

Patient Satisfaction Drives Imaging Volumes for Outpatient MRI Clinics



A study recently published in *Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology* found that outpatient imaging volumes increase in MRI clinics where patients are satisfied with their care.

Under value-based payment models, patient satisfaction is an important measure of healthcare quality and factors into calculating reimbursements. Previous studies in non-radiology settings have demonstrated that satisfaction encourages return visits and positive recommendations for medical services. But generalising these findings to imaging services is problematic because patients may not meet with their radiologists, or discomfort from confined enclosed spaces may impact satisfaction scores.

Ohio State researchers retrospectively reviewed outpatient MRI volume trends across ten sites and matched them with Press Ganey outpatient surveys. The analysis included almost 40,000 patient visits from April 2015 to March 2016. They found that facilities reporting rising visits tended to show higher satisfaction scores. Volume trends correlated with changes in all five Press Ganey score domains, including overall assessment, facilities, personal issues, registration, and test or treatment. Statistical significance was highest for 'overall assessment' (staff coordination, rating of care quality delivered, etc.) and 'test or treatment' (instructions received, time spent waiting, staff friendliness).

The study's authors summarise: 'Patient satisfaction and patient volume at MRI imaging sites are interrelated, and patient experiences or perceptions of quality of care have the potential to influence what imaging sites are preferentially utilised. Significant associations between favourable satisfaction survey trends and increasing MRI volume suggest that patient satisfaction is not only a quality metric but has operational importance in predicting or impacting imaging volume.'

Since a high proportion of MRI operating costs are fixed, site profitability strongly depends on patient volume. Thus, the study's authors advised. 'Taking patient volume as an indicator of increased profitability, our findings corroborate the positive association between client satisfaction, loyalty and profitability described for inpatient care, the hospitality industry and banking services.'

Source: [Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology](#)

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