

The Significance of Online Healthcare Reviews

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Significance of Online Healthcare Reviews

Online review systems have changed the way people shop. Whether it's a buying product on Amazon, planning a vacation with Trip Advisor, or a hiring service on Yelp, it is rare that people make a major buying decision without first looking at online reviews.



Online Doctor and Hospital Reviews at HealthSoul

In today's market, this extends to health care services as well. In fact, according to an article in [Becker's Hospital Review](#), 77% of patients conduct an online search before making an appointment with a new physician. This means the first impression about a new doctor often comes from Internet reviews.

WHY ONLINE HEALTHCARE REVIEWS MATTER

Many doctors and healthcare professionals aren't fans of online physician and hospital review sites and argue against their value. Their reasoning is that healthcare related reviews often tend to focus more on things like staff friendliness and customer service than on the healthcare advice and treatment received. Granted, reviews complaining about things such as long wait times are not indicative of how skilled a physician is at his or her specialty – and that's something to keep in mind. If you are dealing with a serious illness or injury, a doctor's bedside manner may not be as important to you as his or her surgery skills.

Nonetheless, online reviews cannot and should not be ignored either. Online reviews are forcing the medical field to realize that patients care about how they are treated as individuals, not just as medical cases. In a field where doctors are sometimes seen as arrogant and distant and where customer care is often an afterthought, online reviews are forcing the healthcare industry to recognize that healthcare is a patient-centered service business, and patient experience matters.

CHANGING METRICS

Traditional means for rating doctors and hospitals, such as hospital feedback surveys, typically focus on factors that measure the staff's medical expertise. However, online review sites tend to include things that traditional customer satisfaction surveys don't, focusing largely on how patients are treated by both doctors and medical staff.

In 2018, a study was published in the [Journal of Medical Internet Research](#) where researchers

asked 1000 Americans to select a physician from two hypothetical doctor profiles. Each profile had different star ratings from both governmental and online organizations for various elements of medical care. (You can do the experiment yourself online.) The resulting data indicated that when it came to choosing a doctor, non-clinical ratings from commercial sites were just as important as clinical ratings from government sites – especially with women.

NECESSARY HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY CHANGES

The growth of online review sites is proof that customers want to make informed decisions. While online review sites are not always accurate, they can at least be used to help make educated assessments when it comes to choosing doctors or hospitals. Too many complaints or other negative reviews can signal there's a problem and that patients should look elsewhere.

With [online doctor review sites](#), patients have become much more powerful. As a result, the medical field is being forced to recognize that patients must be treated not just as medical cases, but as paying customers. Whether they agree with the value of online reviews or not, they have power, and they are likely here to stay. Not adjusting to the times will end up hurting their bottom line.

YOUR EXPERIENCE MATTERS

As with any type of online review site, there are going to be outliers – i.e., extremely good or extremely bad reviews. In some cases, there may even be fake reviews. You need to keep those things in mind when searching for a doctor or hospital. Look for common trends, not extreme responses.

As a patient, your experience also matters. Just as you want to look to other people's reviews online, other people want to look at yours as well. It's human nature to let others know about negative experience, but be sure to include the positives as well. If you have a doctor or hospital that you like and trust, let others know. As a patient, you have power. Use it wisely.

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