Understanding Patient Loyalty

The following summaries of recent peer-reviewed studies and articles identify factors that influence patient loyalty and the likelihood to recommend an organization or care provider.

### EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

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▪ Post-discharge calls to emergency department patients are strongly associated with improved patient satisfaction as measured by likelihood to recommend.  
▪ The strong association between post-discharge calls and patient satisfaction remains after controlling for waiting time, total length of emergency department stay, and acuity (as assessed by triage class). |
| Johnson, M. B., Castillo, E. M., Harley, J., & Guss, D. A. (2012). Impact of patient and family communication in a pediatric emergency department on likelihood to recommend. Pediatric Emergency Care, 28(3), 243-246. | To identify the specific emergency department patient experience variables that most strongly predict satisfaction as measured by likelihood to recommend. | ▪ A strong correlation exists between nurse and physician communication and emergency department patients’ likelihood to recommend.  
▪ Keeping the patient informed is the communication variable with the strongest correlation to patients’ likelihood to recommend.  
▪ Increased daily census and increased median daily wait times have no impact on emergency department patients’ likelihood to recommend. |
▪ Making sure patients are aware of care-related details, working with a caring touch, and making treatment procedures clearly understood are the caring behaviors most strongly correlated with patient loyalty.  
▪ Time-stamp data show a link between wait time and patient loyalty. |

### INPATIENT

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▪ Patient satisfaction has business implications for health care providers and may be useful as a management tool for private and public purchasers. |
### INPATIENT (continued)

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| Senti, J., & LeMire, S. D. (2011). Patient satisfaction with birthing center nursing care and factors associated with likelihood to recommend institution. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality, 26*(2), 178-185. | To determine which care factors are most important to birthing center patients and correlated with the likelihood to recommend the facility to others. | - Wait time, communication, and services in the hospital birthing center influence satisfaction with care and correlate with likelihood to recommend.  
- Wait time for call light response accounted for the largest amount of survey variability and was correlated with likelihood to recommend the facility. |

### MEDICAL PRACTICE

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| Carlin, C. S. (2014). Patient loyalty in a mature IDS market: Is population health management worth it? *Health Services Research, 49*(3), 1011-1033. | To understand patient loyalty to providers in Integrated Delivery Systems (IDS) over time, informing effective population health management. | - Once the patient shows loyalty to a care system, his or her chance of switching relationships is very low in future years.  
- Co-located primary and specialty services are important in maintaining primary care loyalty.  
- Investment in population health management makes sense for both patient health and the financial health of a care system in a shared savings contract. |
  - Confidence in the care provider  
  - Coordination of care  
  - Concern care providers show for patients' questions and worries  
  - Listening  
  - Courtesy of care providers  
- The most important predictor of patient loyalty is patients' confidence in their care providers. |
| Platonova, E. A., Kennedy, K. N., & Shewchuk, R. M. (2008). Understanding patient satisfaction, trust, and loyalty to primary care physicians. *Medical Care Research and Review, 65*(6), 696-712. | To develop and test a model reflecting a system of interrelations among patient loyalty, trust, and satisfaction as they are related to patients' intentions to stay with a primary care physician and recommend the physician to others. | - Patient trust and good interpersonal relationships with the primary care physician are major predictors of patient satisfaction and loyalty to the physician.  
- Patients need to trust the primary care physician to be satisfied and loyal to the physician.  
- Patient trust, satisfaction, and loyalty are strong and significant predictors of patients' intentions to stay with a primary care physician and to recommend the physician to others. |
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<td>Boss, E. F., &amp; Thompson, R. E. (2012). Patient satisfaction in otolaryngology: Can academic institutions compete? Laryngoscope, 122(5), 1000-1009.</td>
<td>To describe ambulatory otolaryngology patient satisfaction and examine the association of teaching status. The item &quot;likelihood-to-recommend practice&quot; was measured as an indicator of patient loyalty.</td>
<td>▪ Otolaryngology patients seen in teaching or academic settings are more likely to recommend their care provider and more likely to recommend the practice where they received care. ▪ Items that most strongly correspond with loyalty are related to care provider communication and behavior.</td>
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<td>Fulton, B. R., Malott, D. L. Jr., &amp; Ayala, L. (2010). Award-winning outpatient service: Finding the common thread. The Journal of Medical Practice Management, 25(4), 202-206.</td>
<td>To offer a conceptual framework for understanding the effects of communication initiatives and how they relate to patients' likelihood to recommend the organization.</td>
<td>▪ The extent and quality of communication with the patient and among health care team members, both during and after the patient’s visit, are key drivers of the patient’s increased likelihood to recommend the organization. ▪ Patients’ satisfaction with their visit and post-visit requires effective and clear communication which will translate into adherence to medical guidelines and an improved quality of life. This, in turn, will impact the likelihood to recommend the organization, their experience of future visits to the organization, and whether or not to have a future visit.</td>
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