

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

US federal agency which administers [Medicare](#), [Medicaid](#), and the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

In April 2014 the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a [dataset](#) for the public which included information on services provided by physicians and healthcare providers for Medicare beneficiaries in the 2012 calendar year.

A survey was sent to members of the [Association for Collaborative Spine Research](#) (ACSR) regarding their practice patterns and opinions on the release of the CMS data. Determinants included surgical subspecialty, practice setting, years in practice and region. The average response was collected for each question and compared across groups. Additionally, questions in which greater than 75% of respondents either agreed (agree or strongly agree) or disagreed (disagree or strongly disagree) were identified.

Seventy-six surgeons completed the survey, and while the overall interobserver reliability between each question was only slight ($\kappa = 0.11$), more than 75% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with five statements and, more than 75% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with six statements. While 86% of surgeons are in favor of more transparency, 83% of respondents felt that without the proper context, the data released does not accurately portray spine surgery. Additionally, 96% of spine surgeons do not believe the CMS data helps patients decide which spine surgeon is best for them.

The small percentage of spine surgeons who responded to this survey are in favor of more transparency but do not feel the release of the CMS data either accurately represents spine surgeons or will help patients better identify the appropriate surgeon. In spite of these concerns, it is unlikely the release of the CMS data will significantly impact the accessibility of a spine surgeon to a Medicare beneficiary ¹⁾.

¹⁾

Koerner JD, Schroeder GD, Shah A, Arnold PM, Isaacs RE, Hilibrand AS, Vaccaro AR, Radcliff KE. A Survey On Spine Surgeons' Opinions On The Release Of The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Data. Int J Spine Surg. 2015 Oct 13;9:51. eCollection 2015. PubMed PMID: 26609506.

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