

MANAGING ONLINE REPUTATION FOR COSMETIC SURGEONS

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The Internet has become the ultimate symbol of an individual's right to information and the freedom of expression. As a result, there is plenty of good information about practicing cosmetic surgeons available on the Internet. However, along with good information, there is also the risk of an equal level of misinformation and negative biases that find their way on the World Wide Web.

TYPES OF RATINGS WEBSITES

Rating websites for plastic surgeons and other medical professionals can be broadly classified into four categories.



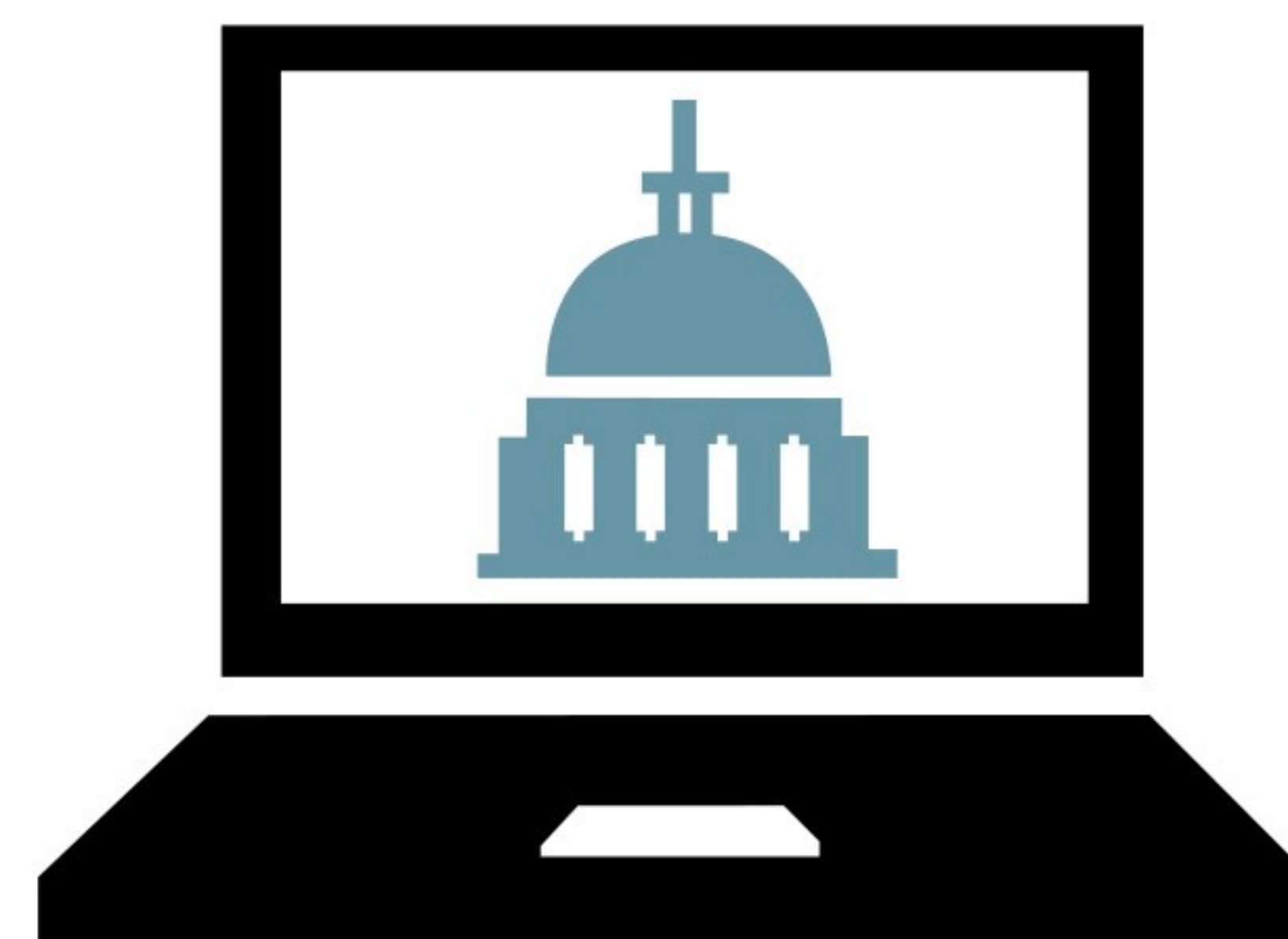
- **NO-FEE** sites offer free information to patients about the listed doctors. Some of these sites earn their revenue through advertising, while others may charge a fee to the listed doctors. From an aesthetic clinician's perspective, it is relatively easier to control information on such a website because there is a financial tie-up between the site and the practitioner.



- Some sites have no relationship with the doctors but **CHARGE A FEE** to the patients to provide privileged access to information about doctors. The cosmetic surgeon can exercise little or no control over the views and reviews that the website may choose to publish about his or her practice.



- **INSURANCE** company websites, which have doctor reference sections, give their own ratings to the listed doctors.



- **GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED WEBSITES** provide information about doctors licensed in their state.

(Continued on page 72)

(Continued from page 74)

HOW ARE RATINGS DETERMINED?

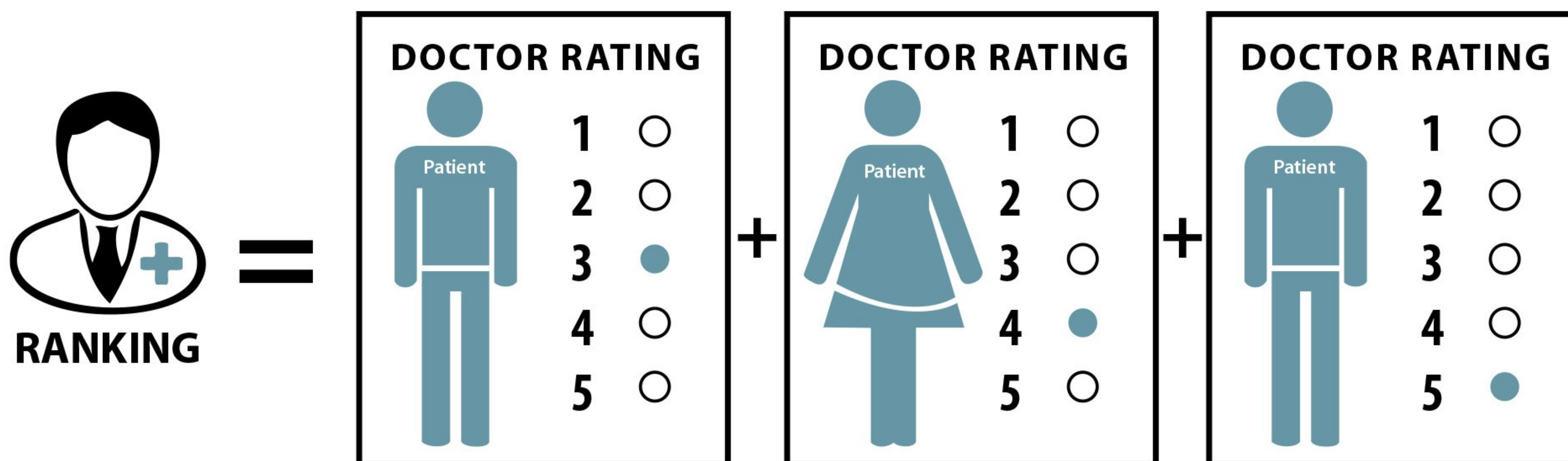
Doctor rating websites usually follow one of the following three approaches to develop rankings or ratings.

APPROACH 1

$$\text{RANKING} = \sqrt{\text{EXPERIENCE} \left(\frac{\text{EDUCATION}}{\text{SPECIAL TRAINING}} \right)^2}$$

- The first approach involves using an algorithm or a formula that attaches different weights to different sets of credentials of the doctor, such as education, experience, and any special training. Some sites may differentiate even on the basis of the type of medical school a particular doctor attended. If the doctor has settled a mal-practice suit out of court, some sites may consider it a grounds to attach lesser weight to the doctor.

APPROACH 2



- The second approach involves using feedback from patients. The website will invite actual patients to rate their doctors on various parameters. Average ratings for the doctor are then computed on the basis of the feedback of different patients.

APPROACH 3

$$\text{RANKING} = \text{EXPERIENCE} \left(\frac{\text{DOCTOR RATING}_1 + \text{DOCTOR RATING}_2 + \text{DOCTOR RATING}_3}{\text{EDUCATION} * \text{SPECIAL TRAINING}} \right)^2$$

- The third approach is a hybrid of the first two, which is perhaps a more comprehensive way to develop ratings.

- ▶ The first challenge for a cosmetic surgeon is to ensure that the ratings and review websites maintain the **latest updated information** about his or her practice. Most sites do not have a system to ask for such updates and expect the listed plastic surgeons to provide updates on their own.
- ▶ Patients may get mixed up where two or more plastic surgeons have the same or similar-sounding names. It may lead to **misplaced patient reviews** and ratings about some of them. Corrections in such cases must be provided by the concerned doctor.
- ▶ Sometimes a particular patient may have made an **unfair, false, or incorrect accusation**, which can be countered only if the cosmetic surgeon takes care to tell his side of the story.
- ▶ Apart from retrospective damage control in such instances, cosmetic surgeons also should reach out to ratings and review sites on their own to **provide accurate facts** so that the chances of misinformation are minimized.

PROACTIVE ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

A growing number of patients are inclined to check out a doctor's background on the Internet, and it may become an important factor of influence in their decision to choose a particular doctor.

HIRE ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT EXPERTS

Cosmetic surgeons who are looking to grow and expand their practices in their local area can no longer afford to ignore the marketing power of the Internet. They should have a professional and dynamic website that creates an outstanding image for their practice. Such website needs to be promoted professionally so that it achieves high rankings on all search engines, allowing maximum number of local patients to reach the website.

The cosmetic surgeon must be able to protect his or her reputation on third-party websites on the Internet. These three tasks can be performed efficiently and cost-effectively with the help of a professional SEO and online reputation management services provider. ■



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