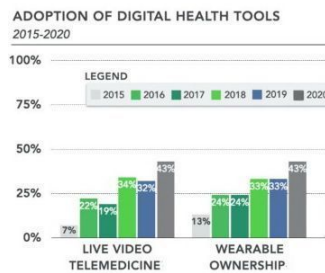


## Pandemic and Digital Health: Growth, Gaps and Challenges



A new report shows the growing adoption levels for certain categories of digital health tools and populations, and looks into the matters of patient data sharing, including the COVID-19 data.

*You might also like:* The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated growth in the use of telemedicine, but not in all populations. [Learn more](#)

Rock Health partnered with the Stanford Center for Digital Health to produce their sixth Digital Health Consumer Adoption Report for 2020. The report explores public's attitudes to using various telehealth and digital health tools, in general and in the COVID-19 context, and how these vary across different populations.

In 2020, the company doubled its usual sample of 4,000 consumers surveyed annually since 2015. While the adoption rates had been increasing over the five-year period prior to the pandemic, the 2020 results show a major boost in consumer digital health adoption, e.g. by over 10 p.p in areas such as telemedicine, wearables and metric tracking. The report therefore suggests that last year digital health transitioned from a desirable, but complementary element of healthcare experience to its necessary, integral part.

Other key findings include:

- There is a gap between different populations' adoption of digital health tools. The adoption is increasing in those who are the likeliest adopters (younger, with high income, higher education, chronic conditions), and is much slower in those who are historically slow adopters (older, rural residents, with lower income). The authors note that "the pandemic acted more to reinforce and accelerate underlying trends rather than to draw in new consumer subgroups as telemedicine users".
- The willingness to share health data is still low and depends on who is on the receiving part. Consumers would share their data most comfortably with their providers (72%), insurers (53%) and family members (52%). The same trend is true for sharing the COVID-19 data.
- Twice as many respondents feel comfortable sharing with authorities their COVID-19 data than their general health data. Notably, the reverse is true with other entities, such as pharmacies and health insurers.
- Large shares of respondents prefer teleconsultations to in-person visits, and are satisfied with video consultations in particular. Still, telehealth remains an expensive option for many.

In conclusion, the report highlights the current challenges in digital health, such as uneven adoption of tools, consumers' reluctance to share health data and insufficient democratisation, and calls digital health innovators to address these issues to enhance and expand the digital health field.

Source and image credit: [Rock Health](#)

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