METHODOLOGY

America’s Best Spine Surgeons 2024
Methodology – America’s Best Spine Surgeons 2024

How we did it – a brief summary of the project

**Data sources**
The evaluation is based on four pillars

1. **Physician performance data**
   - Analysis of Medicare fee for service claims for 2022 from CareJourney.
   - An evaluation of the physician’s performed procedures was conducted:
     - Volume of episodes performed
     - Five measures per procedure e.g. complications by episodes, mortality rate.

2. **Recommendations from peers**
   - Online survey of thousands of medical experts (physicians, managers/administrators and other medical professionals) with knowledge in the field of spine surgery in 20 states.

3. **Quality assessment**
   - Quality of care rating by peers for each spine surgeon

4. **Certifications**
   - Orthopedic Surgery
   - Certifications by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery

**Scoring model**
Based on these pillars, a weighted score was calculated for each spine surgeon

- **Physician performance data**
  - 45%

- **Recommendations from peers**
  - **In-state**: 30%
  - **Out-of-state**: 10%

- **Quality assessment**
  - 10%

- **Certifications**
  - 5%

**AMERICA’S TOP 150 SPINE SURGEONS**
Spine surgeons from the 20 states with the highest number of physicians were eligible for the ranking

Geographical Distribution

- The following 20 states with the highest number of physicians, according to the KFF(1), were included in the survey:
  - Arizona
  - California
  - Florida
  - Georgia
  - Illinois
  - Maryland
  - Massachusetts
  - Michigan
  - Minnesota
  - Missouri
  - New Jersey
  - New York
  - North Carolina
  - Ohio
  - Pennsylvania
  - Tennessee
  - Texas
  - Virginia
  - Washington
  - Wisconsin

(1) Kaiser Family Foundation: [https://www.kff.org/other-state-indicators/total-active-physicians/?CurrentTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=specialist-physicians--total&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Specialist%20Physicians%22,%22sort%22:%22desc%22%7D](https://www.kff.org/other-state-indicators/total-active-physicians/?CurrentTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=specialist-physicians--total&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Specialist%20Physicians%22,%22sort%22:%22desc%22%7D)
The evaluation is based on four pillars

Data Sources

1. **Physician Performance Data**
   - Analysis of Medicare fee for service claims for 2022 from Care Journey

2. **Recommendations from peers**
   - Online survey of thousands of medical experts with knowledge in the field of spine surgery

3. **Quality assessment**
   - Quality of care rating by peers for each spine surgeon

4. **Certifications**
   - Orthopaedic Surgery Certifications by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery
Physician fee for service data from CareJourney was used to evaluate a physicians’ performed procedures against the state average.

Methodology: Physician Performance Data

1. **Physician Performance Data**

   - **The volume of episodes performed was compared against the state average across following measures**:  
     - Back and neck pain treatment without fusion  
     - Neck Pain and spine problems  
     - Disorder of thoracic spine  
     - Lower back pain  
     - Spinal fusion  

   - **Evaluated Measures per procedure**:  
     - Average LOS (Days) of Institutional Long-term Stay  
     - ER Visits per 1,000 Episodes  
     - Mortality Rate  
     - Complications by Episode  
     - Unplanned Readmissions per 1,000 Episodes

   - Physicians who performed a procedure above the state average received either 1 or 2 ribbons depending on the volume of episodes performed.

   - The analysis was based on Medicare fee for service claims data for the year 2022.

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**Physician Performance Data Constitutes 45% of the Total Score**

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(1) https://carejourney.com/
Thousands of medical experts were invited to the online survey

**Physician recommendations from peers**

From March to April 2024, Statista invited thousands of medical experts (physicians with knowledge in the field of spine surgery, managers/administrators and other medical professionals in the field of spine surgery) in 20 US states to an online survey. The survey was also promoted on newsweek.com. Recommendations from peers constitute 40% of the total physician score.

Online survey among medical professionals in the 20 US states with the highest number of physicians.

Participants were asked to recommend physicians in their own state and in any of the other US states included in the survey. They were also able to specify a standout treatment (e.g., Spinal fusion) for the recommended physician.

Analysis of recommendations for each physician. The reason of recommendation (e.g., well-known specialist), the working experience of the participant and the order of recommendation were considered.
A quality score and certifications were taken into consideration for all physicians

Methodology: Quality assessment and certifications

3  ⭐️⭐️⭐️ Quality assessment

- For In-State recommendations, participants were asked to assess the quality of care (e.g., treatments, follow-up care, use of most recent equipment), professional expertise (e.g., knowledge in medical field) and waiting time (until appointment) of the spine surgeon.
- Spine surgeons who only received out-of-state recommendations were given a baseline score.
- For each recommended spine surgeon, participants rated the quality dimensions on a scale from 1 (“poor”) to 10 (“excellent”)
- A quality score was calculated for each spine surgeon with In-State recommendations. This score accounts for 10% of the total score.

4  📘 Certifications

- Certifications of the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery were considered in the analysis.
- Certifications account for 5% of the total score.
A score was calculated for each spine surgeon

Scoring Model

1. **Physician Performance Data**
   - Weight: 45%

2. **Recommendations from peers**
   - In-State: 30%
   - Out-of-State: 10%

3. **Quality assessment**
   - Weight: 10%

4. **Certifications**
   - Weight: 5%

**Physician Score**

The total physician score is based on the four pillars and their respective weights listed above.
As a result, the top 150 spine surgeons were awarded

Toplist of leading spine surgeons in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spine Surgeons</th>
<th>Hospital Affiliation</th>
<th>City, State</th>
<th>Certifications, Treatments and More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingsley O Abode-Iyamah, MD</td>
<td>Mayo Clinic - Jacksonville</td>
<td>Jacksonville, FL</td>
<td>Click to Display ▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Adams, MD</td>
<td>Covenant Medical Center</td>
<td>Saginaw, MI</td>
<td>Click to Display ▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley D Ahlgren, MD</td>
<td>Beaumont Hospital Troy</td>
<td>Troy, MI</td>
<td>Click to Display ▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd Alamin, MD</td>
<td>Stanford Health Care - Stanford Hospital</td>
<td>Stanford, CA</td>
<td>Click to Display ▼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin N Ammar, MD</td>
<td>Memorial Health University Medical Center</td>
<td>Savannah, GA</td>
<td>Click to Display ▼</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**

- Hospital affiliation for each physician was determined by patient volume\(^{(1)}\). For physicians with no data regarding hospital affiliation, affiliation was determined by desk research.
- If the specified affiliated hospital has been awarded in a recent hospital ranking by Newsweek and Statista, it is listed under ‘Affiliated with best hospital’.
- The state average performance for a specific procedure is marked with 1 or 2 ribbons. If a particular procedure has been recommended frequently by peers, it is indicated under ‘Peers Choice’.

[...]

**LEADING SPINE SURGEONS WERE AWARDED**
Overview of involved parties

America’s Best Spine Surgeons partner network

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Disclaimer

The rankings are comprised exclusively of physicians that are eligible regarding the scope described in this document. A mention in the toplist is a positive recognition based on peer recommendations and available data sources at the time. The toplist is the result of an elaborate process which, due to the interval of data-collection and analysis, is a reflection of the past 12 months only. Furthermore, any events preceding or following the period January 1st, 2024 – May 6th, 2024, were not included in the metrics. As such, the results of this toplist should not be used as the sole source of information for future deliberations.

The information provided in this toplist should be considered in conjunction with other available information about physicians or, if possible, accompanied by a visit to a hospital/physician's practice. The quality of physicians that are not included in the toplist is not disputed.