



Media Contact:
Cheryl Jacobs
cjacobs@thevitalitygroup.com
312.224.7219

Fitness Devices Impacting Employee Health According to Vitality Study

Pedometers, activity trackers, and smartphone applications on the rise

CHICAGO — April 23, 2014 — People of all ages, weight and gender are embracing wearable fitness devices offering real-time data to track their physical activity according to a three-year analysis from [The Vitality Group](#), part of the world's first and largest incentive-based wellness program. To better understand how the latest trends in digital health are impacting employees, The Vitality Group conducted research to determine how prevalent the use of these devices are among members, who uses them, and if these technologies impact health.

“Wearable technologies ultimately only work if they’re used and we wanted to determine if the hype is justified,” said Alan Pollard, CEO of The Vitality Group. “Our data shows that when incorporated as part of a broader structured program, there was a measurable change in behavior. Those using devices when paired with incentives were more likely to reduce the prevalence of key risks such as BMI and cholesterol levels.”

Additional research findings include:

- Over the three years of the study, smartphone and pedometer use skyrocketed, while heart rate monitors and gym membership declined.
- Pedometers and activity trackers are more popular with the older demographic (more than 30% are 35-44) and smart phones show an expectedly younger audience (almost 65% are ages 18-34).
- A slightly larger percentage of women use pedometer/activity trackers (56%) and smartphone devices (51%), whereas heart rate monitors are more popular with men (52%).
- Within the Vitality wellness program, a high proportion of those who use devices are overweight or obese— 67% of people who use a pedometer or activity tracker are overweight, 62% of those who use a heart rate monitor, and 63% a smartphone.
- Members not previously engaged in fitness activities reduced their health risk factors by 13%, and members already active in fitness saw the greatest improvement, reducing their factors by 22%.
- Incentive structures built around daily step counts motivated members to reach thresholds.

In 2013 activity trackers generated an estimated \$290 million in American retail sales according to the NPD Group who says the market could double in 2014. Vitality was an early adopter of integrating devices as a means to track verified workouts, starting in 2004 as one of the first wellness programs to integrate heart rate monitors. The program now works with more than 100 unique devices.

How Vitality Works

Members start with an online Health Risk Assessment that identifies relative risk factors for each member and provides them with their Vitality Age™. This is a scientifically calculated representation of their risk-adjusted or “true” age, allowing each member to easily understand how their current behaviors are impacting their health.

Each member is then presented with a Personal Pathway™, a recommended set of activities and goals to assist them in improving their health. Members can select from more than 30 health-related activities including exercising, achieving health goals such as losing weight or stopping smoking, receiving routine preventive screening and participating in health education programs. Members are incentivized for their participation throughout the program and earn rewards.

The wearable devices technical brief can be accessed [here](#). Join the conversation on Twitter by following @TheVitalityGrp.

About Vitality

[The Vitality Group](#) is a member of Discovery Ltd., offering an incentive-based wellness program to employers as part of their benefits program. With a foundation based on actuarial science and behavioral economic theory, Vitality encourages changes in lifestyle that reduce health care costs, both in the short run and long term, by rewarding members for addressing their specific health issues. Vitality wellness programs serve companies in a wide range of sizes and industries, improving individuals’ health and wellbeing as well as employers’ bottom lines.

Vitality brings a global perspective through successful partnerships with large employers and best-in-class insurers around the world, in countries including the United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, China and more recently Singapore and Australia.

###