How consumers are swaying the future of healthcare with online reviews

Article

The news: Consumers are increasingly shopping online for healthcare services—especially when it comes to choosing providers, according to new research released by Press Ganey.

The survey was conducted in September 2021 on 1,140 US adults.

Here are some key findings:

- **51% of respondents** said they used the internet to find and select a new primary care provider.

- And respondents were **more than twice as likely to use digital sources** than a doctor's referral to choose a primary care doctor.

  Reviews are driving the consumerization of healthcare: Positive online reviews were the No. 1 factor influencing consumers' choice of providers, per Press Ganey.

- **59% of US adults said a four-star average rating or higher** was influential in their choice of providers.

- In fact, **84% of respondents wouldn't see** a provider they were referred to if the provider was rated under four stars.

- When shopping for healthcare, consumers are **weighing an average of 5.5 reviews and visiting three different websites** before making a decision.

- Credibility of the reviews is also important: **68% said the quality of reviews** was a key factor in selecting a doctor.

Top 5 Sites in the Patient Journey

Google	Hospital/Clinic Website	WebMD	Healthgrades	Facebook
78.1%	**36.3%**	**26.8%**	**22.3%**	**19.5%**
GOOGLE	HOSPITAL/CLINIC WEBSITE	WEBMD	HEALTHGRADES	FACEBOOK

Source: Consumer Experience Trends in Healthcare 2021 report, Press Ganey, December 2021

What's next? Virtual care providers might want to add Yelp-like online search and review capabilities to reel in more customers.

15% of respondents say "lack of information about providers" is one of the top pain points driving lower satisfaction with telehealth, according to JD Power's 2021 Telehealth Satisfaction study.
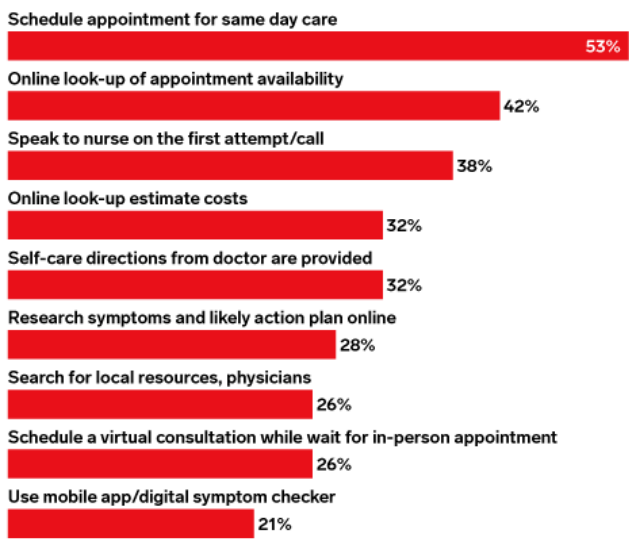
- Other top pain points include limited services (24%), lack of awareness of costs (15%), and confusing tech requirements (15%).

The bigger picture: As consumers rely on candid online reviews to select a doctor, providers will need to beef up their digital tech investments to provide a more seamless patient experience—or else they could get called out online and risk losing new patients.

For example, appointment scheduling and better search tools will help providers capture more patients and channel them to newly integrated digital health services, like virtual visits. Providers that don't have these digital health add-ons may lose out against competitors that do.

What Do US Adults Look for When Seeking an Ideal Healthcare Experience?
% of respondents, Nov 2020

Schedule appointment for same day care	53%
Online look-up of appointment availability	42%
Speak to nurse on the first attempt/call	38%
Online look-up estimate costs	32%
Self-care directions from doctor are provided	32%
Research symptoms and likely action plan online	28%
Search for local resources, physicians	26%
Schedule a virtual consultation while wait for in-person appointment	26%
Use mobile app/digital symptom checker	21%

Note: ages 18+; when initially seeking care/realizing care is needed
Source: Evernorth, "Health Care in Focus" conducted by Ipsos, March 5, 2021
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