

Physician rating websites: a cross-sectional study assessing the impact on physician choice making and characteristics associated with its use

APPENDIX - Survey

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[1] Have you ever used the internet to find information about a physician?

Yes

No

[2] Which sources do you use when searching for a physician? [multiple response possible]

Recommendations from family, friends or colleagues

Printed business directories (e.g., yellow pages)

Information from (professional) journals and newspapers

Online-physician directories / physician rating websites

Online-search engines (e.g., Google)

Recommendations from your (general) practitioner

Physician / practice websites

Others

[3] Do you wish more transparency about the quality of care of physicians?

Yes

No

[4] What information is important for you when choosing a new physician? [multiple response possible]

Parking space

Other patients' opinions about this physician

Practice equipment

Scientific publications

Distance between practice and my home place

Physician's certificates and further training

Accessibility by public transport

Physician's specialization

Others

The next section is about your personal experiences, attitudes and opinions regarding physician rating websites. We would like to know, which sources you use when searching for a physician and whether you have used physician rating websites for this purpose.

[5] Have you ever heard of any of the following PRWs? [multiple response possible]

Sanego.de

Docinsider.de

Jameda.de

Esando.de

Onmeda.de

Imedo.de

Medführer.de

Weisse Liste (Arztnavigator)

Arzt-auskunft.de

I don't know any of these websites.

[6] Have you ever searched for a physician on any of the following PRWs? [multiple response possible]

Medführer.de

Arzt-auskunft.de

Sanego.de

Jameda.de

Docinsider.de

Weisse Liste (Arztnavigator)

Esando.de

Onmeda.de

Imedo.de

I have not used any of these websites to search for a physician.

[7] Have you ever posted a rating on any of the following PRWs? [multiple response possible]

Imedo.de

Arzt-auskunft.de

Medführer.de

Sanego.de

Onmeda.de

Weisse Liste (Arztnavigator)

Docinsider.de

Esando.de

Jameda.de

I have never rated any physician on a physician rating website.

[8] Have you ever, based upon the publicly published results on any PRW ...

Yes

No

... selected a particular physician?

... not selected a particular physician?

Physician rating websites provide a variety of information about a physician. There is information about the physician himself (e.g., age, gender, languages, nationality, education) as well as about the practice in general (e.g., consultation hours, equipment, parking spaces). Additionally other patients' rating results are indicated. The illustration below shows an exemplary physician's profile from the website jameda.

[9] Of what importance is the information listed in the following for you when choosing a physician?

No importance

Very high importance

Pictures of furnishing and equipment

Physician's education (e.g., university)

Gender

Accessibility by public transport

Technical equipment (e.g., MRT, CT, 3D-ultrasound)

Physician's further training

Proximity between practice and my place of residence
 Consultation hours
 Physician's specialization
 Picture of the physician
 Parking spaces
 Other patients' opinions about this physician
 Scientific publications
 Map and directions

Some physician rating websites provide the possibility to filter results according to particular characteristics, e.g., a practice's specializations, insurances accepted or employee-friendly consultation hours. An example of such a filter is shown in the following illustration.

[10] Now we would like to assess the usefulness of different filter characteristics for your physician choice.

	Not useful	Highly useful
Filtering for very positive patient ratings		
Filtering for special consultation hours (e.g., evening or weekend)		
Filtering for accepted insurances (e.g., physician only treats privately insured patients)		
Filtering for a minimum number of ratings		
Filtering for the assessment of the waiting time to get an appointment		
Filtering for particular additional training courses or further education of a physician		
Filtering for the physician's gender		
Only show practices for which pictures are provided		
Filtering for particular specializations of the physician		
Filtering for the assessment of the waiting time within the practice		

The physician rating website jameda provides a physician's recommendation based on different categories (e.g., treatment, information, trust) which are aggregated to an overall score. Additionally, it is possible to leave a short narrative comment. The following illustration shows an exemplary rating.

[11] Please estimate each category's importance to you when choosing a physician.

	Not important	Highly important
(1) Other patients' satisfaction with the treatment		
(2) Other patients' opinions about the quality of the treatment information provided by the physician		
(3) Other patients' opinions about their relationship of trust with the physician		
(4) Assessment of the time the physician spends with the patient		
(5) Other patients' assessments of the physician's friendliness		
Overall score based on the categories mentioned above (1-5)		
Other patients' experience reports (narrative comments)		

Now, we turn towards the narrative comments. Here patients can report about their personal experiences with a particular physician without any guidelines. For example, they comment

“Competent, experienced physician, hardly any waiting times”, “Practice very well organized, hardly any waiting time, physician seems to be very competent” but also “unfriendly person, despite having an appointment, I had to wait at least one hour and that happened three times”. We would like to know how important these narrative comments are for your physician choice.

[12] Do you read available narrative comments other patients left attached to the ratings?

Yes

No

[13] What is the importance you attribute to other patients’ narrative comments for the significance of a rating?

No importance

Very high importance

Importance of narrative comments for a rating’s significance

[14] What is more important to you when choosing a physician? The overall score or the narrative comments?

Overall score

Narrative comments

Equally important

[15] How useful are the following functions of a physician rating website for you?

Not useful

Highly useful

Write a narrative comment about my physicians myself

Read other patients’ narrative comments about a physician

Conduct of an online-search including all general practitioners, specialists and dentists in Germany

Obtain information about a physician and his practice before the first visit

Conduct of online-physician-search for a general practitioner, specialist or dentist close to my place of residence

[16] What do you think about the overall usefulness of physician rating websites?

Not useful

Highly useful

Benefit from the information provided on these websites

[17] What are your major criticisms?

Criticisms

[18] Please indicate your gender.

Male

Female

I wish not to answer this question.

[19] Please indicate your year of birth. [e.g., 1984]

Year of birth

I wish not to answer this question.

[20] Please indicate your marital status.

Married

Single

Divorced

Widowed

I wish not to answer this question.

[21] Please indicate your postal code. [e.g., 80469 for Munich]

Postal code

I wish not to answer this question.

[22] What is your highest level of education?

Matura examination

Technical university entrance qualification

Intermediate secondary school

Polytechnic secondary school

Secondary general school

Without school qualification

I wish not to answer this question.

[23] Please indicate your current occupation.

Self-employed

Civil servants

Employee

Apprentices

Unemployed

Pensioners

Students (pupils)

Students (Univ./tech. univ.)

Others

I wish not to answer this question.

[24] Please indicate your current insurance status.

Statutory health insured

Privately health insured

Not health insured

I wish not to answer this question.

[25] How frequently have you seen a physician/dentist in the past six months?

I have not received medical treatment.

Once

Twice

Three times

Four times

Five times and more

I wish not to answer this question.

By the following two questions we would like to know how frequently you use the internet and which websites you visit mainly.

[26] How frequently do you use the internet?

- Several times a day
- Once per day
- Several times a week
- Once per week
- Several times a month
- Once per month
- Less frequently

[27] Please indicate the purposes you used the internet for recently. [multiple response possible]

- Online-shopping
- Travel portals
- Entertainment (e.g., music, games)
- Online-communication (e.g., telephony, Email, chat)
- Job offers and recruitment portals
- Politics
- News
- Sports information
- Health-related topics
- Finance and insurance
- Social networks
- Others

[28] Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling. Over the last two weeks...

All of the time Most of the time More than half of the time Less than half of the time Some of the time At no time

...I have felt cheerful and in good spirits

...I have felt calm and relaxed

...I have felt active and vigorous

...I woke up feeling fresh and rested

...My daily life has been filled with things that interest me