

# Physicians rate communication during visit lower than patients

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(HealthDay)—There is a lack of correlation between physician scores

and those of others for physician-patient communication, according to a study published in the July/August issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Jenni Burt, Ph.D., from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, and colleagues analyzed survey data from patients attending face-to-face appointments with 45 family physicians at 13 practices. Patients and physicians independently completed a questionnaire including seven items assessing [communication](#) quality immediately post-appointment. Using the same seven communication items, a sample of videotaped appointments was assessed by trained clinical raters. Data were included for 503 [physician](#)-patient pairs; 55 appointments were assessed by trained clinician raters.

The researchers found that physicians scored themselves lower than patients on average (mean physician score, 74.5; mean patient score, 94.4); 63.4 percent of patient-reported scores were 100. From 55 appointments, the mean of rater scores was 57.3. A near-zero correlation coefficient was seen between physician- and patient-reported communication scores (0.009;  $P = 0.854$ ) and between physician- and trained rater-reported communication scores ( $-0.006$ ;  $P = 0.69$ ). A moderate and statistically significant correlation was seen between patient and trained-rater scores (0.35;  $P = 0.042$ ).

"Physicians may not be aware of how patients experience their communication practices; peer assessment of communication skills is an important approach in identifying areas for improvement," the authors write.

Two authors disclosed financial ties to Ipsos MORI; several authors were involved in developing the English GP Patient Survey.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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