

Use of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Social Media in the Field of Gastroenterology

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Introduction

- Social Media has become an essential platform for the public to decide where to receive medical services.
- However, the reliability of social media in deciding on a physician, especially a gastroenterologist, remains a huge challenge and is still underdetermined.
- The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of social media in selecting the physicians for their care

Methods and Materials

- Online search results for the keywords “Gastroenterology doctors’ in city name” for four major cities (New York, Chicago, Seattle, and Los Angeles) on the 3 most commonly used websites (Facebook, Google, and Yelp) were included.
- The top 5 results for each website were studied with respect to the type of gastroenterology practice, including university-based or private practice.
- A comparative analysis of the order in which the results were displayed on each of these three websites was performed

	GOOGLE	FACEBOOK	YELP
New York			
Dr.Murray Orbuch MD	1	NL	NL
Dr.Samuel Davidoff MD	2	NL	NL
New York Gastroenterology Associates	3	NL	NL
Manhattan Gastroenterology	4	1	NL
Dr.Neville Bamii	5	NL	NL
Los Angeles			
LA Integrative Gastroenterology and Nutrition	1	3	1
West Gastroenterology Medical Group	2	NL	NL
Dr.Paul Choi MD	3	NL	NL
Dr.Mark Davidson MD	4	NL	NL
Dr.Leo Treyzon MD	5	NL	NL
Chicago			
Loyola Center of health on Roosevelt	1	NL	NL
Dr.Priya Venkataraman	2	NL	NL
Dr.Perry L Kamel	3	NL	5
Dr.Greg S Cohen	4	NL	4
Dr. Julia A Dyer	5	NL	1

Table 1: Social media results

Results

- After searching 151 websites, Facebook, Yelp, and Google search engines were included in the study.
- These 3 platforms mostly showed gastroenterologists in private practices as their top results.
- There was no correlation between physician ranking and placement. The search results for 90 websites (Facebook, Yelp, Google) were dominated by private practice Gastroenterologists.
- No academic Gastroenterology practice made the top 5 search results. There was no correlation between the ranking and placement of search results across different websites.
- The Gastroenterology practices listed as number one on Google in New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Seattle were not listed among the top 5 practice results on Facebook. There was no significant correlation between the ranking on Facebook and Yelp

Conclusion

- Private and Small practices run by non-academic gastroenterologists dominate the search results for “Gastroenterologist” in the top 5 metro areas in the United States. This may be due to academic institutes or academic affiliated institutes not relying on developing their social media as much as private practices.
- Therefore, if patients do rely on social media platforms to choose their gastroenterologist, it may be beneficial to use multiple search engines rather than a single engine.
- American College of Gastroenterology should further promote streamlining this process and provide a possible review body that can help patients with a more reliable source of information in choosing their gastroenterologist.