Factors Influencing Online Patient Reported Ratings Among Adult Reconstructive Surgeons

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INTRODUCTION: Patient-reported ratings act as a measure of satisfaction and can significantly impact the recruitment of new patients. Various factors may affect these ratings on physician review websites (PRWs), including social media presence, academic output, type of fellowship training, and work environment. This study explores how these elements are associated with average ratings and patient interaction on PRWs.

METHODS: The AAHKS directory was searched for all active members who completed a fellowship in adult reconstruction or sports medicine. Surgeons were searched online, and a summative social media presence score was calculated. Each surgeon's practice setting (academic vs private), region of practice, medical school, residency, and H-index was also recorded. Each surgeon was searched on Healthgrades, Vitals, and Google Reviews to collect data on average rating, number of ratings, and number of written comments for statistical comparison.

RESULTS SECTION: A total of 239 surgeons were analyzed (237 men, 2 women). Surgeons in the top 15% of social media presence demonstrated higher average ratings on Google Reviews (4.7 vs 4.4, P< 0.05) compared to those in the bottom 85%. Surgeons from top 20 medical schools or residency programs had significantly higher H-index scores (14.7 vs 6.8 and 13.8 vs 6.0, respectively; P< 0.05), but no consistent advantage in patient ratings. We found that the longer you practice, the worse your ratings. No significant correlations were found between H-index and overall patient ratings.

DISCUSSION: Multiple modifiable and non-modifiable variables can play a role in patient ratings of surgeons. We found that surgeons with higher social media presence had higher patient ratings. Factors such as research productivity, medical school and residency prestige, and region of practice may not play a role in patient ratings. Limitations include restriction to AAHKS members, reliance on independent PRWs, and the tendency of PRWs to attract extreme opinions, as well as possible underrepresentation of older patient populations less likely to use online platforms. Since prospective patients tend to choose surgeons with higher ratings, adult reconstruction surgeons can leverage this insight to enhance patient retention and recruitment and boost overall satisfaction.

SIGNIFICANCE/CLINICAL RELEVANCE: Since patient-reported ratings are tied to physician reputation and reimbursement, it's important to understand what drives them. We found that social media presence, practice setting, and personalized biographies were linked to more engagement and higher ratings, while surgeon experience shaped both the number and average score of reviews—insights that highlight ways to improve patient engagement and satisfaction on PRWs

IMAGES AND TABLES:

Table 1. Online Patient Ratings and Engagement Between Top 15% versus Bottom 85% of Social Media Users Based on Cumulative Social Media Score for Adult Reconstruction Orthopaedic Surgeons

	Top 15% n=45	Bottom 85% n=194
HealthGrades		
Mean Rating, SD	4.5 (0.5)	4.4 (0.6)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD	74.3 (84.7)	63.2 (68.9)
Mean Number of Comments, SD	54.9 (69.4)	44.2 (53.7)
Google Reviews		
Mean Rating, SD*	4.7 (0.4)	4.4 (1.1)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD	106.3 (142.0)	95.4 (128.5)
Vitals		
Mean Rating, SD	4.2 (0.6)	4.4 (0.8)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD	60.4 (123.9)	43.2 (48.0)
Mean Number of Comments, SD	37.0 (82.3)	24.5 (36.5)
Mean H-Index, SD	12.0 (17.1)	7.1 (11.1)
Mean Years As Attending, SD	16.3 (9.2)	19.1 (10.8)

* Indicates P <0.05

Table 2. Online Patient Ratings and Engagement Between Academic versus Private Work Environments for Adult Reconstruction Orthopaedic Surgeons

	Academic n=61	Private n=178
HealthGrades		
Mean Rating, SD	4.4 (0.6)	4.5 (0.6)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD	55.1 (63.8)	68.7 (74.5)
Mean Number of Comments, SD	37.4 (52.2)	49.2 (58.3)
Google Reviews		
Mean Rating, SD	4.4 (1.1)	4.5 (1.0)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD*	44.9 (75.8)	115.5 (140.7)
Vitals		
Mean Rating, SD	4.2 (0.5)	4.4 (0.9)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD	40.0 (43.0)	48.7 (75.8)
Mean Number of Comments, SD*	18.3 (28.4)	29.8 (53.6)
Mean H-Index, SD*	20.6 (18.2)	3.7 (5.2)
Mean Years As Attending, SD	19.3 (10.4)	18.3 (10.6)

* Indicates P <0.05

Table 3. Online Patient Ratings and Engagement Based on Having Personalized HealthGrades Biography versus Not Having a Personalized HealthGrades Biography for Adult Reconstruction Orthopaedic Surgeons

	Biography n=83	No Biography n=156
HealthGrades		
Mean Rating, SD	4.5 (0.5)	4.4 (0.7)
Mean Number of Ratings, SD*	83.7 (74.6)	55.5 (68.9)
Mean Number of Comments, SD*	60.0 (57.9)	38.9 (55.2)
Mean H-Index, SD	9.2 (14.9)	7.4 (11.1)
Mean Years As Attending, SD	17.9 (9.7)	18.9 (11.0)
*P <0.05		