

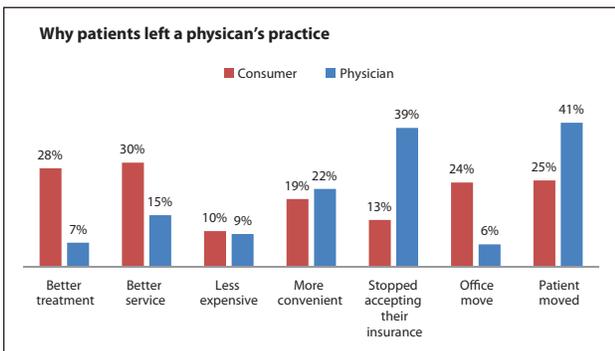


Physicians Underestimate Consumer Likelihood to Switch Doctors

Altarum Institute's Center for Consumer Choice in Health Care surveyed physician perceptions of and experiences of consumerism behaviors in the patients they treat. The physicians' results were then compared with the Altarum Fall 2011 Survey of Consumer Health Care Opinions.

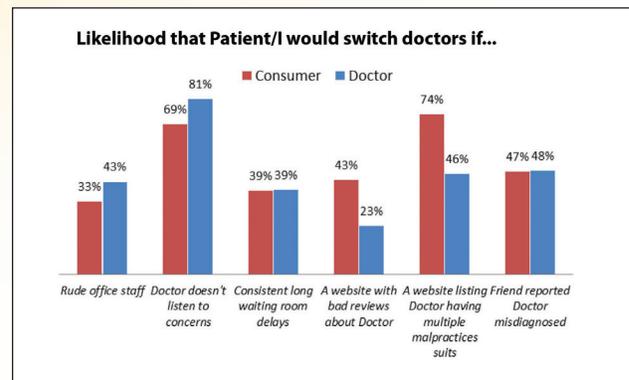
Interestingly, patients reported a higher probability of switching providers for cost or quality reasons than physicians believed. Furthermore, physicians reported convenience or access (moving or change in insurance coverage) as the most likely reasons for patients switching providers; patients reported more substantive reasons such as clinical efficacy and malpractice. Overall, about half as many consumers reported complete satisfaction with their care as the number whom physicians believed were completely satisfied.

Consumers may choose to switch doctors for a variety of reasons, such as to receive better treatment or service, save money, or find someone closer to their home or work. For patients who have switched away from one practice to another, doctors and consumers have different impressions about the reasons for that switch. Doctors believe that 80% of patients had either moved or found that their insurance was no longer accepted, but only 38% of consumers selected these reasons. Doctors also believed that only 22% had switched for better treatment or service, while 58% of consumers stated this as their reason. Neither group reported cost differences as a reason for switching.

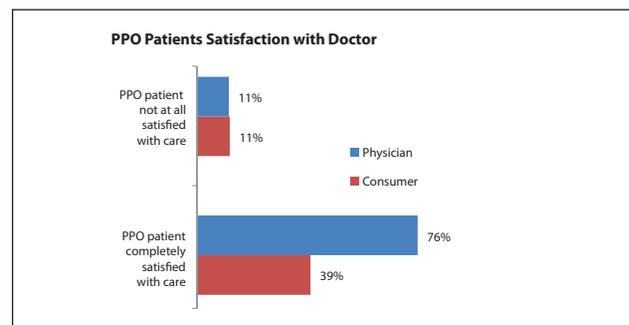


Both consumers and physicians were asked how likely a patient would be to switch doctors due to the varying reasons shown below. Consumers stated that they were less likely to change doctors because of how they were treated than the physicians believed. However, for

clinical or legal reasons, physicians underestimated a consumer's likelihood to switch doctors. If a doctor was listed as having multiple malpractice suits on a website, only 46% of physicians thought that their patients would change doctors, while 74% of consumers stated that they would. Similarly, 43% of consumers said that they would be likely to switch doctors as a result of negative online ratings from other consumers, while only 23% of doctors thought that that would influence consumers.



When physicians were asked to infer their patients' satisfaction with their office, 11% of both consumers and physicians believed that they were not at all satisfied. However, physicians estimated that 76% of consumers were completely satisfied with their care, while only 39% of patients claimed that they were.



The survey of 600 physicians was a companion to Altarum's semiannual series of surveys administered to nationally representative samples of more than 3,000 civilian adults.

Download the [consumer survey results](#).

Download the [full comparison report](#).