

Design of physician satisfaction surveys affects results

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(HealthDay)—Patient satisfaction scores are influenced by the design

and implementation of patient surveys, according to an article published in the January-February issue of *Family Practice Management*.

John W. Bachman, M.D., from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. discusses some of the potential problems with patient satisfaction scores and suggested ways to improve their utility.

Bachman notes that patient satisfaction scores are often derived from surveys, and that how and when questions are asked can affect the result, including phone versus written surveys, the timing of the survey, and sampling methods. Sample size can also affect the accuracy of the score, with smaller sample size giving a few dissatisfied patients more influence. Variation in several factors can complicate comparison of physician scores, such as differences in patient mix; system factors that affect satisfaction that are outside of the physicians' control; inherent issues with measuring results; and environmental issues, such as what kind of clinic the physician works in.

In order to mitigate potential problems, Bachman recommends aggregating data from all providers to get adequate samples; not presenting satisfaction scores without including statistical information; not rewarding or penalizing physicians solely based on scores; examining the lowest few [patient satisfaction](#) scores that fall outside a random distribution; and studying quality improvement and statistical variation.

More information: [Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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