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Online Ratings of Urologists: Comprehensive Analysis.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Physician-rating websites are being increasingly used by patients to help guide physician choice. As such, an understanding of these websites and factors that influence ratings is valuable to physicians.

OBJECTIVE: We sought to perform a comprehensive analysis of online urology ratings information, with a specific focus on the relationship between number of ratings or comments and overall physician rating.

METHODS: We analyzed urologist ratings on the Healthgrades website. The data retrieval focused on physician and staff ratings information. Our analysis included descriptive statistics of physician and staff ratings and correlation analysis between physician or staff performance and overall physician rating. Finally, we performed a best-fit analysis to assess for an association between number of physician ratings and overall rating.

RESULTS: From a total of 9921 urology profiles analyzed, there were 99,959 ratings and 23,492 comments. Most ratings were either 5 ("excellent") (67.53%, 67,505/99,959) or 1 ("poor") (24.22%, 24,218/99,959). All physician and staff performance ratings demonstrated a positive and statistically significant correlation with overall physician rating ($P < .001$ for all analyses). Best-fit analysis demonstrated a negative relationship between number of ratings or comments and overall rating until physicians achieved 21 ratings or 6 comments. Thereafter, a positive relationship was seen.

CONCLUSIONS: In our study, a dichotomous rating distribution was seen with more than 90% of ratings being either excellent or poor. A negative relationship between number of ratings or comments and overall rating was initially seen, after which a positive relationship was demonstrated. Combined, these data suggest that physicians can benefit from understanding online ratings and that proactive steps to encourage patient rating submissions may help optimize overall rating.

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KEYWORDS: online physician ratings; reputation management; urology

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