

Consumers reveal where Big Tech and health tech wearables are winning and losing

Article

The data: Most patients (86%) using prescribed wearables experience improved health outcomes, quality of life, and quality of care, per a new Software Advice [survey](#). The survey

was conducted in January 2022 on 476 US patients who were using medically prescribed wearables.

What US consumers think of wearables

According to Software Advice's 2022 survey of 476 US patients using medically prescribed wearables



1 in 5 patients say their wearable device is hard to use



Most (43%) think commercial wearables (like Apple Watch, Fitbit, Oura) are easier to use than medically prescribed devices (9%)



15% say their device gives them the ability to receive remote care



A majority of patients (87%) have, at some point, recorded inaccurate data with their medical devices. 85% said this had to do with device usability

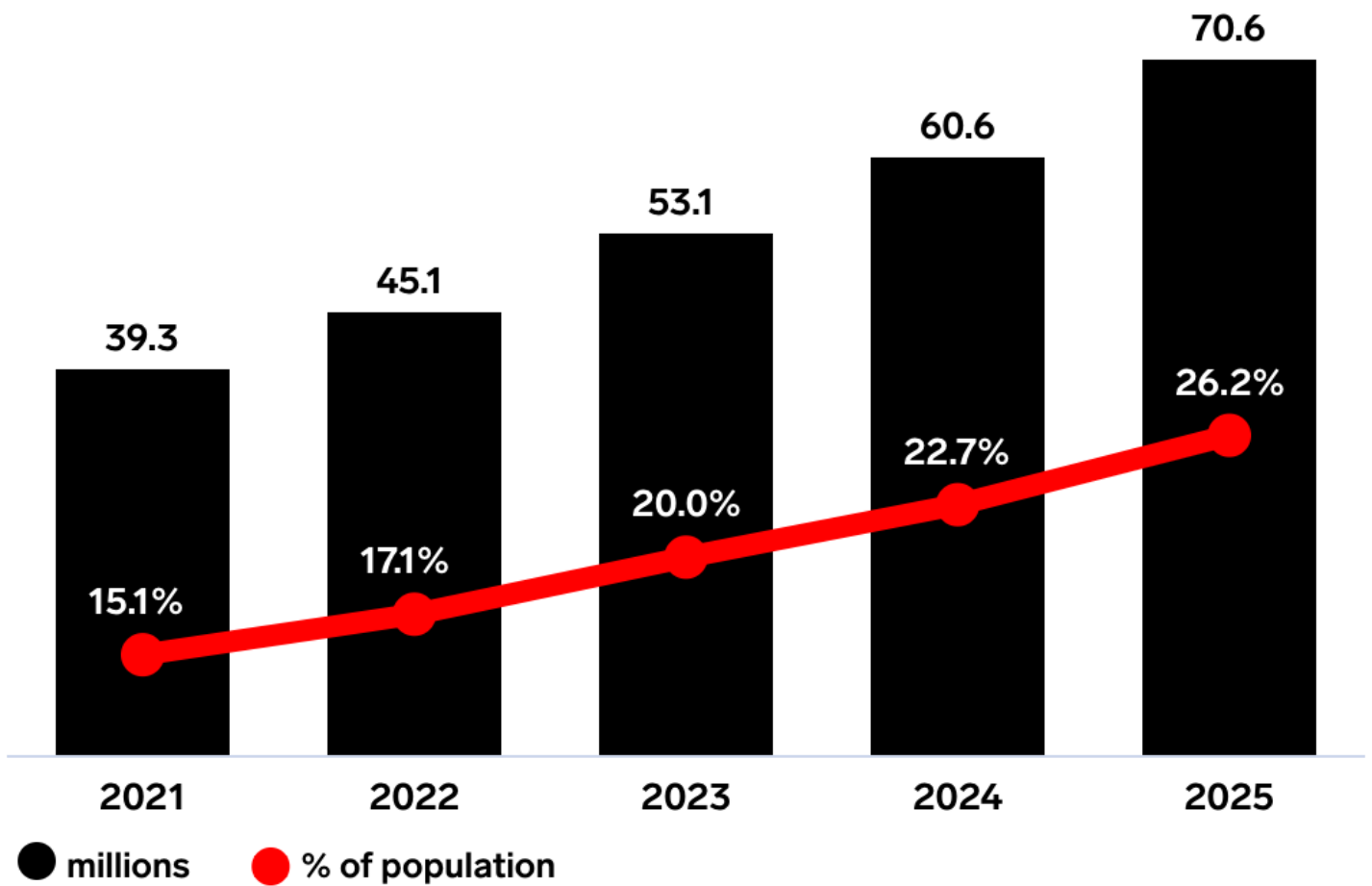
INSIDER
INTELLIGENCE

The bigger picture: Patients' willingness to incorporate wearables into their healthcare regimens coincides with a growing remote patient monitoring (RPM) market.

- We expect RPM users to grow from 39.3 million in 2021 to 70.6 million in 2025, per our most recent forecast.

Remote Patient Monitoring Users

US, 2021-2025



Source: eMarketer, August 2021

InsiderIntelligence.com

What's next? Wearable makers need to improve user design and experience to get their devices to stick.

Ease of use is probably the biggest driver of whether consumers actually use the wearables prescribed by their doctors. Adherence and regular usage is extremely important to gauge the effectiveness of wearables in improving health outcomes.

- Respondents to the survey noted that commercial wearables like **Apple Watch** and **Fitbit** devices were much easier to use than prescribed wearables (e.g. **AliveCor**, **Withings**, or **Philips**).
- Medical-grade wearables makers could take a page out of consumer tech companies' books by making their wearables more user friendly. This includes making the user interface easier to navigate and better integrated with smartphone apps, for instance.

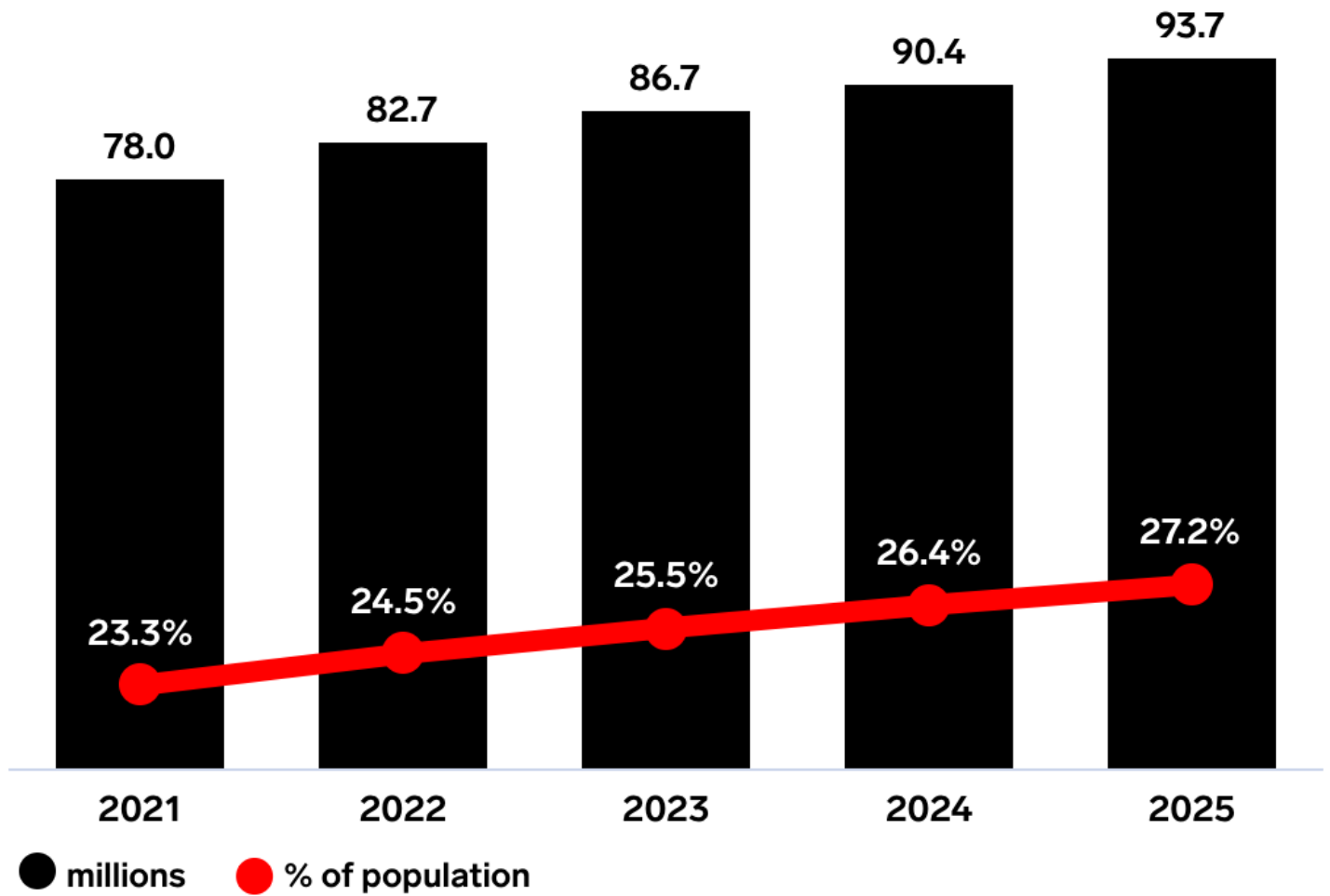
Will Big Tech wearables ever achieve medical-grade status? It seems that's the direction they're headed in, but there are two main hurdles in the way:

1. More clinical research is needed. Unlike medically prescribed wearables, tech companies depend directly on the consumer market to sell their wearables. Clinical viability only became a priority for them in recent years as tech and healthcare began to converge more and they saw opportunity in making consumer wearables more healthcare-compatible.

2. Taking the leap into medical-grade status = more risk. There's no question that getting more directly involved in the healthcare industry and claiming medical-grade status of wearables dumps greater liability risks on Big Tech companies. That means when inaccurate readings/alerts cause patients to experience any adverse health events, tech companies would be subject to taking full accountability of their devices' mishaps—including any legal action that would result.

Smart Wearable Users

US, 2021-2025



Source: eMarketer, October 2021

eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com