

Physician review website

With the ever-growing utilization of physician review websites, healthcare consumers are assuming more control over whom they choose for care. We evaluated patient feedback and satisfaction scores of spine surgeons using comments from three leading physician rating websites: Healthgrades.com, Vitals.com, Google.com. This is the largest review of online comments and the largest review of spine surgeon comments.

METHODS: From the North American Spine Society (NASS) membership directory, 210 spine surgeons practicing in Florida (133 orthopedic trained; 77 neurosurgery trained) with online comments available for review were identified, yielding 4,701 patient comments. These were categorized according to subject: 1) surgeon competence, 2) surgeon likeability/character, 3) office staff, ease of scheduling, office environment. Type 1 and 2 comments were surgeon-dependent factors whereas type 3 comments were surgeon-independent factors. Patient comments also reported a score (1-5), 5 being the most favorable and 1 being the least favorable.

RESULTS: There were 1,214 (25.8%) comments from Healthgrades, 2,839 (60.4%) from Vitals, and 648 (13.8%) from Google. 89.9% (4225) of comments pertained to surgeon outcomes and likeability (comment type 1 & 2), compared to 10.1% (476) surgeon-independent comments (comment type 3) ($p < 0.0001$). There was a significantly higher number of favorable ratings associated with surgeon-dependent comments (types 1 and 2) compared to surgeon-independent comments (type 3). Surgeon-independent comments were associated with significantly lower scores compared to comments regarding surgeon-dependent factors on all review sites.

Spine surgeons are more likely to receive favorable reviews for factors pertaining to outcomes, likeability/character, and negative reviews based on ancillary staff interactions, billing, and office environment. Surgeons should continue to take an active role in modifying factors patients perceive as negative, even if not directly related to the physician ¹⁾.

Physician review Websites (PRW) are rapidly growing for-profit businesses. Most orthopedic surgeons are rated on at least one PRW as are other surgical specialists. To date the online ratings of spine surgeons have not been evaluated.

METHODS: Cervical Spine Research Society surgeon ratings on five physician rating Web sites were performed in April 2016: "healthgrade.com," "vitals.com," "ratemd.com," "webmd.com," and "yelp.com." Numeric ratings from the PRWs were standardized on a scale of 0 to 100 with a higher score indicating positive ratings. Sex, practice sector (academic or private), specialty (orthopedics or neurosurgery), geographic location, and years of practice were also collected.

RESULTS: A total of 209 spine surgeons were included in our study. Of the 209 spine surgeons, 208 (99.52%) were rated at least once in one of the five PRWs. Average number of ratings per surgeon was 2.96. Average rating was 80 (40-100). There were four female (1.92%) and 204 male surgeons (98.1%). There were 121 (58.2%) in academic practice and 87 (41.8%) in private practice. There were 175 (84.1%) orthopedic surgeons and 33 (15.9%) neurosurgeons. Most of the surgeons were Caucasian 163 (78.4%) and worked in the South and Northeast 135 (64.9%). Those in academic practice had significantly higher ratings (81.6 vs. 77.65; $P = 0.026$). Number of years in practice was significantly associated with ratings ($P = 0.0003$) with those in practice for 21 or more years having significantly lower ratings.

CONCLUSION: In this first study evaluating the online ratings of spine surgeons, we found that 99.5% of spine surgeon had at least one rating on a PRW. The average score, 80, indicated mostly positive ratings. Being in practice for 20 years or less and being in academic practice significantly associated with higher ratings ²⁾.

The future of health care is consumer driven with a focus on outcome metrics and patient feedback. Physician review websites have grown in popularity and are guiding patients to certain health-care providers, for better or worse. No prior study has specifically evaluated Internet reviews of spine surgeons, determined if social media (SM) correlates with patient reviews, or evaluated Google as a physician review website.

PURPOSE: This study aimed to evaluate patient satisfaction scores for spine surgeons in Florida using leading physician ratings websites.

STUDY DESIGN: A retrospective study was carried out.

SAMPLE POPULATION: The sample comprised spine surgeons with a review on Healthgrades.com (HG), Vitals.com (V), or Google.com (G) online rating websites as of August 17, 2017.

OUTCOME MEASURES: Number of ratings, number of comments, overall rating, patient-reported wait times, physician website presence, and physician SM presence were the outcome measures.

METHODS: Using the directory of registered North American Spine Society physicians, we identified all spine surgeons practicing in Florida (137 orthopedic trained; 78 neurosurgery trained). Surgeon demographics and ratings data were collected from three physician rating websites (HG, V, G) from July 19, 2017 to August 17, 2017. Using only the first 10 search results from Google.com we then identified if the surgeon had accounts on Facebook (FB), Twitter (TW), or Instagram (IG).

RESULTS: Nearly every surgeon in this cohort had either an institutional or personal website (98.1%), and 38.6% had at least one SM outlet of our three reviewed. Both personal and institutional website presence significantly correlated with higher G scores. Spine surgeons with a searchable account on FB, TW, or IG made up 35.4%, 10.2%, and 0.5% of the cohort, respectively. Surgeons with an SM presence had a significantly higher number of ratings and comments on HG, V, and G, but not overall scores. In multivariable analysis, only V showed a significant inverse correlation between overall score and age, private institution, and orthopedic surgery training. Wait times >30 minutes were significantly associated with worse overall scores across all three review sites. Overall ratings between HG, V, and G all had significantly positive correlations on Pearson correlation analysis.

CONCLUSION: Social media presence correlates with patient communication in the form of number of ratings and comments, yet does not impact overall scores, suggesting social media may influence patient feedback. Longer wait times are indicative of lower scores across all three platforms. Overall ratings from all three websites correlate significantly with each other, indicating agreement between physician ratings across different platforms. Understanding the factors that optimize a patient's overall experience with a physician is an important and emerging outcome measure for the future of patient-centered health care ³⁾.

see [Online Ratings of Neurosurgeons](#)

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Donnally CJ 3rd, Roth ES, Li DJ, Maguire JA Jr, McCormick JR, Barker GP, Rivera S, Lebwohl NH. Analysis of Internet Review Site Comments for Spine Surgeons: How Office Staff, Physician Likeability, and

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