



The Current State of Patients' Access and Use of their Electronic Health Information

ONC Annual Meeting

January 27, 2020

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Health Information Technology



Background

- Since 2015, ONC has collaborated with the National Cancer Institute to track consumers' access and use of online medical records (also known as patient portals). Prior to this, ONC conducted its own national surveys.
- The Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS) is a cross-sectional, mail-administered survey that collects information about the American public's access and use of health information.
- The survey achieves a nationally representative sample of ~3,500 U.S. adults annually.
- We will be presenting descriptive results on trends related to access and use of online medical records through portals.

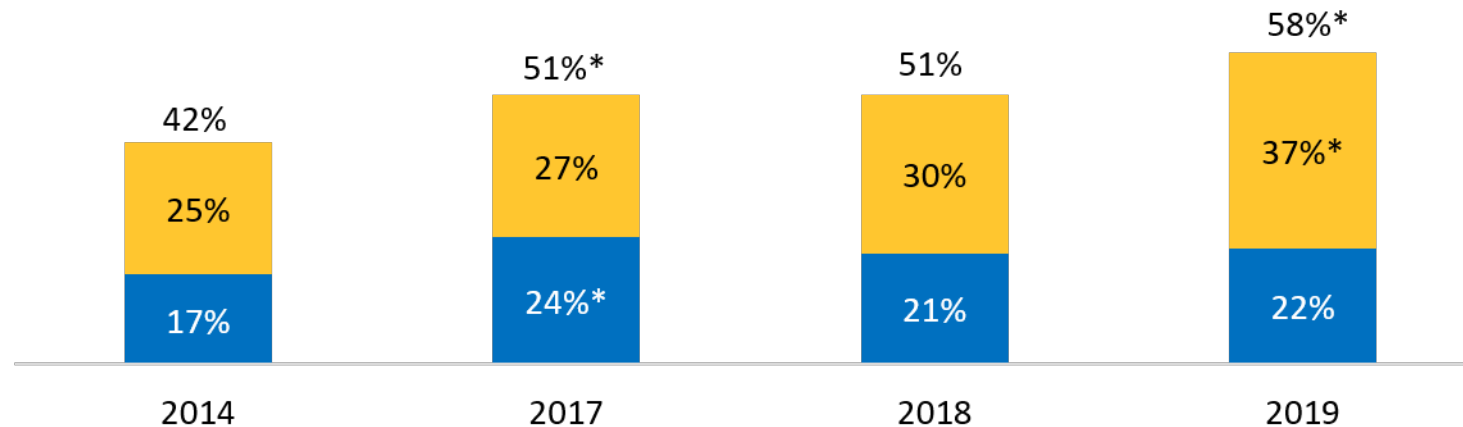


How are individuals currently accessing and using their online medical records?

The percentage of individuals offered access to their online medical record increased between 2018 and 2019.

Percent of individuals ever offered access to their online medical record by a health care provider or insurer by whether they viewed their online medical record, 2014-2019.

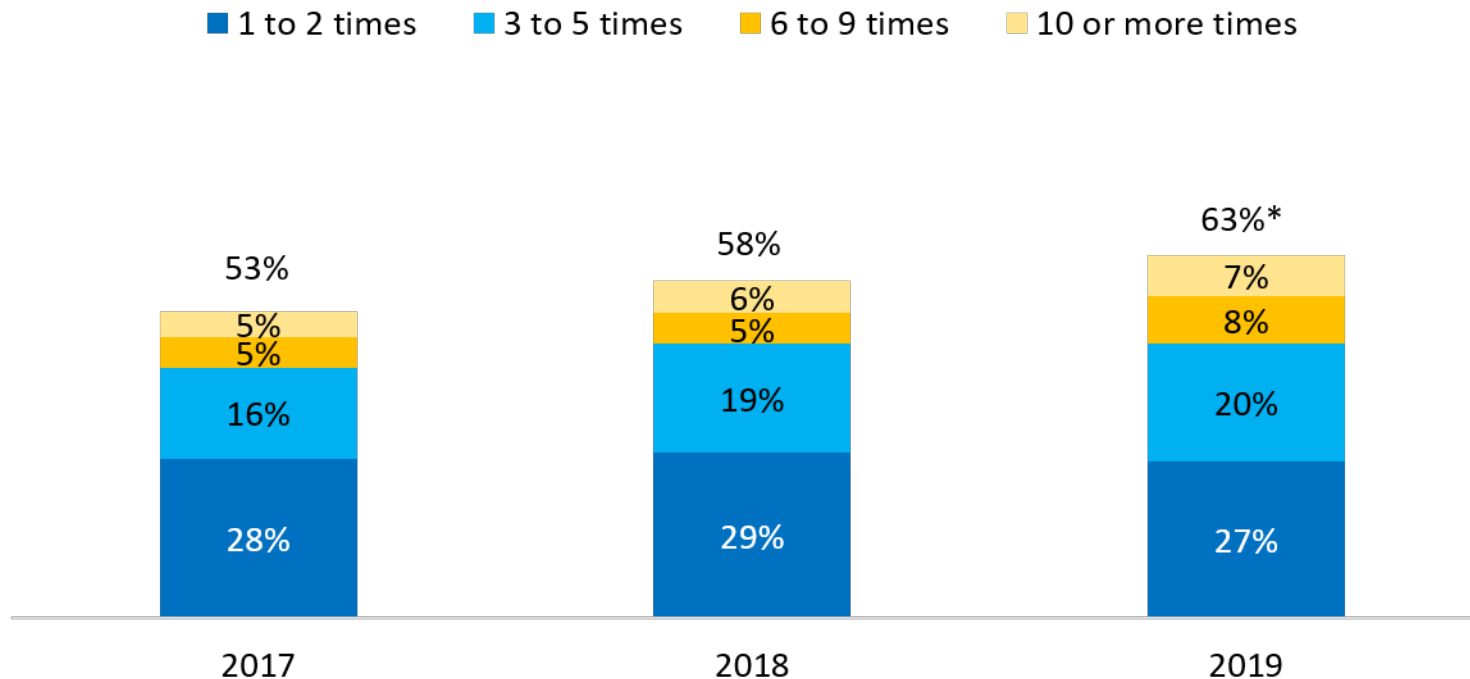
- Offered access and viewed online medical record at least once within the past year
- Offered access but did not view online medical record within the past year



Source: HINTS 4 Cycle 4, 2014; HINTS 5, Cycle 1, 2017; HINTS 5, Cycle 2, 2018; HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.
Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. *Significantly different from previous year ($p < 0.05$).
Denominator represents all individuals. Percentage reflects weighted national estimate. Estimates for 2019 do not add up to 58% due to rounding.

Among individuals who were offered access to an online medical record, more than 60% viewed it within the past year.

Frequency of viewing an online medical record within the past year among those who had been offered an online medical record by a health care provider or insurer, 2017-2019.



Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 1, 2017; HINTS 5, Cycle 2, 2018; HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. *Significantly different from previous year ($p < 0.05$). Denominator represents individuals who were offered access to their online medical record.

Individuals access and subsequent viewing of online medical records varies by sociodemographic and health-related characteristics.

Variation in individuals being offered access and viewing their online medical record by selected characteristics, 2017-2018 (combined sample).

Characteristic	Offered Access	Viewed
Gender	✓	blank
Age	✓	
Race/Ethnicity	✓	✓
Income	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓
Urban/Rural		✓
Visited an HCP in Past Year	✓	✓
Internet Access	✓	✓
Chronic Condition	✓	✓
Health Insurance	✓	

Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 1, 2017; HINTS 5, Cycle 2, 2018.

Notes: Adjusted estimates controlled for survey year (2017/2018), gender, age, race/ethnicity, income, education, geography, having seen a doctor in the past year, internet access, chronic condition, and health insurance.

Most individuals cite their preference to speak to a provider directly and a perceived lack of need as reasons for not viewing their online medical records.

Reasons for not accessing online medical record as reported by individuals who did not view their online medical record within the past year, 2019.

Reason for Not Using Online Record	2019
Prefer to speak to health care provider directly	75%
Did not have a need to use your online medical record	64%
Concerned about the privacy/security of online medical record	20%
Do not have a way to access the website	15%
No longer have an online medical record	14%
Difficult to login	22%
Uncomfortable with computers	22%
Have more than one online medical record	12%

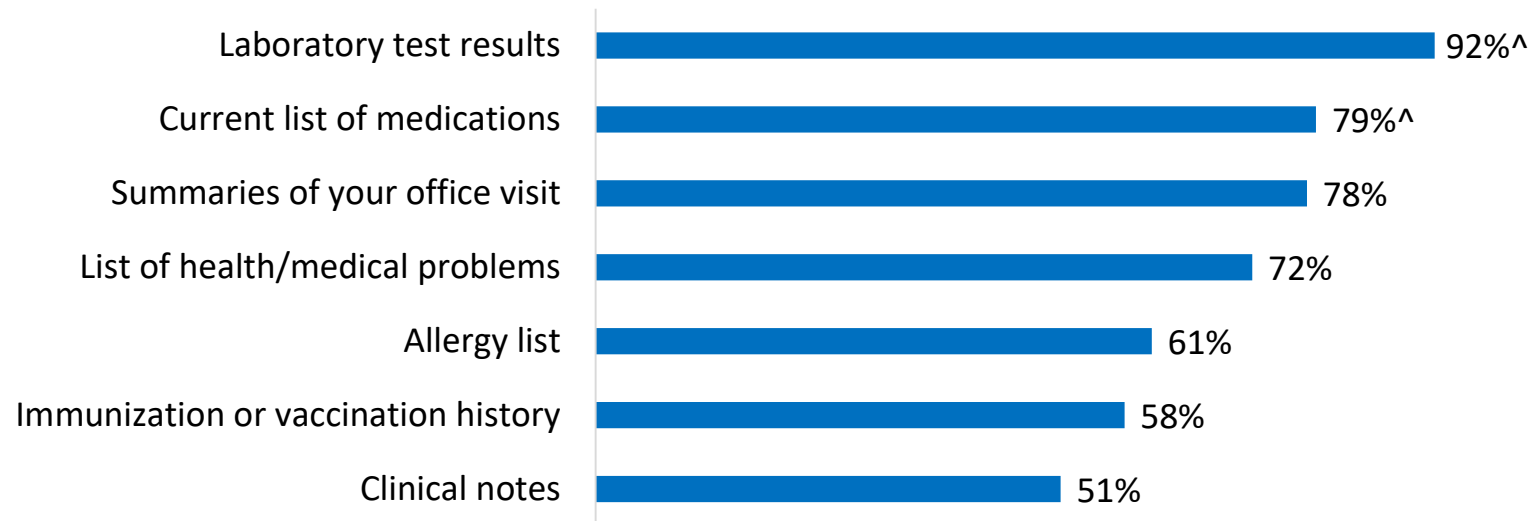
Newly Collected
in 2019

Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. Denominator represents individuals who were offered an online medical record but did not view their record within the past year.

In 2018, more than 9 in 10 individuals who viewed their online medical record reported that it included lab test results.

Types of information reported in individuals' medical record amongst those who were offered and viewed their record, 2018.

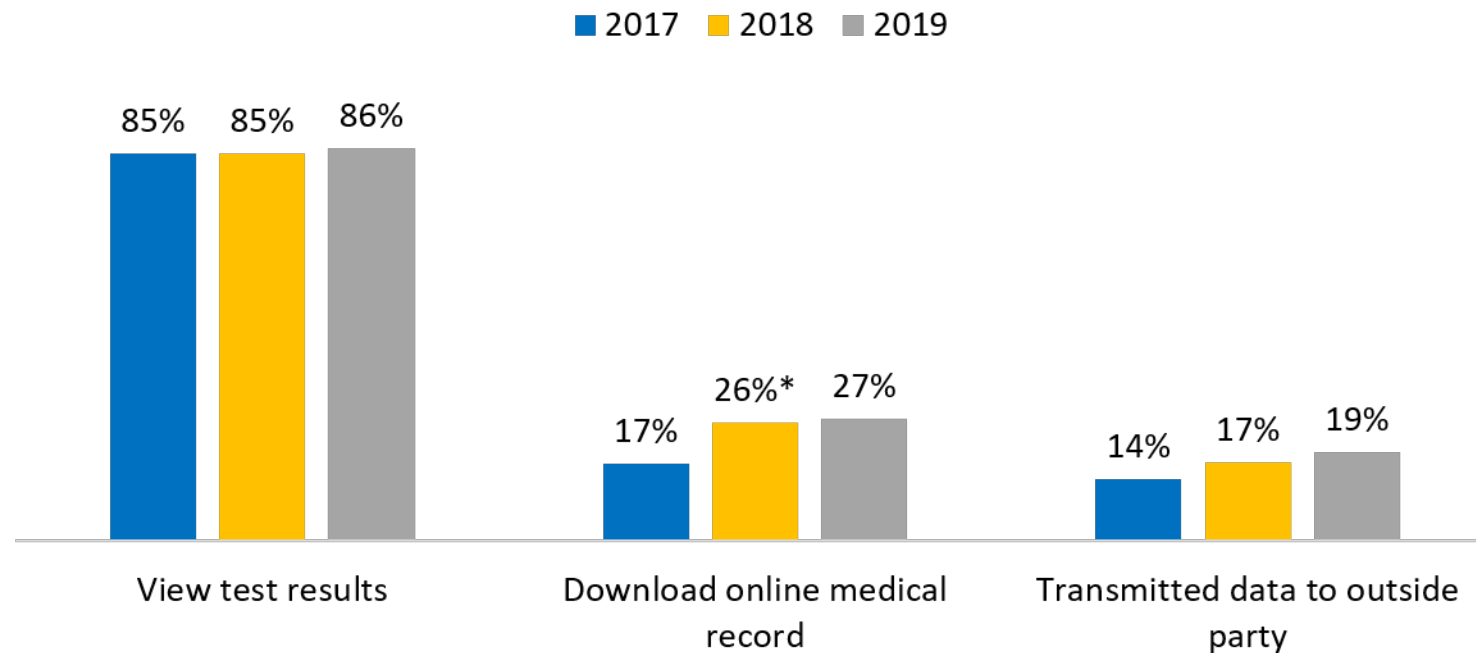


Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 1, 2017; HINTS 5, Cycle 2, 2018.

Notes: ^Survey last collected this data point in 2017; Denominator represents individuals who were offered access to the online medical record and viewed it at least once within the last year.

In 2019, about 1 in 5 individuals who viewed their online medical record transmitted their data to a third-party.

Among those viewed their record at least once within the past year, the percentage that used view, download, or transmit functionalities 2017-2019.



Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 1, 2017; HINTS 5, Cycle 2, 2018; HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. *Significantly different from previous year ($p < 0.05$). Denominator represents individuals who were offered access to the online medical record and viewed it at least once within the last year.

More than half of individuals viewed their online medical record and used it to securely message their health care providers in 2019.


Reported online medical record functionalities used by individuals amongst those who were offered and viewed their record, 2019.

Functionality	2019
Convenience Functions	
Request refill of medications	47%
Fill out forms or paperwork related to your health care	43%^
Updating Medical Record	
Request correction of inaccurate information	10%
Add health information	25%
Communicating with Health Care Provider	
Securely message health care provider and staff	53%
Self-Management and Decision Making	
Help you make a decision about how to treat an illness or condition	24%

Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 2, 2018 ; HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. ^Survey last collected this data point in 2018.

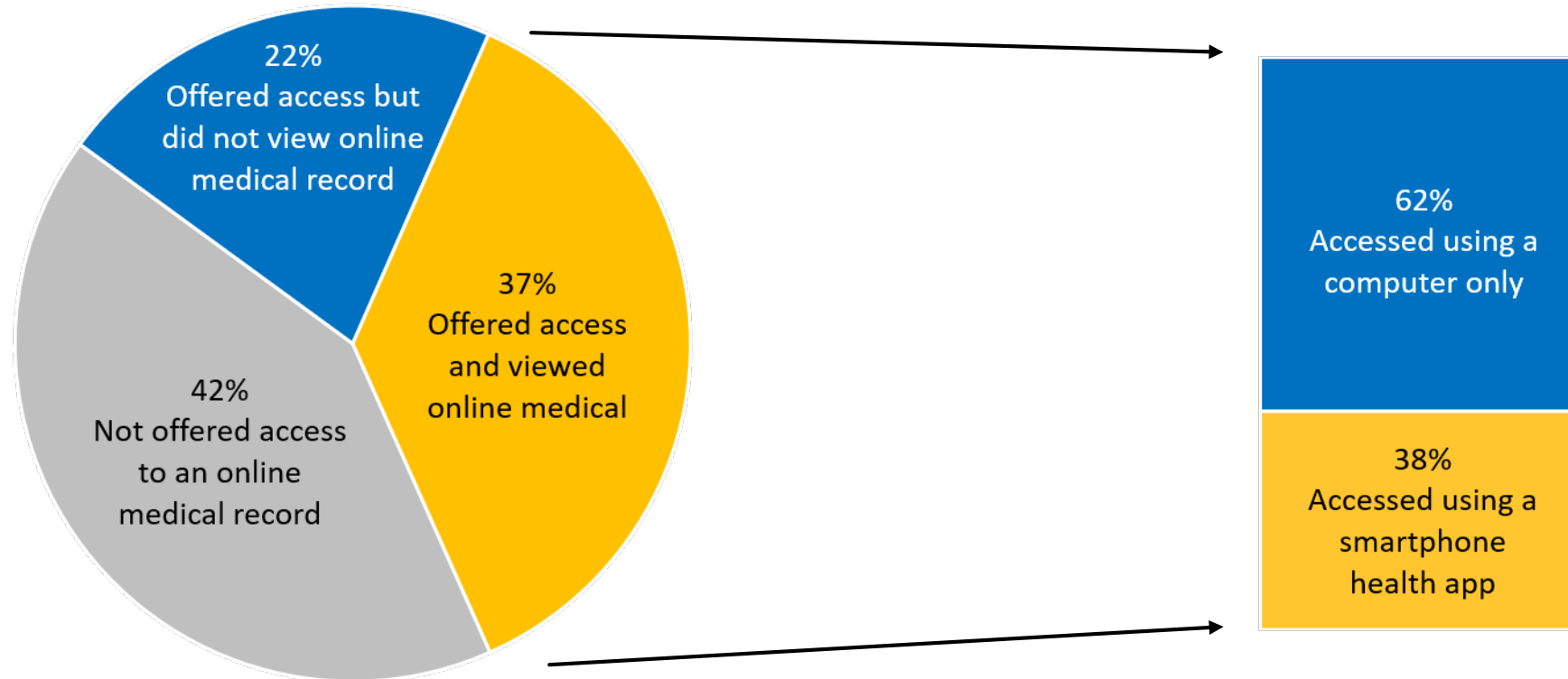
Denominator represents individuals who were offered access to the online medical record and viewed it at least once within the last year.



**What tools are
individuals using to
view their online
medical records?**

Nearly 40% of individuals who accessed their online medical record viewed it using a smartphone health app in 2019.

Percent of individuals offered access to their online medical record by whether they viewed their record using a smartphone health app or a computer only, 2019.

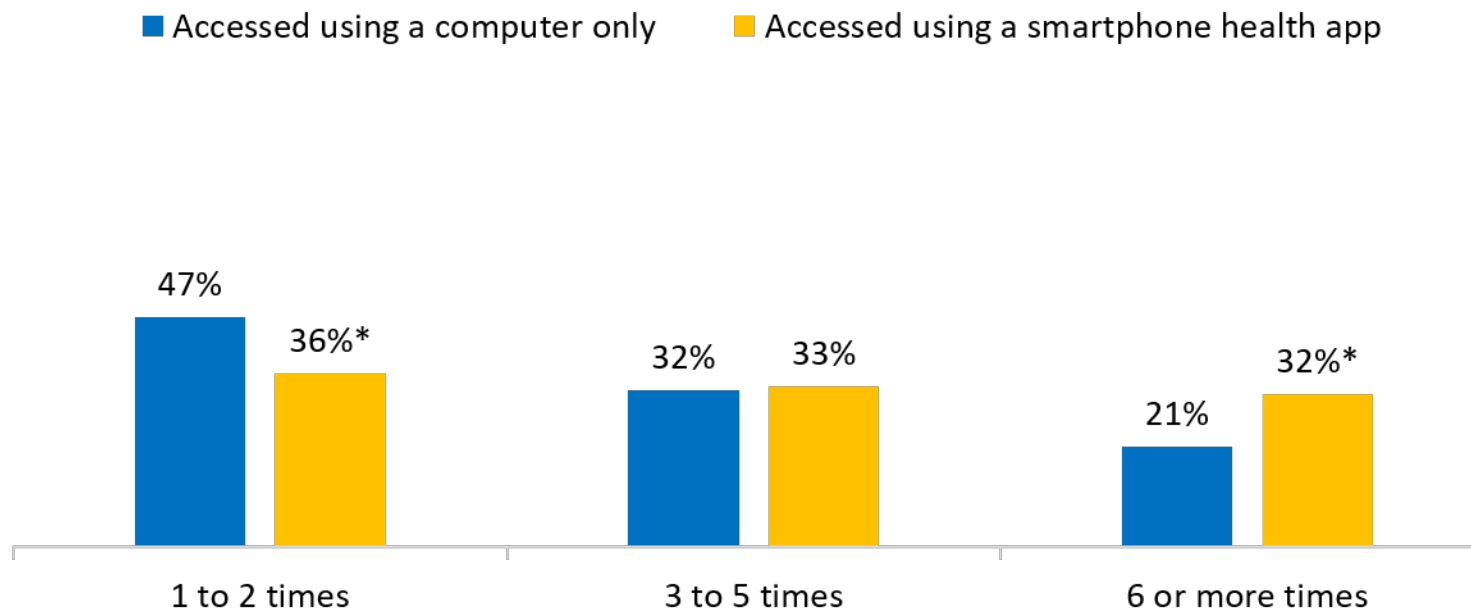


Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. Denominator for the figure on the left represents all individuals. Denominator for the figure on the right represents individuals who were offered access to an online medical record and viewed it at least once within the last year.

Individuals who accessed their online medical record using a smartphone health app viewed their data more frequently than those who used a computer only.

Frequency of viewing an online medical record within the past year by whether they viewed their record using a smartphone health app or a computer only, 2019.

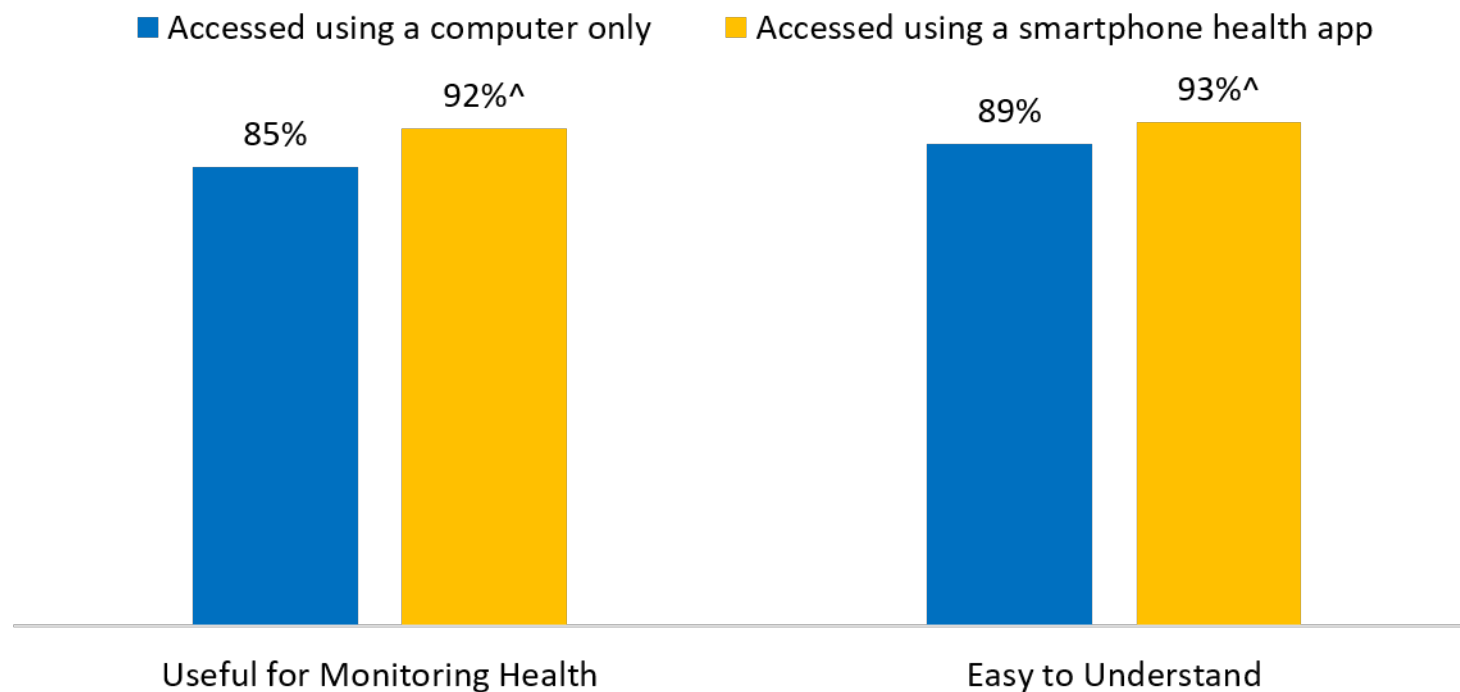


Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. Denominator represents individuals who were offered access to the online medical record and viewed it at least once within the last year.

Individuals who viewed their online medical record using a smartphone health app reported higher rates of their record being useful for monitoring their health and easy to understand.

Perceived ease of understanding the information in an online medical record by whether individuals find their online record useful for monitoring their health, 2019.



Source: HINTS 5, Cycle 3, 2019.

Notes: Results are based on preliminary analyses. ^Statistically different from “computer only” group ($p < 0.1$). Denominator represents individuals who were offered access to the online medical record and viewed it at least once within the last year.

What does the current state of patient access tell us about the future?

- Portal use is gaining traction, with increases in the proportion of individuals being offered access and subsequently viewing their online medical record between 2018 and 2019.
- The use of apps to access portals is sizable and individuals report greater frequency of viewing their records using their portal app.
- Portal app users also rated their online medical as more useful and easier to use, suggesting that health apps could make it easier for patients to access and view their electronic health information from multiple care settings.
- However, given the top barriers to use of online medical records are unrelated to technology and usability, further work should be done to educate patients and providers about the benefits of accessing and using electronic health information.
 - ONC's [Patient Engagement Playbook](#) and [Guide to Getting and Using your Health Record](#) deliver tips to providers and patients for making this process easier.



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