

ARTICLE



Online Reviews Play a Significant Role for Healthcare Providers

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Over the years, online reviews have become a critical component in the shopper's path-to-purchase. Today, nine out of ten online adults in the U.S. have used online reviews to help make a purchase decision when looking for traditional consumer products or services. A recent study conducted by RepuGen shows adults exhibit the same behavior when looking for a healthcare provider.

The study found that 3 in 4 patients prefer healthcare providers with a minimum star rating of 4 or more. It also identified that with 81% of patients using online reviews to select a healthcare provider, three vital aspects go into their decision-making process: sentiments expressed through patients' feedback, average star ratings, and the total number of reviews.

Additional key findings include:

- 81% of patients consider online reviews when selecting a healthcare provider. This is a 2% increase over 2020.
- 40% of patients will not visit a provider with poor reviews. This is a 10% increase over 2020.
- Sentiment expressed by patients' comments, star rating, and the total number of reviews are the 3 most important aspects of online reviews evaluated by patients in their decision-making process.
- 75% of patients would only consider healthcare providers/practices with a minimum star rating of 4 stars or more.
- More than 69% of patients visit 2 or more review platforms while selecting their practice/provider.
- Google, WebMD, Healthgrades, and Yelp continue to be the most trusted review sites, in the same order.
- 80% of the patients find that a review's age affects its reliability, with more recent reviews being more reliable.
- More than 50% of patients would not trust a review that is older than a year.
- 60% of patients check 10 or more reviews before deciding on a healthcare provider.

The study also explored why patients provided negative feedback. Some of the findings are as follows:

- Quality of care received and the provider's demeanor are the top 2 reasons for patient dissatisfaction and negative feedback.

- More than 60% of patients do not leave any negative feedback for their providers.
- More than 50% of providers respond to patients' negative feedback, and about 65% of patients are satisfied with the response received. However, only 10% were satisfied with the way the provider handled their feedback.
- Only 44% of patients write a review for their healthcare practice/ provider.
- More than 90% of the patients who expect a response to their review expect it within a week
- E-mails, phone calls and text messages are the 3 most preferred modes of communication among patients, preferred in that order.

Three of the most important factors used by patients in evaluating a potential healthcare provider are online reviews, referrals from another medical professional, and referrals from family/friends.

It's clear from this data that online reviews are becoming more critical for healthcare providers.