From Online to In-person: Assessing the Effectiveness of Organic Web Content on Guiding New Patients to an Orthopedic Practice

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Questions that Led to Current Topic

“Could the way people search for information online have an impact on their choice of healthcare provider?”

“Can a healthcare provider or practice gain new patients simply by optimizing their website content?”

“Do providers who experience more web traffic also experience more new patient appointments?”

“How would people report that they found a healthcare provider?”

“Where can I find information on this topic?”

Lack of Literature

As research began, it became apparent that multiple sources had cited a lack of literature as it pertains to the topic of internet medical marketing. (1-7)

Research Questions

1. What, if any, impact does keyword density of a webpage have on the number of page views?
2. What, if any, relationship is there between web content and new patient appointments?
3. How did the new patients to the group during the 6 month study period report they found the practice?

Methods

• Approach
  – Quantitative non-parametric secondary data analysis: web data, page view statistics, and number of new patient appointments
  – Permission / IRB approval for secondary data analysis attained
  – Organization of data into excel spreadsheets
  – Use of Google AdWords to aid in keyword density analysis
  – Flesch-Kincaid (F-K) grade level scores used to evaluate web content readability
  – RO1 & RO2 Spearman’s Rank Correlation
  – RO3 Frequency Analysis

Data collected from 12 full time orthopedic physicians

Between March 2013 – August 2013

• 49,143 Visitors to individual provider web pages
• 3,878 New patients were seen at the practice
• 1,615 Surveys collected

Results

Between March 2013 and August 2013, the 12 orthopedic physicians had a combined total of 49,143 visitors to their individual web pages. During this time 3,878 new patient appointments were made. Surveys were distributed to these new patients, and of the 1,615 surveys collected, 866 met the researcher defined criteria set for this study. A critical Spearman value of 0.4965 was used for the sample size of 12 physicians. No relationship was found between page view keyword density and page views (R_s=0.19). No relationship was found between number of spelling and grammar errors on physician web pages and new patient appointments (R_s=0.08). A relationship was found between F-K grade level scores and number of new patient appointments (R_s=0.61). A relationship was found between number of web page views and number of new patient appointments (R_s=0.74)

Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Total Web Page Views</th>
<th>New Patient Appointments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provider 1</td>
<td>56,789</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider 2</td>
<td>47,890</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider 3</td>
<td>45,678</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major Findings

Providers with a greater number of web page views are also likely to have greater numbers of new patient appointments.

Web pages with lower F-K reading level scores are also likely to have higher numbers of new patient appointments.

Weak keyword use was found, indicating there may be room for optimization of language used.

Conclusions

A webpage may serve as an effective marketing tool in communicating with new patients

An audit of current web content is suggested

Consider developing divisions of healthcare websites for both patients and professionals

Ensure web content is written for its target audience

Data mine existing new patient forms for search terminology

Review existing web content again to ensure use of basic keywords to describe what services you offer in simple, searchable terms

References


