new generation of researchers, however, is now stepping up to challenge the view that menstrual blood is a mere “waste product”. The good news: They are starting to make progress and early findings are quite promising. According to [research](#) menstrual blood is potentially just as effective as systemic blood for the diagnosis of several key diseases.

What’s exciting is that menstruators bleed every month anyways, which makes menstrual blood collection non-invasive and somewhat simple. Startups who are looking at commercialization in this space are working on the development of menstrual cups or pads made specifically for blood collection, that are either “smart” and connected to apps, or mailed in for further analysis in a lab.

A somewhat sizeable number of conditions may either be diagnosed or tracked via biomarkers in menstrual blood according to early research. Among them are:

- **Diabetes:** Measures average blood sugar levels
- **Reproductive Health:** Indicator of for ovulation health & ovarian reserve, menstrual health, fertility, peri-menopause. Measures FSH, LH & AMH
- **Endometriosis:** Diagnostics
- **Thyroid Health:** Initial test measuring TSH
- **Inflammation:** Measures C-reactive protein
- **Cervical Cancer:** HR-HPV, the leading cause of cervical cancer

Pretty impressive list, don’t you think?! What’s important to understand of course is that research around biomarkers in menstrual blood is an active field of research today, and further studies are most definitely needed to verify early findings. Without doubt though the early findings are encouraging, and I hope more research in this space will follow.

## Who's Innovating?

Of course this wouldn't be an Inner Circle brief, if we didn't also talk about a few of the startups in this space who are working on using menstrual blood as a biomarker. Here we go! 📌

### **Qvin (US)**

"Menstrual blood isn't waste. The blood our body naturally delivers every month has never been explored as a health testing source. Until now. We believe people who menstruate should be given the choice to proactively and routinely manage their health using menstrual blood." [Learn more](#)

### **Emm (UK)**

[Emm](#) was founded in 2020 and will initially provide personalized data and unique insights into menstrual health. It automatically syncs with a smartphone app allowing users to understand their baseline health and spot any changes in patterns or irregularities in their cycle that could indicate a health issue. In its first generation, Emm will monitor menstrual flow rate, volume, length, and regularity. [Learn more](#)

### **Blood (Germany)**

[Blood](#)'s mission is to help people access, understand and benefit from unprecedented data. "We give back self-determination, control, and specific health conditions to our users through a non-invasive menstrual blood test." [Learn more](#)

*Besides those focused on menstrual blood we are also seeing a more and more startups pop up, who are looking at vaginal discharge as a biomarker, which is another promising area, especially when it comes to better understanding the [vaginal microbiome](#), and its potential as a diagnostic.*

So in conclusion: Yes it is indeed exciting to see more work done around the identification of novel biomarkers in menstrual blood, vaginal

discharge, and elsewhere! Definitely a trend we hope continues in 2023!

## Femtech Investments November 2022

As every month we share an overview of all the fundraising news we covered on Femtech Insider with you, our Inner Circle audience. Check out our **November 2022 Femtech Investment Round-up** [here](#) or visit our [Investment Round-up Archive](#) in the Inner Circle Member Hub.

### 👉 Highlights:

Y-Combinator alum **Almond** raises [\\$7M](#) to pursue its vision of holistic OB/GYN care.

**Maven Clinic** adds [\\$90M](#) in Series E funding to further scale its virtual clinic for women's and family health.

**Contraline** adds [\\$7.2M](#) in funding; announces first patients successfully implanted in male contraception study.

**Daylight**, the LGBTQIA+ digital banking platform, raises [\\$15M](#) to launch family planning solutions.

## Startup Spotlight

Wanna know which startups get us excited these days? Below are a few of our **recent (femtech-healthtech-ish) discoveries**. 🧐

[Lumino](#) is the company behind [Seren](#), a CBT-based app for women going through menopause.

[Samphire](#)'s neuromodulation treatments deliver mood and pain relief to women everywhere. Currently under development, the Samphire Hairban is a proprietary medical device that uses medical-grade tES (transcranial

electrical stimulation) to provide non-invasive neuromodulation and pain relief.

[Selfely](#) is a data-driven solution for the self-assessment and stimulation of the vagus nerve, a key component of the inflammatory response across menstrual cycles.