
Patient satisfaction with dermatologists,
resident physicians, and physician assistants: a multi-
year cross-sectional study in an academic medical
center

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Background – What is known

- Patient satisfaction is a measure of healthcare quality which predicts treatment compliance and continued healthcare utilization.^{1,2}
- Publications on this metric in dermatology are sparse. One prior study has shown high patient satisfaction with medical care from dermatology resident physicians, but this was limited by small sample size and no comparison with attending dermatologists.³
- While a recent review of 23 studies evaluated patient satisfaction with physician assistants (PAs) for 8,062 patients, none of these were in dermatology.⁴

We sought to address this knowledge gap by describing patient satisfaction with attending physicians, residents, and PAs in the dermatologic setting.



Background – Why is patient satisfaction important

- Patient satisfaction is a measure of healthcare quality which predicts treatment compliance and continued healthcare utilization. ^{1,2}
- Physicians are negatively affected by the tracking of patient satisfaction scores.

Borrelli M, Ting JY, Rabbani CC, et al. Patient satisfaction survey experience among American otolaryngologists. *Am J Otolaryngol.* 2020;41(6):102656. doi:10.1016/j.amjoto.2020.102656

Method

- These data were collected for 12,386 outpatient visits with 25 dermatologists (8,988 encounters; 1-36 years in practice), 6 PAs (2,479 encounters; 1-14 years of dermatology employment), and 26 dermatology residents (892 encounters; postgraduate years 3 and 4 only) at UTSW Medical Center from April 2019 to December 2021.

Largest population studied to determine patient satisfaction with PAs to date.

- Patient-reported Press Ganey scores were queried in areas related to satisfaction with their dermatology provider. Patient satisfaction scores were grouped by clinician type, the 3 groups were compared, and a single factor ANOVA was used to measure any differences between their scores.

■ **Specific Aim:**

- Compare Patient satisfaction with attending physicians, residents, and physician assistants in the dermatologic setting.

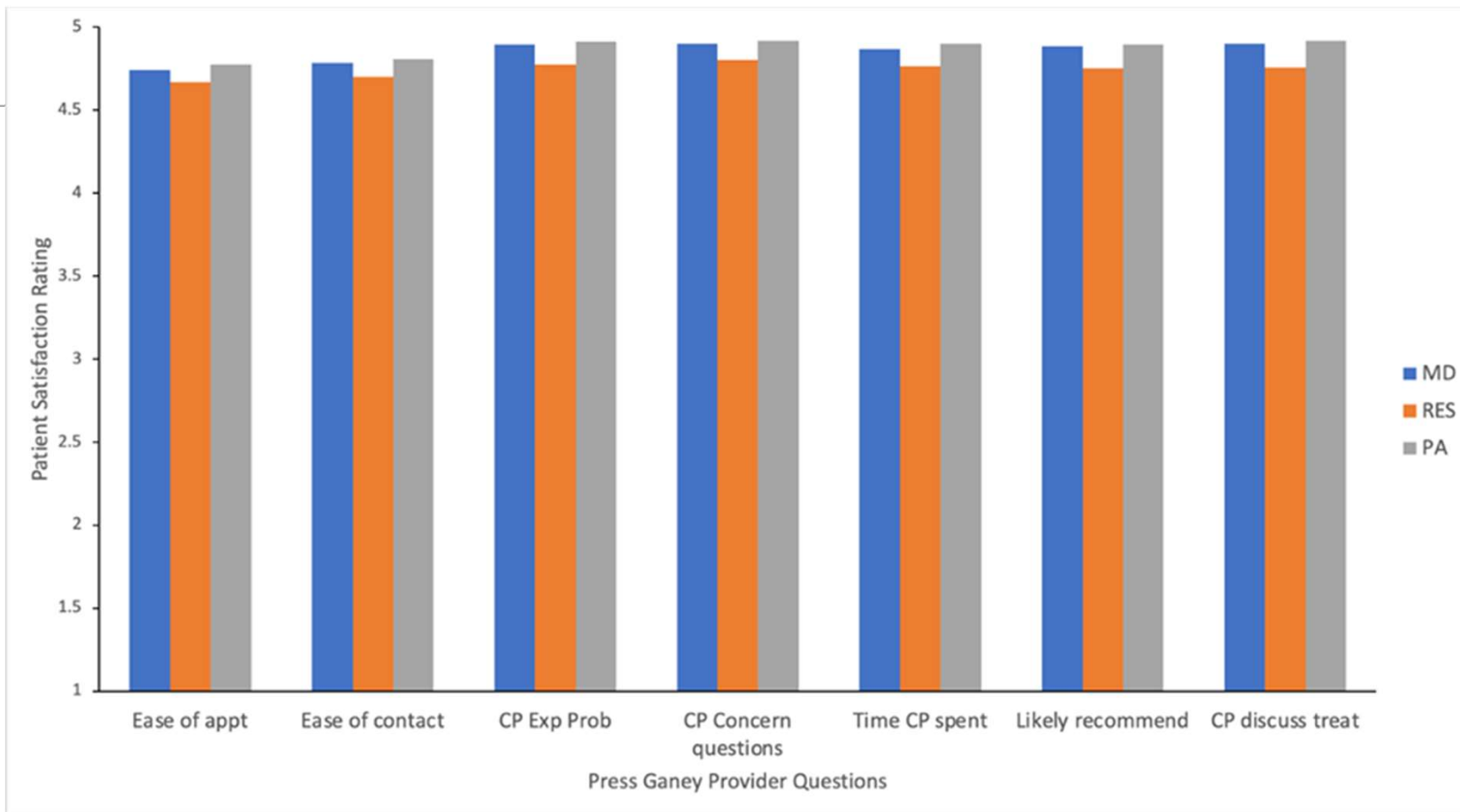
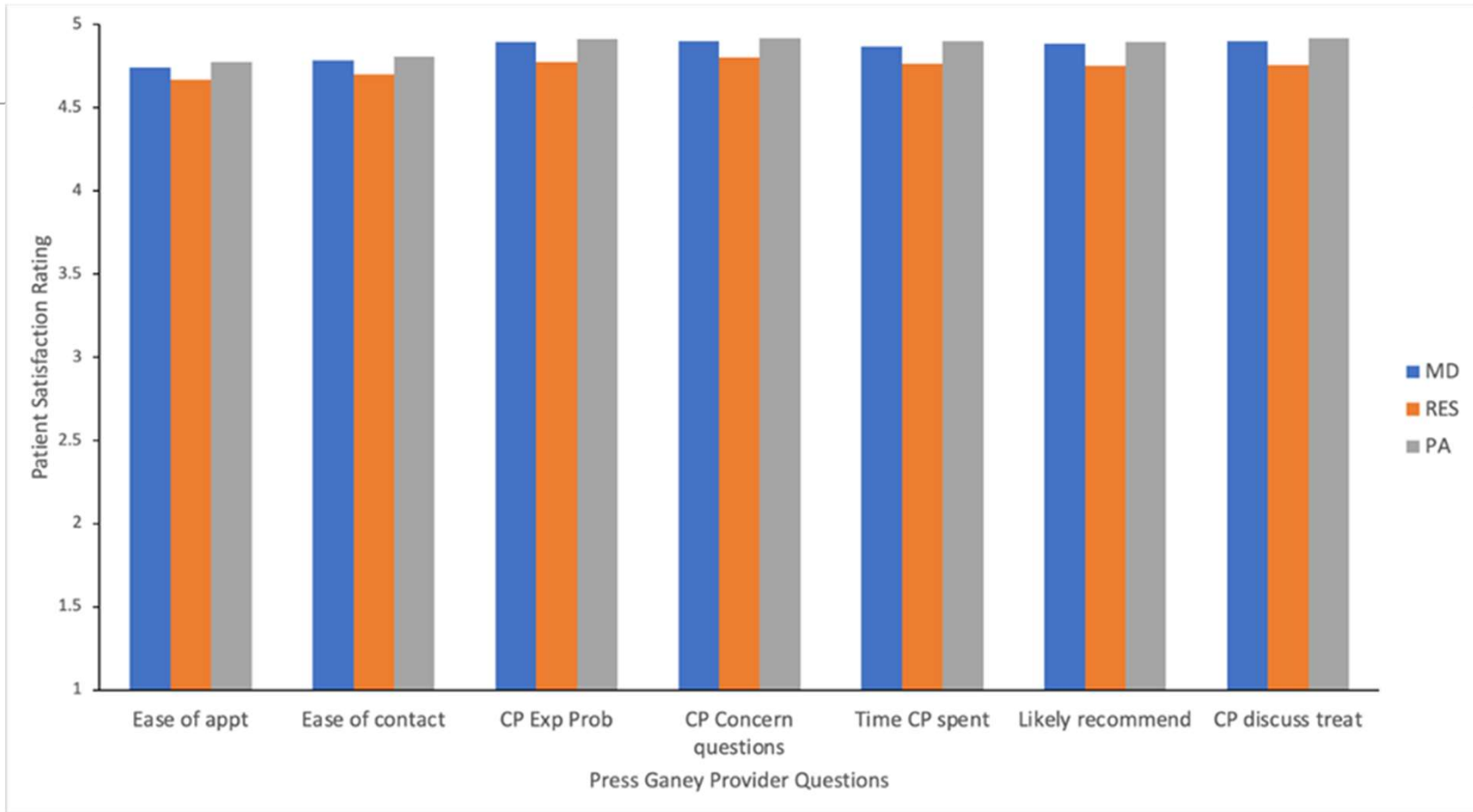


Table 1: Mean patient satisfaction scores, Confidence Intervals and Effect Sizes on Press Ganey Questionnaire for dermatologists, PAs, and dermatology resident physicians. Raw score on a 5-point scale is shown, where 1 is *very unsatisfied* and 5 is *very satisfied*.

	Mean score			MD vs Res		Res vs PA	
	MD	Res	PA	95% CI diff	Cohen's d	95% CI diff	Cohen's d
Ease of scheduling appointments	4.74	4.67	4.77	0.04, 0.12	0.12	-0.15, -0.06	0.17
Ease of contacting	4.78	4.70	4.80	0.03, 0.14	0.14	-0.16, -0.05	0.19
CP explanations of problem/condition	4.89	4.77	4.91	0.09, 0.15	0.25	-0.17, -0.11	0.31
CP concern for questions/worries	4.90	4.80	4.92	0.07, 0.13	0.21	-0.15, -0.08	0.26
Time CP spent with patient	4.87	4.76	4.90	0.07, 0.13	0.20	-0.17, -0.10	0.29
Likelihood of recommending CP	4.89	4.75	4.89	0.10, 0.17	0.25	-0.18, -0.10	0.27
CP discussion of treatments	4.90	4.76	4.92	0.10, 0.18	0.28	-0.20, -0.12	0.34

Abbreviations: CP, care provider; MD, dermatologist; Res, dermatology resident physician; CI diff, mean difference confidence interval; PA, physician assistant; Cohen's d, effect size in standard deviation units between the means



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Discussion

- This data gives insight into patient attitudes about their care from both dermatology residents and physician assistants, which may have implications for healthcare utilization and treatment adherence.^{1,2}
- These findings support the continued utilization of PAs in dermatology and are consistent with similar research in other specialties utilizing PAs, showing non-inferior patient satisfaction with PAs compared to physicians.⁵

Limitations

- ❑ The data did not differentiate between established versus new to the provider patients; some patients may have self-selected for clinicians they are satisfied with.
- ❑ Residents only hold one clinic weekly, have numerous training-related responsibilities, and always see patients jointly with an attending dermatologist. These factors may impact resident opportunities to develop and/or sustain relationships with patients, which may explain their slightly lower scores.
- ❑ Experience of care provider could be factor, perhaps more experienced care providers may have increased patient satisfaction scores

Implications

- Patients' satisfaction and perception of care is vital to understand their confidence in and comfort with their healthcare.
- Further research could focus on patient outcome data (such as number of melanomas treated) in facilities with only dermatologists versus those with PA team member



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■ Questions

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