“WHAT ARE THE STONGEST DETERMINANTS OF OVERALL PATIENT SATISFACTION?”
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INTRODUCTION
Patient satisfaction, defined as a positive evaluation of one’s experience, is one of the strongest indicators of healthcare quality. However, determinants of O&P satisfaction are not well known. By reviewing literature that correlates determinants with overall clinic satisfaction, this paper seeks to establish factors that drive O&P patient satisfaction.

METHOD
Searches were performed on Google Scholar and NCBI databases from 2001 to 2016 using the parameters “prosthetic”, “orthotic”, “satisfaction”, and “clinic”. Articles judged as relevant, including those found through references, were selected for research. Determinants significantly correlating with overall clinic satisfaction (p<.05) were recorded with their respective number of occurrences in the literature.

RESULTS
Search results with “prosthetic” or “orthotic” parameters returned determinants of device satisfaction but very little regarding overall satisfaction. After removing them, determinants from a broader field of physician clinics and hospitals were yielded (relevant papers N=7). Significant determinants are listed in Figure 1 according to their number of occurrences. Some determinants such as patient characteristics were beyond the control of the clinician and were not included in the chart data. These were level of education (Pakdil, et al., 2005), expectations, age, smoking, sex, and insurance (Bible, et al., 2015). Determinants judged as very similar were combined (i.e., physician empathy and listening were included with physician interaction).

DISCUSSION
Although the sample size was limited, trends in the literature are evident. By frequency of correlation, we can see that building rapport with the patient (physician interaction) can be as important as the treatment itself (treatment quality) or the efficiency and organization of the clinic (appointment availability and wait time). Since the patient does not have a basis to judge the clinician’s decisions, it makes sense that trust in that clinician would be of major importance. Also, in our high-paced culture, it is no surprise that being respectful of the patient’s time would be a strong determinant.

The strongest determinants for patients are largely based on their expectations (Pakdil, et al., 2005) which can be ascertained in a thorough evaluation. However, it is clear that much of patient satisfaction is determined by courtesy and effective communication.

Most research regarding O&P satisfaction is based on devices. However, dissatisfaction with one determinant can elicit a more critical opinion of another (i.e., a patient kept waiting for too long may be difficult to satisfy regardless of device function). Therefore, current research regarding O&P satisfaction is too focused and should be broadened to encompass other potential determinants.

CONCLUSION
It is important to understand the nature of satisfaction determinants. Although information from other fields is helpful, O&P is a unique field of medicine. Patient satisfaction with O&P is not well understood and should be researched further.

CLINICAL APPLICATIONS
Understanding determinants of satisfaction can assist the clinician with rating and improving his quality of care, increasing compliance and profitability, providing a marketing focus, and aiding in reimbursement.

REFERENCES