

How Your Patients Rate You

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Back in the "old" days, before rating websites such as Yelp existed, the best way to find a good restaurant was to ask a friend for recommendations. Unfortunately, the recommendation was dependent upon whether your friend enjoys the same kinds of food you do. It didn't take too long before you narrowed down your restaurant advisors to a few select individuals who (in your opinion) actually knew what good food tastes like.

Online Provider Ratings: What Matters (and What Doesn't)

Nowadays, Yelp and other rating sites allow you to find the "best" restaurant based on the experiences of people you don't even know. They provide ratings on almost every business, including chiropractic. Yelp even has a "Best Chiropractor" list based on patient ratings and reviews. But while five stars may appear to guarantee the highest quality of care, a newly published study suggests otherwise.¹

Researchers compared the online ratings from five different websites (including Yelp, Healthgrades and Vitals) with MDs' actual "specialty-specific performance scores, primary care physician peer-review scores, and administrator peer-review scores." What they discovered is that "online ratings of specialist physicians *do not predict* objective measures of quality of care or peer assessment of clinical performance." [Italics added] Interestingly enough, the authors also found that providers' online ratings were consistent between websites.

If your patients aren't rating you on the quality of your care, what are they rating you on? [An article](#) on the study appearing in *Modern Healthcare* suggests, "[C]onsumers are more likely to evaluate aspects of care they understand, such as their personal expectations and experiences."²

If you read through the reviews of the "Best Chiropractor in [your city and state]" you will see some common themes:

- "Unlike my last chiropractor, who adjusts me as quickly as he can so he can get to his next patient, Dr. [Name] actually spends the time and uses different adjustment technique[s] to ensure that I go home pain free. He also has a great sense of humor, which makes the visit more enjoyable. I don't ever see any of his patients leave without a smile on their face. His staff is pretty cool, too. I usually get their adjustment and therapy package in one visit."
- "I always feel like million bucks after seeing him. His office staff is helpful and friendly, his office is immaculate, and visits to his office are always a pleasant experience. In addition to being a great doctor, he is a wonderful person. He is very kind, caring, and honest."
- "He remembers his patients and their personal lives, and he will make sure you feel comfortable during your visits. He is also great at communicating between treatments, and is very thorough in sending emails / making phone calls to check up on you and make sure you're doing [OK] or remind you of upcoming appointments."

A Word on Negative Reviews

The personal interaction between the patient and you, your staff and your office clearly has a tremendous influence on how your patients perceive the quality of your care. It also has an impact on their decision to rate, review and refer your services.

While the prospect of a bad review can be disconcerting, it is understood by most people who visit rating sites that every business will receive negative reviews. The top-rated DC in my town received one- and two-star negative reviews that appeared on the first page. But they were easily drowned out by the positive reviews, which made up most of his 110 total reviews.

Your Opportunity

If you haven't read your reviews in a while (or at all), it is probably time to do so. If you aren't near the top of the Yelp-rated "Best Chiropractors," you will want to read some of those reviews first before reading yours. Reflect on their reviews and what seems to be contributing to their high rankings. Then learn from their success stories to take action in your own practice.

References

1. Daskivich TJ, et al. Online physician ratings fail to predict actual performance on measures of quality, value, and peer review. *J Amer Med Informatics Assoc*, Sept. 8, 2017.
 2. Castellucci M. "Online Physician Ratings Don't Reflect Quality of Care." *Modern Healthcare*, Sept. 11, 2017.
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