The Benefits to Orthotic & Prosthetic Practitioners of Using Good Patient/Practitioner Communication
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INTRODUCTION
Medical research reveals good communication between doctors and patients is an important element of health care.1,2 Furthermore, medical research indicates numerous, common problems related to communication that adversely affect patient outcomes. Good communication is essential to the provision of quality care and treatment to patients and has numerous benefits for patients and healthcare providers.2,3

However, similar research does not exist in orthotics and prosthetics (O&P). Hence, this literature review had two specific aims: (1) to identify benefits to medical providers of good patient/practitioner communication, and (2) consider these benefits within the context of a typical orthotic and/or prosthetic patient encounter and summarize potential beneficial themes of good communication for O&P practitioners.

METHOD
A literature search was performed using PubMed, Ovid Medline, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), and Google Scholar. A table was used to extract, organize and categorize the benefits to the medical provider found in each article.

RESULTS
A total of 71 articles were included in this literature review, yielding 17 benefits to medical practitioners of using good communication. From these, six beneficial themes were summarized that are hypothesized to relate to O&P clinical practice (Table 1).

DISCUSSION
The benefits from other medical disciplines were not necessarily exclusive to one of the six beneficial themes. However, for clarity each benefit was listed as part of only one beneficial theme. An additional benefit specific to O&P practitioners is that good communication facilitates adherence to the American Board of Certification (ABC) Scope of Practice & Code of Professional Responsibility. This review may be used to identify areas of further research, including the need to develop ways to analyze individual practitioner communication skills to identify areas needing improvement and the development of best practices for good communication in O&P.

CONCLUSION
There are several benefits to medical providers that are relevant to orthotists and prosthetists with regards to using good communication in patient encounters. These benefits may have a positive impact on orthotists and prosthetists, their practice, and their patients.

CLINICAL APPLICATIONS
This review should motivate orthotic and prosthetic practitioners to use good communication in clinical encounters with patients.

REFERENCES