

Patient satisfaction surveys are a good idea -- true or false? It demonstrates that you are looking for ways to improve." If that's not enough of a reason to push you nearer to the point of surveying your patients, consider this: "Whether you think patient satisfaction surveys are good or bad, the fact of the matter is that the marketplace you work in is demanding that data on patient satisfaction be used to empower consumers," says Leonard Fromer, MD, a family physician in group practice in Santa Monica, Calif., and member of the AAFP's Commission on Health Care Services. If you're inclined to answer "false," you might choose from any number of objections. Perhaps you're not convinced the data are reliable. Perhaps you don't believe the results justify the costs. Or perhaps you don't want to be measured simply for the sake of being measured. All are legitimate concerns, but, as you'll see, they can be overcome. The truth about patient satisfaction surveys is that they can help you identify ways of improving your practice. Ultimately, that translates into better care and happier patients. What's more, he says, "it shows your staff and the community that you're interested in quality." Unless a physician is not interested at all in information, a patient satisfaction survey can be useful," says John Rollet, MD, a family physician in Chatham, Ill., whose group practice recently conducted its first survey.