

Patients Get The Chance To Rate GPs

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Patients are to get the chance online to tell the world what they think about their GP or hospital doctor.



A new site, www.iWantGreatCare.org, has been launched to allow individuals to share information about their healthcare experiences with each other.

It claims to be the only independent source of information in the UK to allow patients to choose a doctor based on the experience and opinion of fellow patients.

The three criteria used in the website are: Do you trust this doctor? Does this doctor listen? and Would you recommend this doctor?

The website founder, Dr Neil Bacon (the former CEO of Doctors.net.uk), says the collection of patient reviews will build an influential network to help others find a doctor with the bedside manner and caring skills they most require.

The organisers say the new site also fits in with health minister Lord Darzi's aims of delivering patient-centred care - patients can now choose to see the doctor they want and are encouraged to find the best for their specific needs.

Recent Department of Health research has found that patients consider the opinions of friends and family as one of the most important factors in deciding where to get treatment, second only to the opinion of their GP.

"Given this central importance, it is hard to believe that doctors have never had a way to measure how well they perform in the key area of patient satisfaction and the quality of their bedside-manner; to have a reliable system to track the satisfaction and perceptions of those they care for.

"The manager of Pizza Express is more likely than the board of an NHS Trust to have up-to-date data on how the public view his service."

"Our healthcare system lags well behind many other professions and industries which make recording and responding to customer satisfaction a key performance indicator.

The British Medical Association, which represents doctors, gave the website a cautious welcome.

"Doctors have always welcomed and valued constructive comments from their patients," a BMA spokesperson said in a statement to Sky News Online.

"However, the BMA is concerned that an uncensored website could be used in a malicious way against individual doctors or provide a generally unbalanced picture of a clinician's actions.

"It is also not possible to appraise a doctor's conduct in three questions without a reference to the environment or specifics of the case they are dealing with.

"The BMA would continue to urge all patients to contact their doctor or local health body with any feedback they have so that their views can be discussed directly with the professionals responsible for delivering their care."