

Zero in on: Italy

Italy was the first European country to be **hit by COVID-19** and the first to enter lockdown in March 2020. It was among the most affected countries in the first outbreak and has also enforced some of the **strictest vaccine mandates** in Europe.

As a result, consumers in Italy report some of the highest levels of worsened mental health at 54%, compared to 29% in similar European countries like France and Germany. Clearly, the early impact and lingering effects of the pandemic have hit many people in Italy hard.

This has all led to a greater awareness of taking care of oneself. Just over half of consumers in Italy say they're more conscious of looking after their physical health and mental health – ahead of similar European markets we've surveyed.

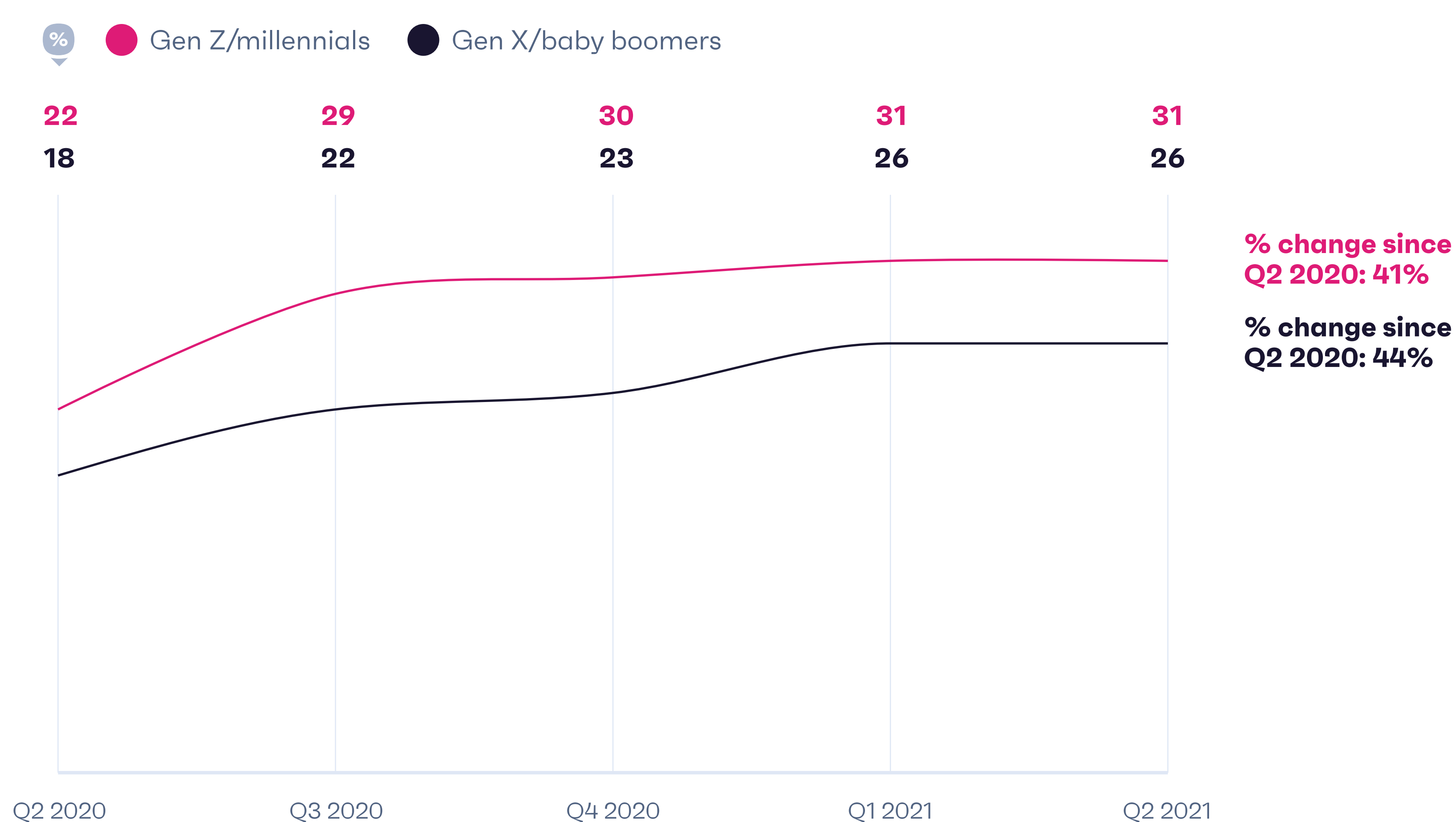
Turning our focus to the growth of wearables in Italy highlights how important technology is in managing health. In this market, ownership of a smartwatch or wristband has grown 41% since Q2 2020.

28% 
of italian consumers
own a smartwatch/
wristband, up from
20% in Q2 2020.

Ownership of wearables is highest among younger generations, however, the biggest growth in ownership of smartwatches since Q2 2020 is actually among Gen X and baby boomers. For a country that has one of the oldest populations in the world, it's encouraging to see that more older, high-risk consumers are turning to tech to manage their health.

Growth of wearables highest among older consumers in Italy

% in Italy who say they own a smartwatch or wristband



Source: GWI Core Q2 2020–Q2 2021 | Base: 6,484 internet users who own a smartwatch/wristband in Italy aged 16–64 | Question: Which of the following devices do you own? (Smartwatch / smart wristband)

On top of this, Italy has some of the highest comfort with tech in Europe. For instance, 32% of consumers in Italy say they're comfortable with apps tracking their activity (for walking or sleeping etc.), compared to just 18% in Germany and Austria. Comfort with apps tracking their activity has also grown 12% since Q2 2020. Italy also ranks fifth among eighteen European countries for trusting new technology to improve their health – 27% say this compared to a low of 17% in the UK.

As wearables become even more advanced, we'll likely see uptake and comfort levels increase even further. Italy, with its aging population, is a prime market for the wearable sector – let's watch this space.



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