

Online reviews - boon or bane?

Science, Computer Science



We are the part of evolutionary process that led to the emanation of anatomically modern human from primates, genus Homo to Homo sapiens. So has the human evolved from just a homo sapiens to a digitally smart homo sapiens. All the basic needs of a human are being fulfilled by the digital convenience of myriad sectors.

Healthcare being a sector of utmost importance is not away from the hackles of digitalization. Ordering medicines to availing nursing care at home is just a tip away. In this world of digitalization, hospital and physician's review is not far away from the prospective patients.

While looking for a doctor the very first instinct may be to head online, check some reviews. As we are curious to know about best facilities available for us in the vicinity so is the healthcare provider curious to know what patient, whether prospective or existing, talk about them in the absence. However, genuinely it becomes impossible to track the stalkers, rumormongers, information seeker physically. However, virtually speaking, yes!

The emerging concept of Online Reputation Management has come to the picture. In this world of internet, stakeholders have a constant eye on your business. Online business now holds a substantial part of the hospital as we are moving towards medical tourism and new consumers connecting with each passing day.

Speaking on the other side, hospital business holds some intricacies into it. Internet providing anonymity and easy perpetuation can make or break the brand of the hospital. Most of the times online reviews do not alienate with what patients think about the hospital and physician. Some factors are

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beyond the control of the physician in order to provide the service in wholesome. Factors like long waiting time, staff friendliness, service preparedness, etc. affect the overall experience of the patient. Online platforms being open for reviews, anyone can post comments, whether negative or positive without being bona-fide. The facility of staying anonymous has added to the freedom of speech of the consumers, which can lead to the unnecessary 'bad-mouth' of the hospital. Independent websites do nothing to check the credibility whether s/he has really walked to the hospital. The online platforms are majorly not authenticated, substantiated and moderated. Sometime it happens that clinics and hospitals get laudatory reviews and comments from most satisfied patients, associations, friends while on the other hand some sites hold reviews from outraged patients. Most of them are single way window providing no scope for clarifying or commenting leading to provide more of a biased opinion.

Closed loop system can be used to check on the patients who give reviews should have visited the hospital or got the service in some form so that every patient has give a review rather than outliers with only very satisfied patients or outrageous patients.

Online reviews , no doubt , has revolutionized the arena giving a voice to the patients for ensuring the satisfaction and further serving as a platform for pre purchase check of the facilities provided. The interaction and involvement into the decision making process has increased. It is also the new word of mouth in today's consumerism of healthcare providing

platforms for improvement, increased patient experience and quality of healthcare services provided.

As digitalization has entered into the nitty and gritty of the healthcare sector cannot be bypassed but can be efficiently used to reap the best of the results for the business. It acts as a feedback system proving ample room for improvement and increasing the volume of the business and value.