



Your Online Reputation Drives HCAHPS Scores

Introduction

HCAHPS is the barometer for understanding a patient's hospital experience. But can you predict the outcome of your patient satisfaction surveys by reading online reviews from past and present patients? And more importantly, does improving your hospital's online reputation improve HCAHPS scores?

Yes.

Reputation.com's Data Science team, led by Brad Null, Ph.D, analyzed two years of HCAHPS hospital survey data from The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, across more than 4,800 hospitals.

The team reviewed the data alongside online reviews, ratings and rankings for those same hospitals, and made some significant discoveries:

- Online reviews provide early warning of issues that may impact patient experience, giving hospitals the opportunity to identify and address those issues before patient satisfaction scores suffer.
- By continually monitoring, managing, requesting and responding to patient reviews, a healthcare organization can address negative feedback that impacts HCAHPS results.
- Positive online sentiment predicts an increase in HCAHPS scores by as much as 17 percent, year-over-year.

This guide provides current market context, examines the details of the findings and provides recommendations for improving your organization's online reputation — and with it, your HCAHPS scores.

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Rising Healthcare Costs Drive Consumers to Review Sites

With higher co-pays, the growth of high deductible plans and rising premiums, consumers are being forced to pay more out of pocket for the care they receive. As a result, they're choosier than ever about which doctors they see and which hospitals they visit, and they're doing their own research prior to selecting providers.

Most consumers begin their search online. About 77 percent of patients use online reviews as their first step in finding a new doctor.

And when consumers land on review sites such as Google or Healthgrades, they see ratings and reviews — not HCAHPS scores or data.

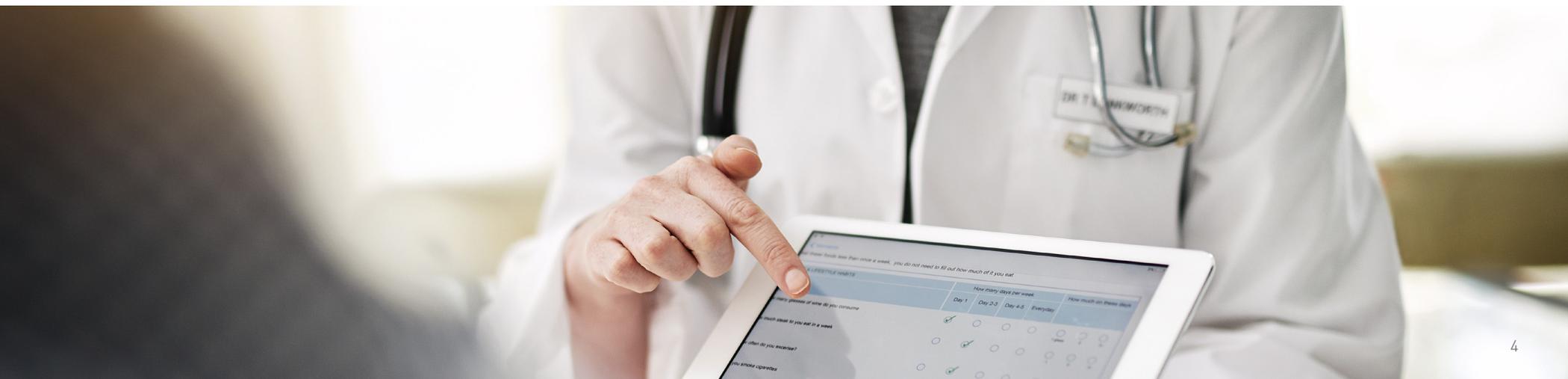
Although HCAHPS data is available on the U.S. Government's Hospital Compare website, awareness of this resource among consumers is only 13 percent. Only 3 percent of consumers surveyed have visited the site.



Online Reviews Add Depth to HCAHPS Scores

HCAHPS asks nine specific questions about patient experience specifically during a hospital stay. But Reputation.com found that online reviews shed light on important aspects of patient experience not covered by HCAHPS, such as caregiver competence, time to get an appointment, wait times, parking and administration complaints, and experiences with billing and insurance.

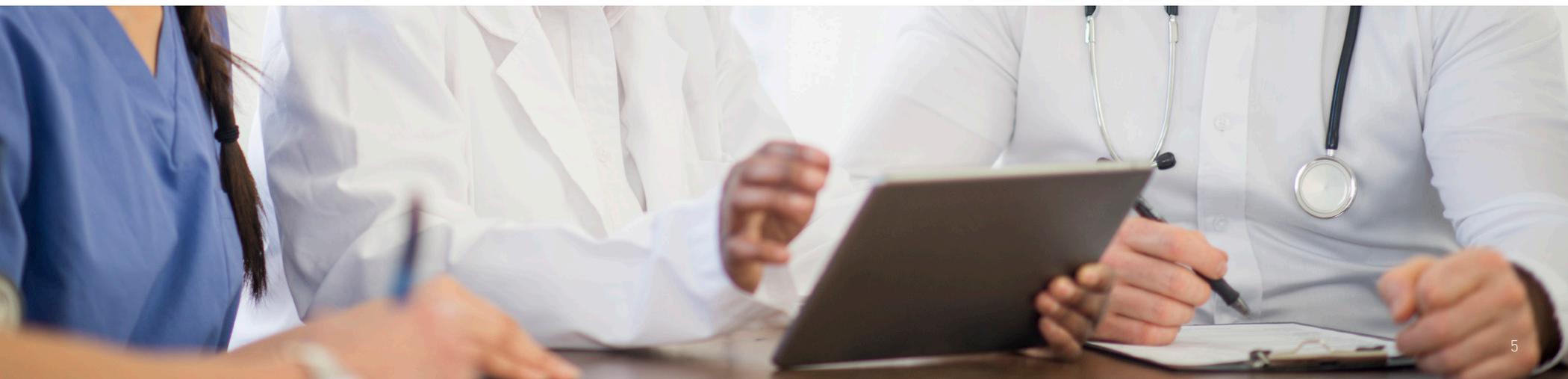
Problems in these areas often prompt patients to write negative reviews. Because online reviews are available immediately, they surface issues early, giving providers an opportunity to address problems and address the negative impact of unresolved issues on HCAHPS scores.



Online Reviews Add Depth to HCAHPS Scores

Online reviews deliver actionable insights about patient experience that HCAHPS alone cannot provide. Much of it comes in the form of unstructured data — the free text on social media and review sites. According to Research firm IDC, 90 percent of unstructured data is never analyzed. This represents a gold mine of insights to improve the patient experience.

An Online Reputation Management platform enables in-depth analysis of the unstructured data in online reviews, making it feasible for hospitals to quickly understand patient sentiment and implement changes in day-to-day operations to improve patient experience.



Where Are Your HCAHPS Scores Heading?

Reputation.com's findings indicate a direct correlation between positive online sentiment and increasing HCAHPS:

- Hospitals with a 4-star HCAHPS rating or higher are 2X as likely to have a 4-star rating or higher online.
- Hospitals whose online sentiment is not as high as their HCAHPS scores indicate have 2.8X as many complaints about categories that HCAHPS does not cover. And, they're 3X as likely to see HCAHPS ratings fall the following year.
- Among hospitals included in the study, an improvement in online sentiment led to a rise in HCAHPS scores by an average of 17 percent.



Conclusion

Online reviews are a critical addition to HCAHPS surveys for capturing the entire patient experience — not just the hospital stay. And, as findings indicate, they have a direct effect on HCAHPS scores.

For continued success, healthcare organizations must implement sound Online Reputation Management strategies that help improve online sentiment:

1. Request reviews to build volume on key review sites.
2. Respond to all negative reviews and work to resolve patient issues and complaints.
3. Build trust by increasing visibility and transparency through review sites and social engagement.
4. Use Online Reputation Management analysis tools to gain actionable insight to improve customer experience.

ⁱ [SoftwareAdvice](#)

ⁱⁱ PRC 2015 National Consumer Report

ⁱⁱⁱ Among hospitals with a 2-star HCAHPS rating, a consistent 4-star online rating over 12 months increased HCAHPS ratings by one-third of a star, on average, over the following year.

About Reputation.com

Reputation.com delivers the category-leading Online Reputation Management platform for leading organizations with thousands of locations.

We help companies monitor review sites, generate more representative ratings, gain insights to improve operations, and drive loyalty and revenue.

For more information, visit us at reputation.com or contact us at sales@reputation.com.