SEP 30
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The Apple Watch's EKG tools are a step up, but still require doctor interpretation

Article

The news: Apple and Stanford Medicine's ongoing Heart Health Study results state the Apple Watch can detect heart arrhythmias besides atrial fibrillation (AFib).

- Approximately **40% of research participants** who received an irregularity notification from their Watch had other arrhythmias present upon follow-up testing.

The study also suggests the Apple Watch may be able to detect irregularities a traditional EKG patch could miss:

- Nearly **31% of participants** who didn't have any detection of AFib with their traditional EKG patch reported a subsequent AFib diagnosis at the end of Apple's study.

What it means for Apple: Clinicians could view the Apple Watch as a higher-caliber clinical tool than before.

The new study results could help prove the Watch's credibility as a viable diagnostic tool:

- Apple wants to prove this, considering research indicated the Apple Watch may not be completely on par with traditional EKG readings.
- In an early 2020 small study, **Cleveland Clinic** researchers found that the Apple Watch 4 only identified less than half (41%) of Afib instances, which means the Watch wasn't as reliableas traditional clinical methods.

But Apple's new research results suggests it's trying to make its tools more trustworthy in the eyes of clinicians:

- Cardiologists previously indicated further tech advances were needed for the Watch before docs can use it to regularly inform their care decisions.

What its means for doctors and patients: Even if Apple's tech becomes better at catching early cases of AFib, the results will still need to be interpreted by a doctor.

Better smartwatch tech may actually hurt more than help—doctors may become even more inundated with Apple EKG readings.

- Docs at health systems like Penn Medicine have stated that patients often "inundate" them with wearable trackings.
- About 42.8% of US suburban doctors report patients typically share wearable data with them during a visit—but overburdened docs don't always find this helpful, since many prefer to rely on tried and tested tools like on-site EKG machines instead.

What it means for other smartwatch entrants: Entrants like **Amazon Halo** and **Whoop** have a long way to go to catch up to Apple and Fitbit's clinical research presence.

Whoop and Halo have unveiled new healthcare features within the past year, likely in hopes of catching the attention of new research partners:

- Earlier this month, Whoop launched Whoop 4.0, which tracks oxygen level, skin temperature, heart rate, and respiratory rate.
- And Amazon Halo comes stocked with healthcare features like body fat measurement, sleep tracking, and voice tone detection.

But giants like Apple and **Fitbit** already have impressive rosters of research partners:

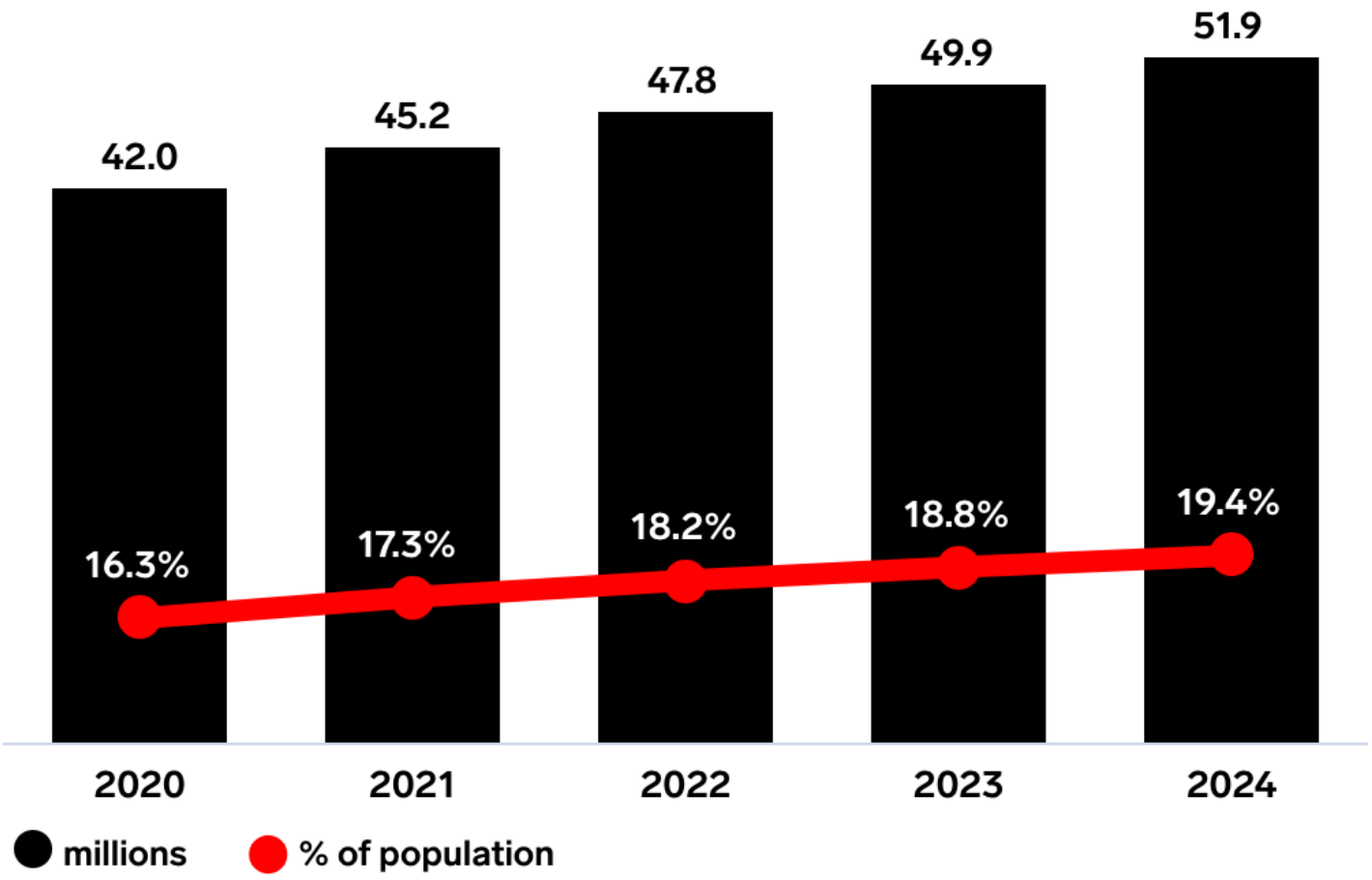
- Fitbit works with Stanford to study the role of wearables to detect and track COVID-19, for instance.

It's likely players like Halo and Whoop will market their fitness features as their main selling point to attract business for now, until it can nab some top clinical research partners to compete with Apple's clinical effectiveness:

- For example, Amazon Halo recently unveiled Halo Fitness, a new video workout service similar to Apple Fitness+.

Smartwatch Users

US, 2020-2024



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