

Characterizing Negative One-Star Reviews for Orthopaedic-Trained Hand Surgeons in the Ten Largest United States Cities: A Retrospective Analysis

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INTRODUCTION:

Physician-review websites are becoming an increasingly common method to aid in the choice of which surgeon to create an appointment with for elective conditions. While data exists regarding other surgical specialties, no current study has examined negative one-star reviews for orthopaedic-trained hand surgeons. The goal of this retrospective study was to investigate negative one-star reviews regarding orthopaedic-trained hand and upper extremity surgeons in the top ten largest cities in the United States in order to determine the major causative factors behind very unsatisfied patients in an effort to improve patient care.

METHODS:

Patient reviews and narratives of orthopaedic-trained hand surgeons were collected from the ten largest cities in the United States using Vitals.com. One-star reviews (out of a total of five-star maximum score) with comments were identified and classified as surgical or nonsurgical. These reviews were further subclassified based on the nature of the comment.

RESULTS:

A total of 830 one-star reviews with 1,662 complaints were included in this study. Of these complaints, 557 (33.5%) were from patients who received surgical care and 1,105 (50.4%) were from nonsurgical care patients. Nonsurgical patient one-star reviews had a significantly higher proportion of complaints related to bedside manner (37.6% to 19.6%, $p<0.001$), not enough time spent with provider (18.1% to 4.5%, $p<0.001$), and wait time (13.3% to 3.2%, $p<0.001$) as compared to surgical patient one-star reviews. Surgical patient one-star reviews had a significantly higher proportion of complaints related to disagreement with the physician's decision or plan (15.6% to 10.2%, $p=0.002$); uncontrolled pain (14.4% to 7.9%, $p<0.001$); and medical staff or institution (17.2% to 12.9%, $p=0.018$) as compared to nonsurgical patient one-star reviews.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Most one-star reviews regarding orthopaedic-trained hand surgeons referenced non-clinical components of care with bedside manner being the most common complaint. It was determined that surgical patients were less likely to leave a one-star review; however, if they did, the most common complaint was in reference to surgical complications or unsatisfactory outcomes from their procedure.

