

Keeping up with Dr. Google: When are Patients Seeking First-Aid Burn Resources?

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Introduction

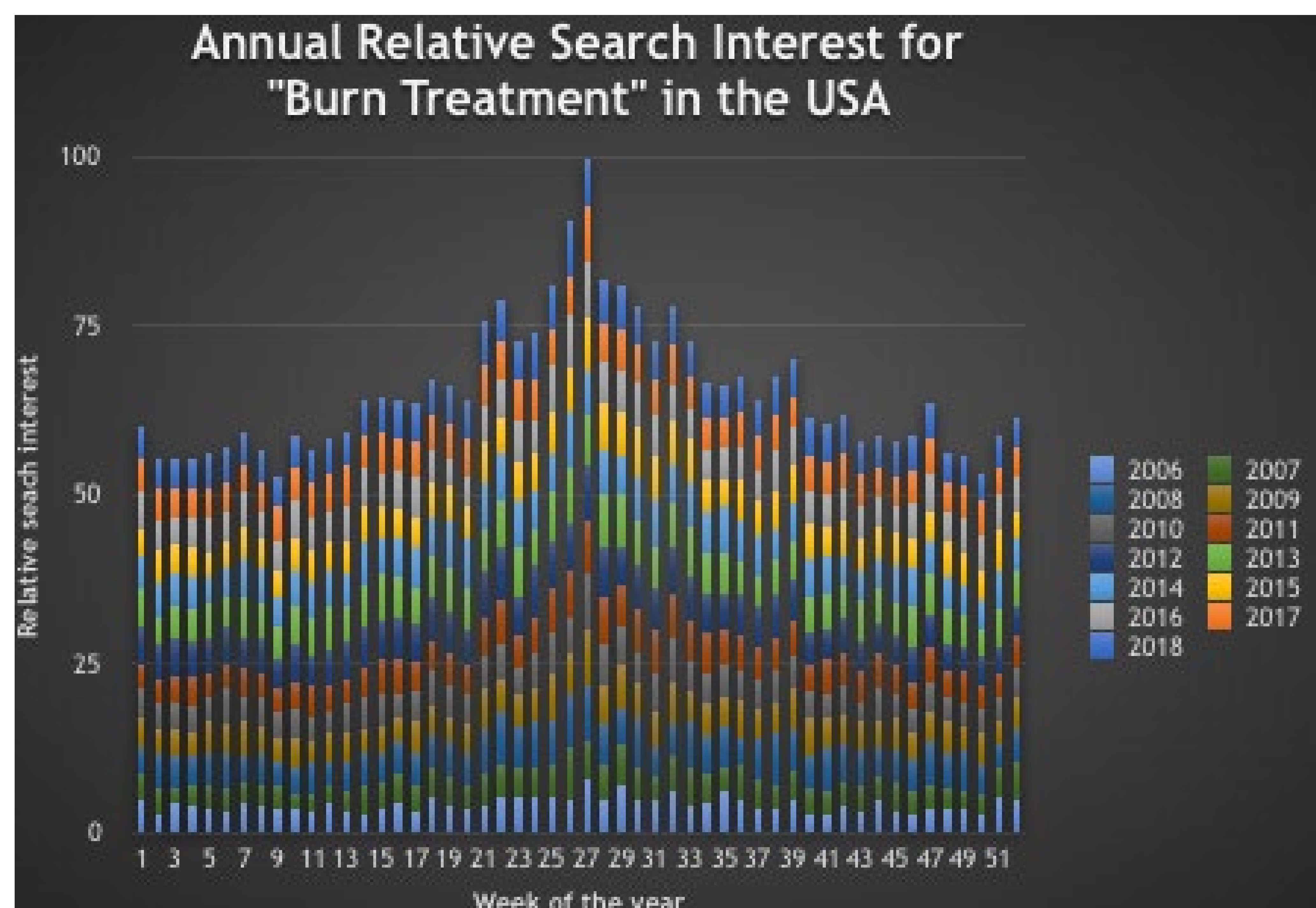
In the digital era, patients feel increasingly empowered to seek out medical resources independently. The true number of people sustaining an injury and treating themselves at home or outside of the hospital setting is difficult to quantify. However, we can see when patients are searching for first-aid burn resources on the world's most powerful and popular search engine - *Google*. We hypothesized that there would be a correlation between patients searching for burn care resources online with burn related clinic visits and admissions.

Methods

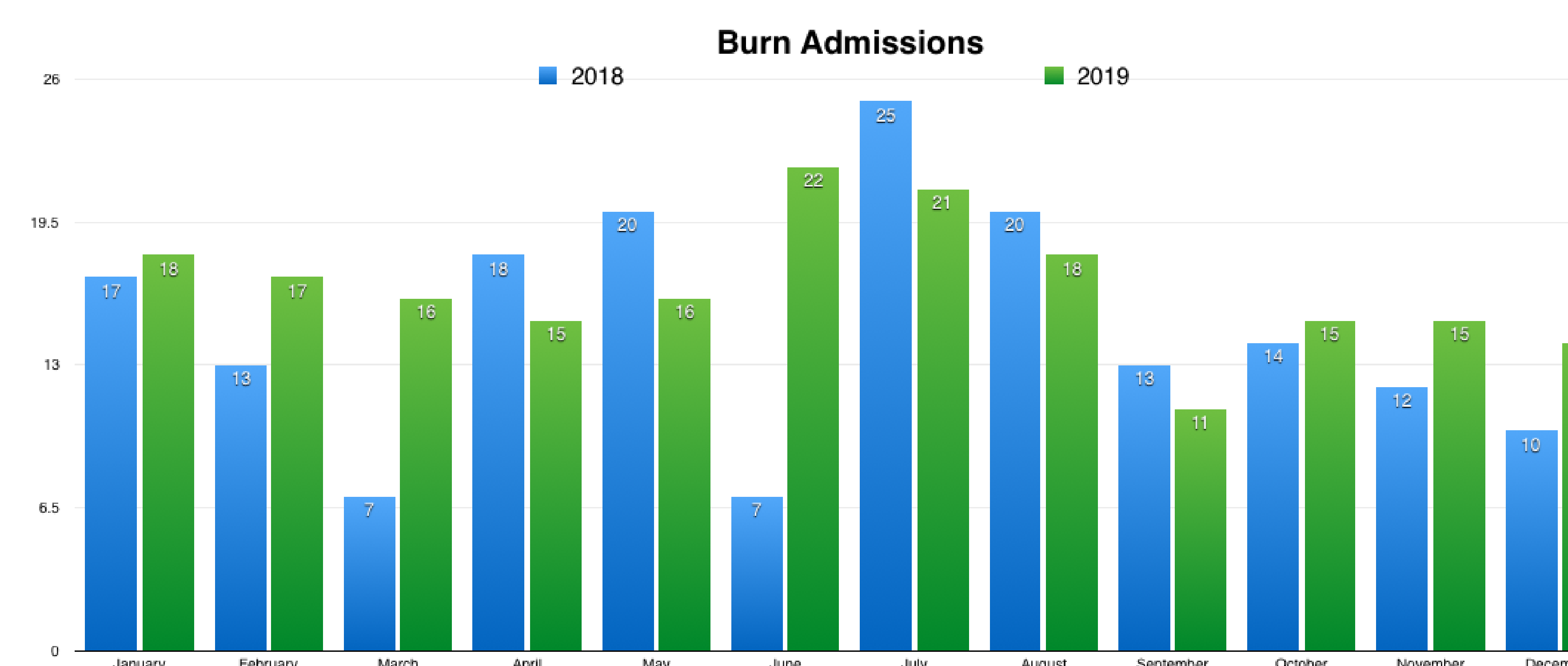
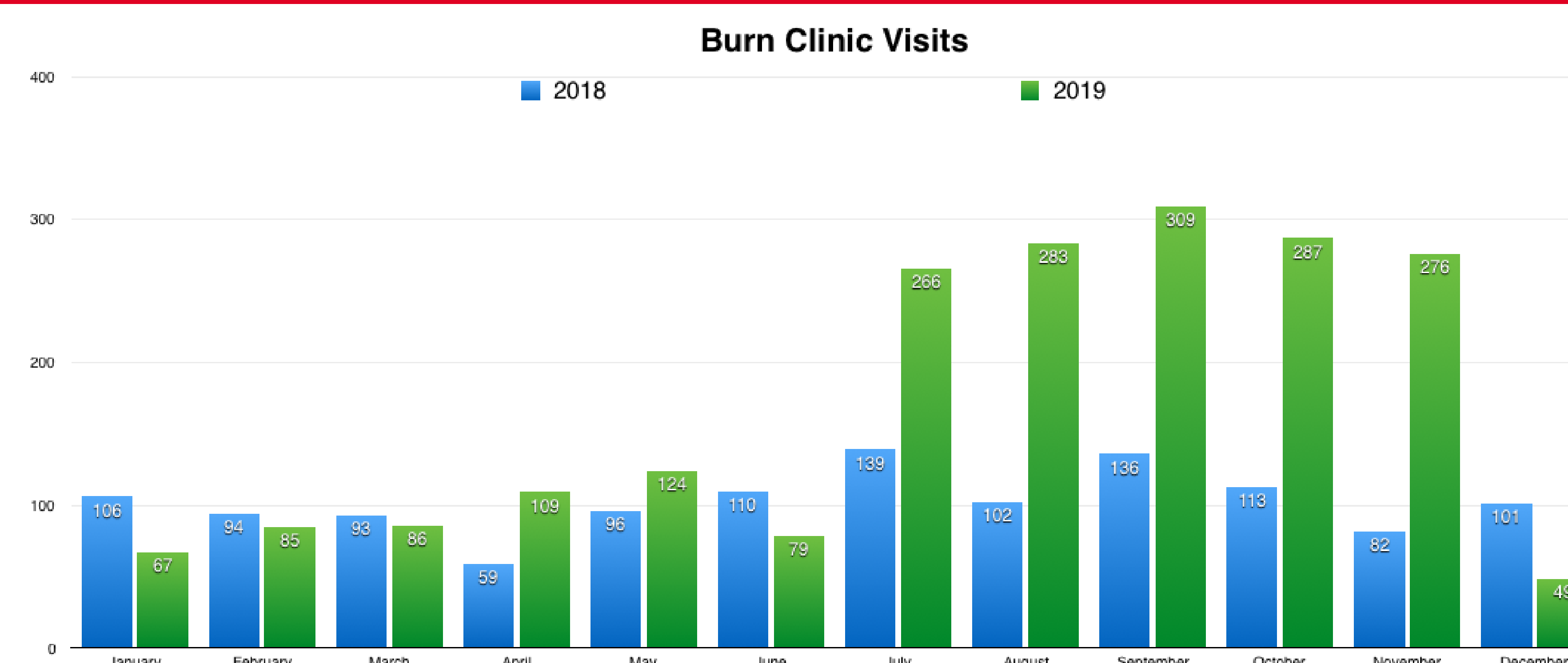
We used *Keywords Everywhere* a browser add-on for Google Chrome to cross check various phrases and words that Americans might search for to find information on how to treat a burn. "Burn treatment" was found to be the most commonly searched phrase and this was verified using *Google Trends*. Google Trends expresses the search frequency for a term relative to how frequently that term was sought out during a specified time period; it does not provide raw search numbers. We pulled search data for each successive year from 2006 to 2018.

Additionally, a query of the burn registry at University of Cincinnati for burn admissions and clinic visits from 2018 to 2019 was performed.

Results



Results



- "Burn treatment" had the greatest search query on Google the 27th week of the year, which is the week of 4th of July
- There was an increase in clinic visits and admissions during the month of July at our Burn Center

Conclusion

The internet is a growing resource that our patients are relying on for medical information. The majority of burn injuries are minor and can be managed on an outpatient basis. The true number of patients being burned and treated at home or third-party providers is unknown.

We were able to demonstrate that the week of 4th of July was a time period with the highest frequency of search interest surrounding first aid burn care. With the ongoing development and increased availability of BQIP data it would be interesting to correlate this trend across the country with burn admission and clinic visits. There are metrics that are increasingly available for us to analyze and individualize to our hospital systems to better serve our communities. One example would be preparing clinics and units for increased volume around the week of 4th of July.

References, Funding and Disclosure

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