

Over 350K digital health apps are flooding the market—here's how apps can stand out

Article

The data: As the digital health market matures, it's being inundated with health apps.

- **More than 90,000 health apps were released last year**—an average of 250 being released per day, [according to IQVIA's](#) new Digital Health Trends 2021 report.
- **Over 350,000** digital health apps are currently available to consumers—many of which are geared toward wellness, but there's a rise in digital therapeutics (DTx) apps.
- In 2021, **47%** of all apps focus on managing specific health conditions (like chronic diseases or mental health), compared with **28%** in 2015.

But more apps does not equal more usage: Despite there being more consumer-directed health apps on the market than ever before, consumer usage hasn't skyrocketed at the same pace.

- **83% of apps** have been installed less than 5,000 times—and they **account for less than 1% of all health app downloads.**
- On the flipside, **the top 110 health apps** have been downloaded over **10 million times** and **make up almost 50% of total health app downloads.**

The challenge: Digital health apps are rife with privacy issues and lack clinical evidence.

- **88%** of mobile health apps have the ability to collect and potentially share user data, [according to](#) a June 2021 study in the British Medical Journal.
- Robust clinical evidence will be key to a health app's growth considering providing clinical validity could reel in the support of payers and providers, but it's lacking for many digital health apps.

What success looks like for digital health apps: Digital health apps that integrate with things like electronic health records, digital pharmacy services, or wearables data may see the most success.

In an ever-changing healthcare landscape, digital solutions are increasingly tangling together to create a more fluid digital health experience for consumers, and data-driven workflows and insights for providers and payers. These three features can be most valuable for patient care, and addressing those can help bring health apps one step closer to the mainstream: **78%** of US clinicians say EHRs are important technologies for patient care, and **44%** say mobile health apps are, [per](#) PwC's Medical Cost Trend: Behind the Numbers 2022 report.

Technologies that Are Important for Patient Care According to US Clinicians*, April 2021

% of respondents

Electronic health record (EHR)

78%

Digital patient portal

57%

Patient medical devices that integrate with the EHR

52%

Mobile apps that help patients manage their health

44%

Note: providers and nurses responded with 6 or 7 on a scale of 1-7 with 1 meaning "not important at all" and 7 meaning "very important"; *including physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and community or retail pharmacists
Source: PwC Health Research Institute, "Medical Cost Trend: Behind the Numbers 2022," June 9, 2021

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