

# Active is Better than Passive Review Requests to Increase Online Physician Ratings

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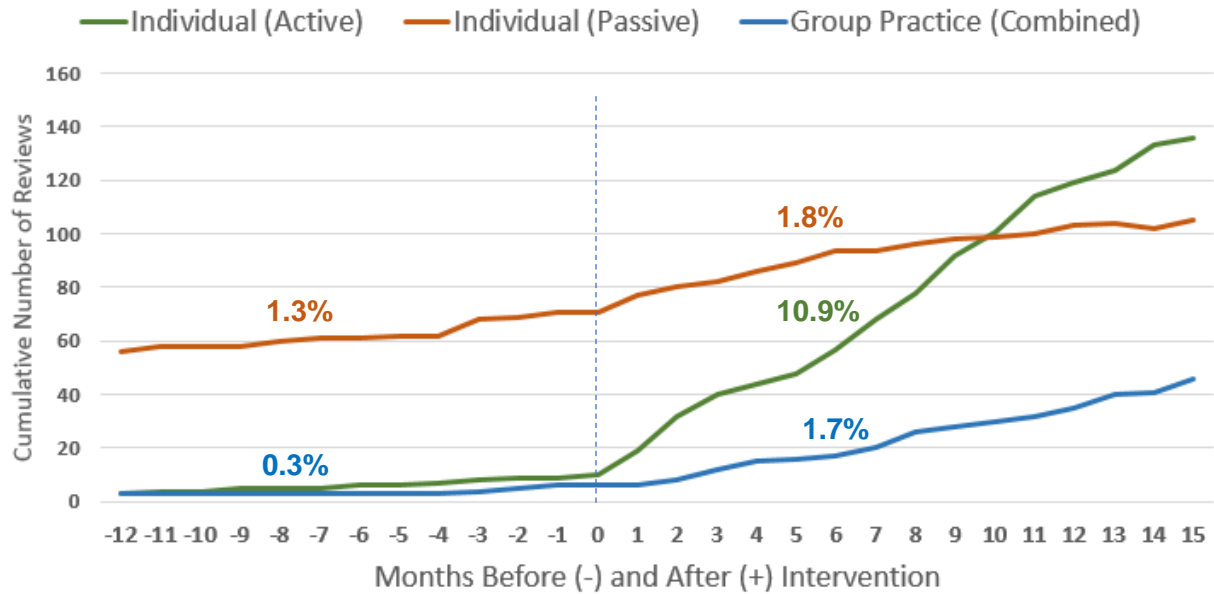
**Background:** Numerous websites provide an opportunity for patients to leave online physician reviews and ratings (HealthGrades, Vitals, Yelp, Google, etc.) for both individual surgeons and group practices. While these sites are intended to be unbiased, some literature suggests that online ratings can be influenced by encouraging patients to leave reviews. The purpose of this study was to determine the efficacy and superiority of either active or passive review requests against a control scenario.

**Methodology:** This prospective cohort study was performed in a private practice office that did not initially request online reviews from patients. We then initiated either active (verbal exchange between surgeon and patient) or passive (email) online review requests. Prior to and following the new protocol, online reviews and ratings for the 4 most popular websites for individual surgeons and the group practice were recorded monthly. Outcomes included the volume of online reviews, overall score, and rate of review accumulation. Rate of accumulation is reported as a percent of patients seen.

**Results:** During the control period, the accumulation of online reviews for an individual surgeon occurred at a combined rate of 16 reviews amongst 1191 new patients (collection rate of 1.3%). After introducing the request protocol, the passive system resulted in 23 new reviews amongst 1253 new patients (1.8% collection rate). The active collection system of verbal requests with reminder cards for an individual surgeon resulted in 123 new reviews amongst 1128 new patients (10.9% collection rate) (Figure 1). The group practice reviews accumulated at 0.3% during the control and 1.7% after the intervention (Figure 1).

**Conclusion:** Surgeons and practices can increase their online ratings by requesting online reviews actively (verbally) or passively (emails). Both protocols increase the volume of online reviews, but active requests are 6 times more effective.

## Accumulation of Online Physician Ratings over 2.5 years



\*A subsequent analysis incorporating automated email review requests in conjunction with handing out review card requests further increased the rate of online review responses as shown below at month 16.

## Online Rating Volume Over Time

