

Introduction

- With a renewed focus on quality measures in healthcare delivery, physician review websites (PRWs) have received a renewed interest in the literature
- Previous studies have analyzed the presence of plastic surgeons (1) and orthopedic surgeons (2) on PRWs, but none have specifically analyzed hand surgeons
- PRWs may have an increasing role in provider selection and other quality measures metrics
- We hypothesized that most hand surgeons would have a profile on PRWs and have overall positive ratings

Methods

- An online Google search was conducted of hand surgeons practicing in 11 major metropolitan areas in the United States
- The top three PRWs (Healthgrades, Vitals, RateMDs) were assessed for the number and quality of reviews.
- All reviews were normalized to a best of 5 scale and analyses were conducted during February 2015
- The number and quality of reviews were compared on the basis of surgeon characteristics including sex, age, practice type (academic vs private), and city
- Differences were elucidated via ANOVA and student t tests

Objectives

- Assess the presence of hand surgeons on PRWs
- Quantify the number of reviews and quality of reviews
- Determine differences by practice characteristics

Results

- 214 hand surgeons were reviewed
 - 92.3% were on HealthGrades
 - 89.6% on Vitals
 - 81.9% on Rate MDs

Characteristic	N	(%)
Region		
NE	54	25
S	57	27
MW	48	22
W	55	26
Practice Type		
Academic	187	87
Private	27	13
Sex		
M	191	89
F	23	11

Table 1. Demographic Profile Hand Surgeon Cohort

Results (cont'd)

- Median Google Search positions for physician websites:
 - 1 for academic website
 - 2 for HealthGrades
 - 3 for personal website
 - 5 for Vitals

PRW	Mean Ratings	SD
HealthGrades	12.6	9.1
Vitals	10.5	12.5
RateMDs	4.1	5.1

Table 2. Mean Number of Ratings on PRWs

PRW	Rating Score	SD
HealthGrades	4.1	0.7
Vitals	4.3	0.7
RateMDs	4.0	1.1

Table 3. Mean Rating Score Out of 5

- 44.1% of hand surgeons had at least one "very poor" rating on Vitals and 20.8% on RateMDs
- No difference was seen in the number or quality of reviews with gender, age, US region, city size, pedigree (ortho vs plastic trained), or practice type (academic vs private) ($p > 0.05$)

Discussion

- Previous studies have demonstrated the impact of PRWs on patient selection of their providers, yet none have assessed hand surgeons
- There is a demonstrated positive relationship between more reviews and more business (3)
- Additionally, patient satisfaction is correlated with more favorable clinical outcomes with one study correlating website ratings and hospital performance measures (4)
- PRWs may have an increasing role in provider selection and other quality measures metrics

Conclusions

- Most hand surgeons are present on PRWs
- While the majority are positive ratings, many hand surgeons have negative reviews
- Hand surgeons should be cognizant of the quality of their reviews and should check them periodically to ensure good online presence

References

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