

Patients using online resources prompts study to examine online ratings of otolaryngologists

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Many otolaryngologists have online profiles on physician-rating websites and most reviews are positive, but physicians need to be aware of the content because patients use the information to choose physicians.

Patients use the Internet as a resource for [health care](#) information. Physician-rating websites are becoming increasingly prevalent. However, many physicians view these rating websites unfavorably.

The authors sought to examine [online ratings](#) for [otolaryngologists](#). The names of academic program faculty members in the Northeast were compiled and 281 [faculty members](#) from 25 programs were identified. Of them, 266 otolaryngologists had a profile on Healthgrades and 247 had a profile on Vitals, two physician-rating websites.

Of those otolaryngologists with profiles, 186 (69.9 percent) and 202 (81.8 percent) had patient reviews on Healthgrades and Vitals, respectively. The average score was 4.4 of 5.0 on Healthgrades and 3.4 of 4.0 on Vitals. On Vitals, 179 profiles had comments, 49 comments were deemed negative and 138 otolaryngologists had at least one negative comment.

"The information presented in this study is related to subjective perceptions and ratings. We are not suggesting that the rating information correlates with the quality of care or overall physician quality. This is an intrinsic limitation of the data, but these data are being used by patients to potentially make decisions about their [health care professionals](#). For these reasons, these ratings hold weight, even if they are not good measures of overall physician quality." Lindsay Sobin, M.D., and Parul Goyal, M.D., M.B.A., of the SUNY Upstate University Hospital, Syracuse, N.Y. said in their research

article.

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