

Patient Perceptions About Quality of Care in Spinal Disorders

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Introduction

Reimbursements are increasingly reliant upon Value Based Purchasing / Pay for Performance rather than Fee For Service. However, value is difficult to define (1). Therefore, we surveyed patients in a general neurosurgery spine clinic to determine patient's perceptions regarding the quality / value of spine care.

Methods

We administered questionnaires to patients at 2 tertiary care institutions who presented to a spine clinic for evaluation. Questions assessed patient perceptions regarding quality of spine care as impacted by provider / institution-specific factors (8 choices including US News & World Report rankings, consumer website survey results, medical website survey results, etc) and by patient-specific factors (7 choices including convenience of access, distance, prior experience, etc). Standard statistical methods were used. The Institutional Review Boards approved the study.

Results

423 surveys from consenting adults were included. Of institution specific factors, patients reported that of most importance were the credentials of the healthcare provider, US News & World Report Rankings of the institution, word of mouth reputation, and wait time during appointment. Significant patient-specific factors included professionalism, and accommodation of requests and choice of provider. Of slightly less importance were timing of access from referral and accomodation of patient requests. Of least importance were prior experience with the provider / institution, distance to clinic, and consumer website (e.g., Angie's List) and medical website ratings.

Conclusions

Patients perceived that the most important contributors to quality in healthcare are the reputations of the provider and institution along with wait time during appointment. Additionally the personalization of the provider-patient relationship also contributed to the perception of quality. Interestingly, out-of-pocket costs and prior experience with provider/institution were noted to be less important. Further investigation would explore the correlation of these patient perceptions to payer perceptions of the factors most important to quality in spine care.

Learning Objectives

By the conclusion of this session, participants should be able to: 1) describe the macro economic changes to physician reimbursement, 2) discuss, in small groups, patient perceptions regarding quality / value in spine surgery, 3) identify factors perceived by patients as important to quality in spine surgery.

References

Porter ME. What is value in health care? The New England Journal of Medicine. 2010;363:2477-2481.