Increasing Online Reviews and New Patients in Clinic with QR Codes

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Background

Patient census at the Medical City Internal Medicine Grand Prairie clinic has been lower comparatively to other HCA Healthcare clinics. Although the cause can be multifaceted, the clinic's online presence (e.g. Google Maps) is minimal. One initial issue with the clinic's online presence was the lack of reviews on the Google page for the clinic. One way to increase online reviews is to provide Quick Response (QR) codes in the clinic for patients to scan on their smartphone.

Objective

The goal of this project is to increase the number of Google reviews for the clinic through QR codes to at least 1 per month. The number of new patients per month in the clinic will be tracked as a secondary outcome with a goal of a 10% increase in the number of new patients per month.

Methods

QR codes were initially obtained from the Google website for the clinic and placed in the clinic. Data was collected manually by going through eClinicalWorks, the electronic medical record used in the clinic, to obtain the number of new patients. The monthly number of new patients in clinic and monthly number of online reviews posted was collected.

Figure 1. Fishbone Diagram
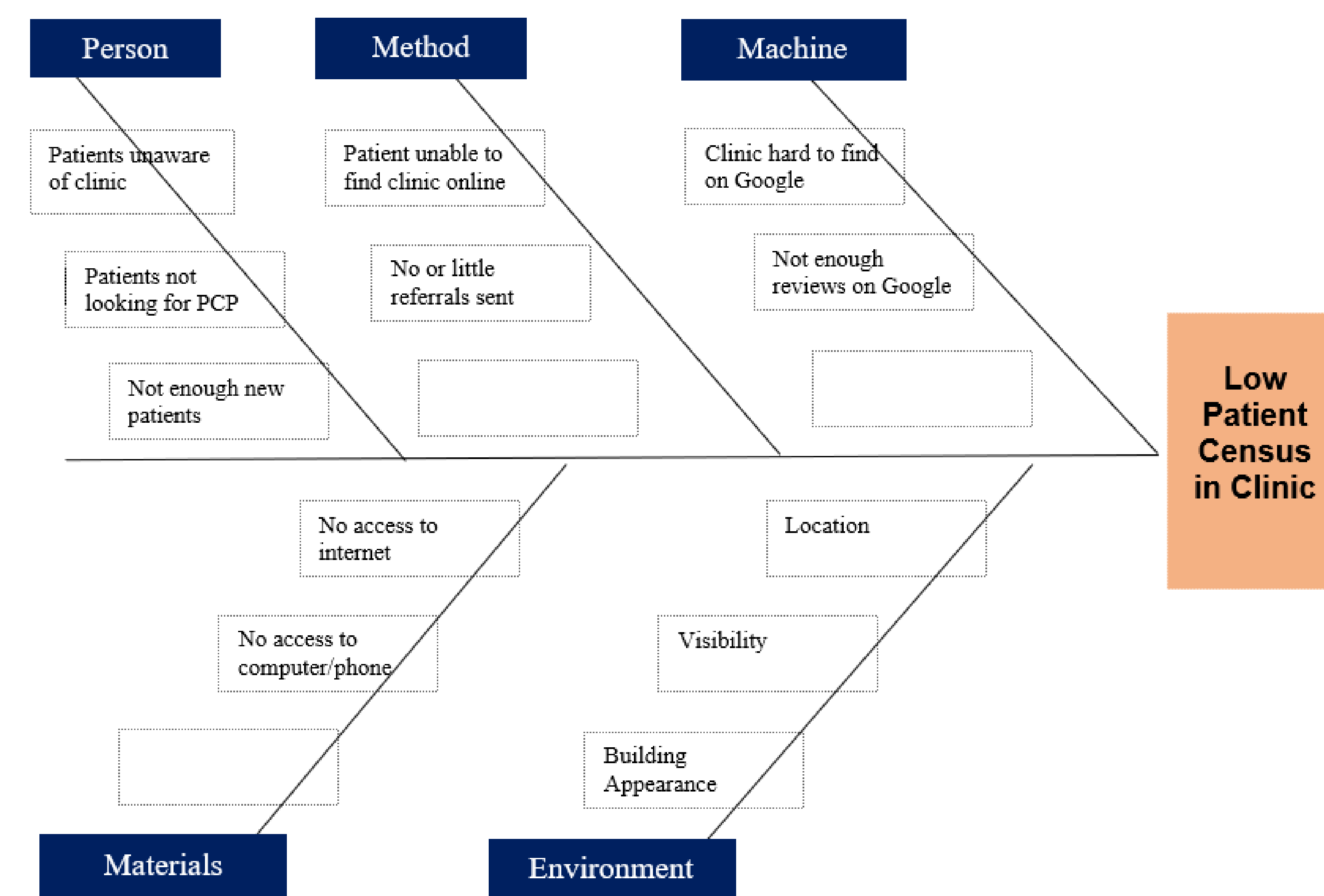
Results

Prior to the start of the study, there was an average of 15.3 new patients per month (N = 3 months) and there was an average of 0.33 reviews per month. After starting the project with the first QR code placed, there was an average of 16.3 new patients per month (N = 4 months, p = 0.7726) and there was an average of 0.5 reviews per month (p = 0.8090). After the QR code was updated, there was an average of 22.2 new patients per month (N = 15 months, p = 0.2226) and there was an average of 0.53 reviews per month (p = 0.6684).

Number of New Patients and Online Reviews per Month

Month	Number of new patients	Number of reviews	QR Code Placement
Jul-21	19	0	
Aug-21	11	0	
Sep-21	16	1	
Oct-21	14	0	QR codes placed in clinic
Nov-21	12	0	
Dec-21	20	0	
Jan-22	19	2	
Feb-22	14	0	Updated QR codes
Mar-22	21	0	
Apr-22	35	0	
May-22	24	1	
Jun-22	15	0	
Jul-22	18	0	
Aug-22	12	1	
Sep-22	16	0	
Oct-22	37	2	
Nov-22	40	1	
Dec-22	27	1	
Jan-23	16	0	
Feb-23	15	2	
Mar-23	26	0	
Apr-23	17	0	

Initial QR Code Page

Revised QR Code Page

Discussion

The average number of new patients per month did increase gradually as well as the number of new reviews although neither were considered statistically significant. While there was an increase in the number of online reviews, it is uncertain if it was affecting the patient census. The number of new patients per month was variable throughout this period. While the trend is positive, it is unclear if there were other sources for new patients. There were other quality improvement projects ongoing at the time of this project also aimed at increasing patient census at this clinic that could potentially cause the patient census to increase. For example, one other project's goal was to have patients who presented to the affiliated hospital Medical City Arlington's Emergency Department to be referred to the Medical City Internal Medicine Grand Prairie clinic if they did not have a primary care physician. At the end of the project timeline, the goal of the project was only partially met. While both the number of online reviews and number of new patients did increase, although not statistically significant, only the number of new patients met the goal of 10% increase while the number of online reviews per month was still below 1 per month. The QR codes were placed throughout the clinic as was planned and remain there. However, there are still more steps that can be taken to further improve upon this project including streamlining a process to show patients the QR code on checkout with the front desk.
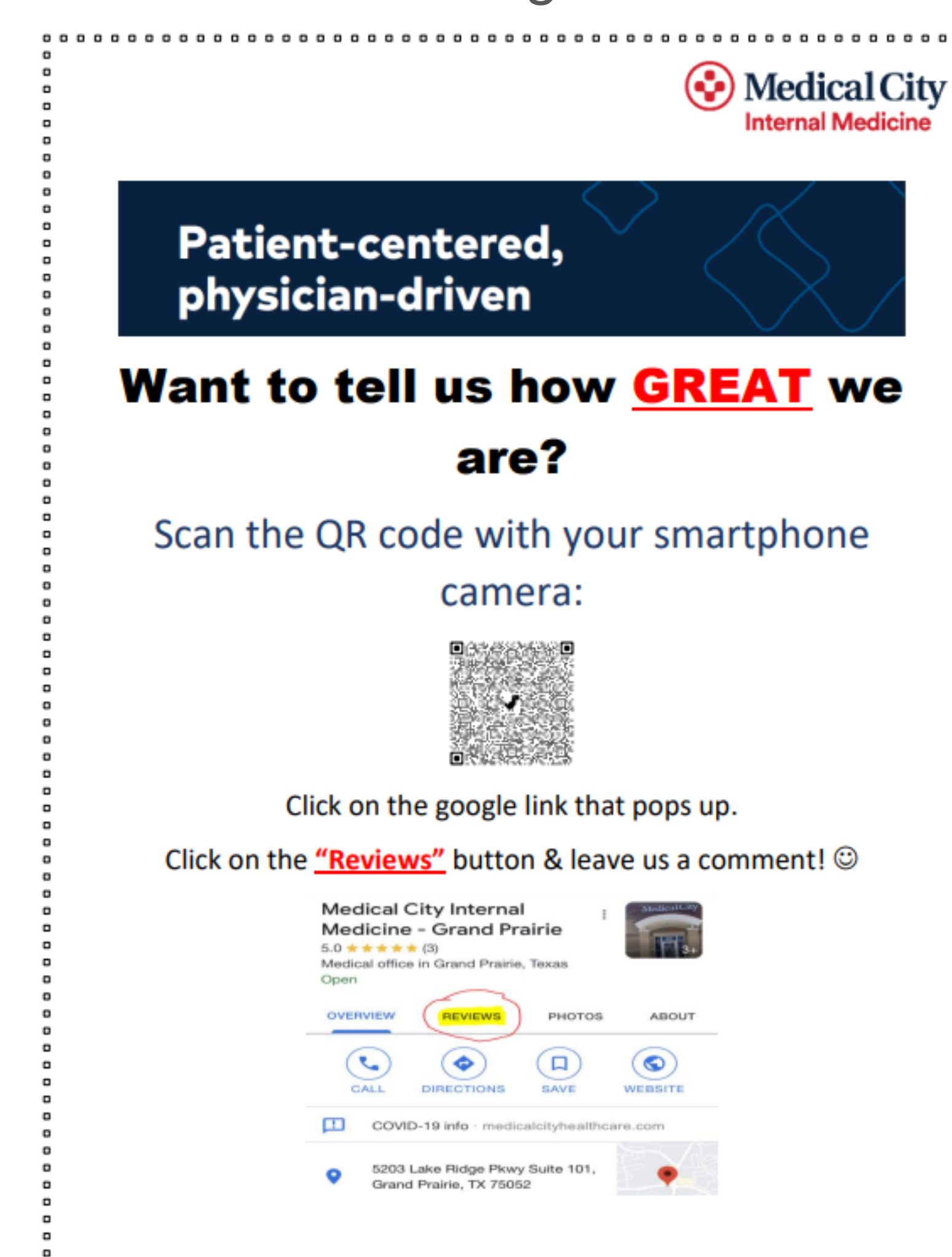
Conclusion

At the end of the project timeline, the goal of the project was only partially met. While both the number of online reviews and number of new patients did increase, although not statistically significant, only the number of new patients met the goal of 10% increase while the number of online reviews per month was still below 1 per month. Future projects can focus on other factors that can increase patient census including improving online visibility on search engines and improving referrals to the clinic from the local community.
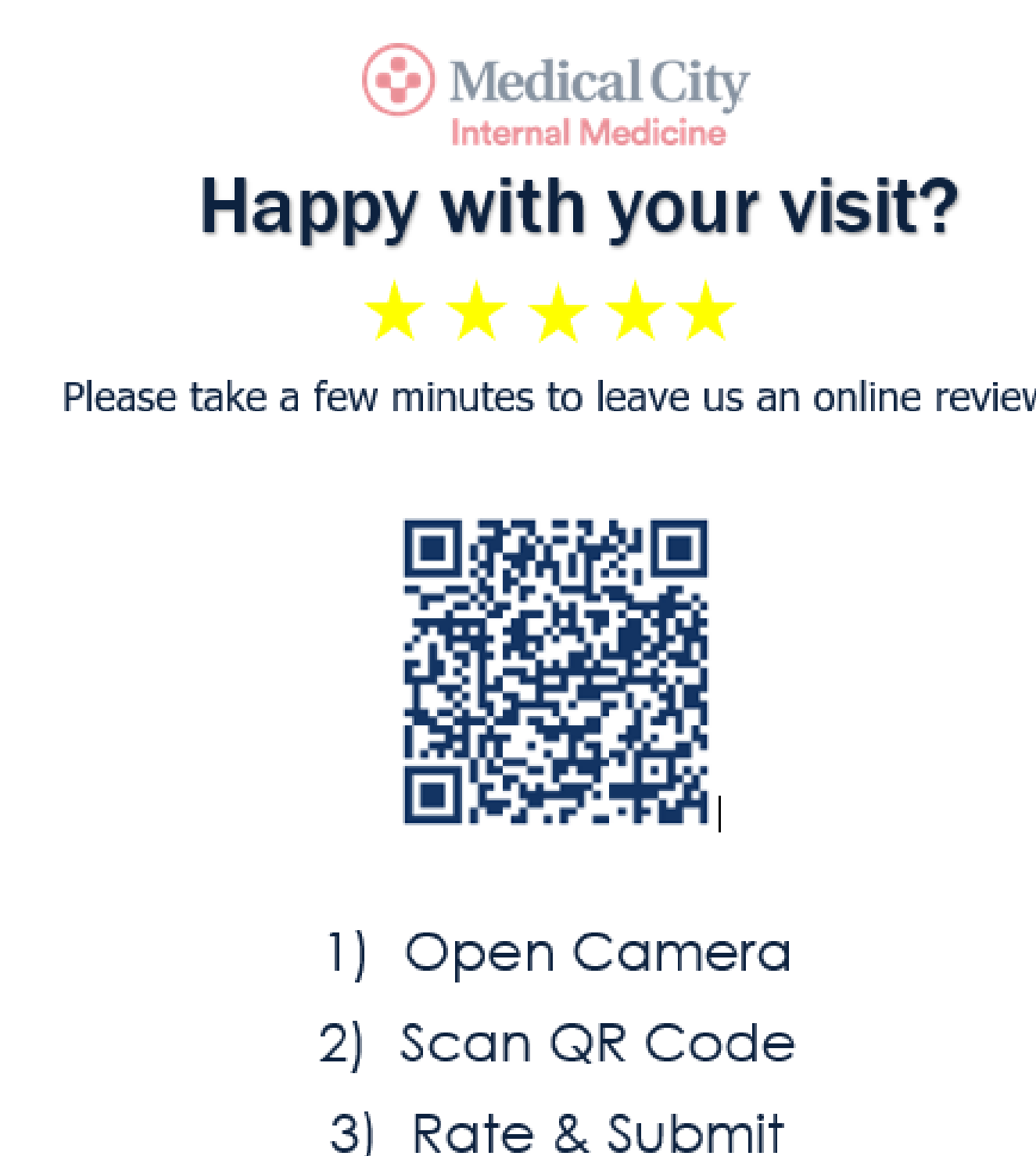
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