

OUT-POCKET EXPENDITURE OF ALBANIAN PATIENTS: ACIBADEM HOSPITALS CASE

Authors

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BACKGROUND

Health care spending accounts for a significant proportion of the family budgets, which is accomplished through different mechanisms.

Out-of-pocket payments for health care can lead households to catastrophic expenditures, which can cause them poverty.

Hence, financial protection is one of the main aims of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Context

After the breakdown of the communist regime in 1990, Albania has undergone significant changes and major reforms including also the health sector.

The Albanian health system covers the costs of patients in public institutions that provide health services and only ten medical procedures that public institutions have not the capacity to treat all patients.

Compulsory health insurance does not cover health care costs for patients accessing private health care.

During last decade, a large number of patients access health services in private institution with their own expenses.

As a matter of fact, the percentage of patients accessing and referring to the private sector is increasing every year.

STUDY AIM

The aim of this study was to contribute to the identification of out-of-pocket (informal) spending by citizens on health spending in transitional Albania.

METHODOLOGY

This a retrospective study with quantitative and qualitative nature.

Data was obtained from the official representative of Acibadem Hospitals in Albania.

Data about all patients treated during the period 2016-2019 in the network of 7 Acibadem hospitals in Istanbul were included in the current analysis.

RESULTS

The data show that in the period covered by the study during 2016 to 2019, these hospitals were frequented by 507 different patients who have occasionally accessed his services more than once over the years, resulting in 1,070 cases in total.

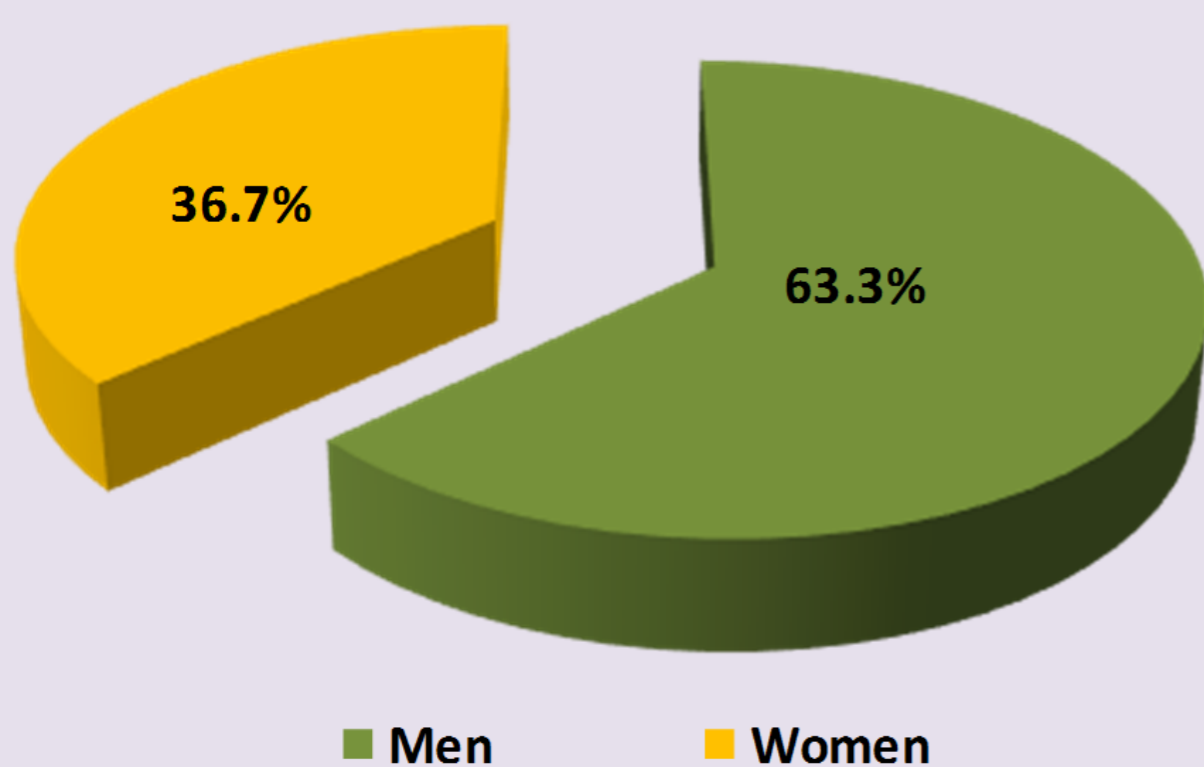


Fig. 1. Distribution by gender of patients

From the data presented in Figure 1, 321 (63.3%) of the patients included in the study are men and 186 (36.7%) of them are women.

Number	507	
Mean	54.59	
Standard Deviation	16.40	
Range	75.68	
Minimum	18.06	
Maximum	93.74	
Percentiles	25 th	41.42
	50 th (median)	56.89
	75 th	68.00

Tab. 1. Age of the Patients

From the study data presented in Table 1, the mean age of the patients in the study is 54.59 years.

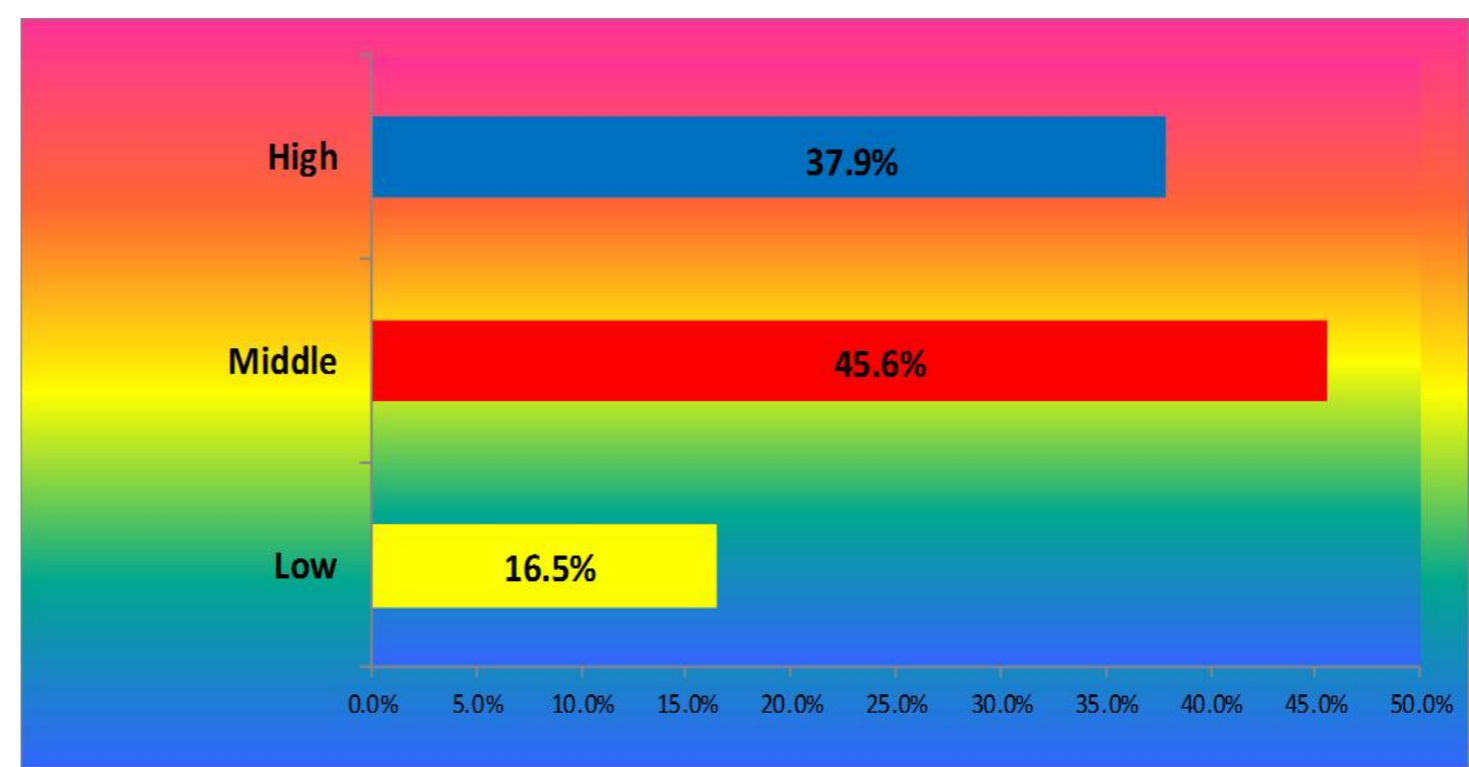


Fig. 2. Distribution of educational attainment of the patients

Regarding the data data presented in Figure 2 on educational attainment of the patients, it shows that 37.9 % have high education level, 45.6% middle and only 16.5% low education level.

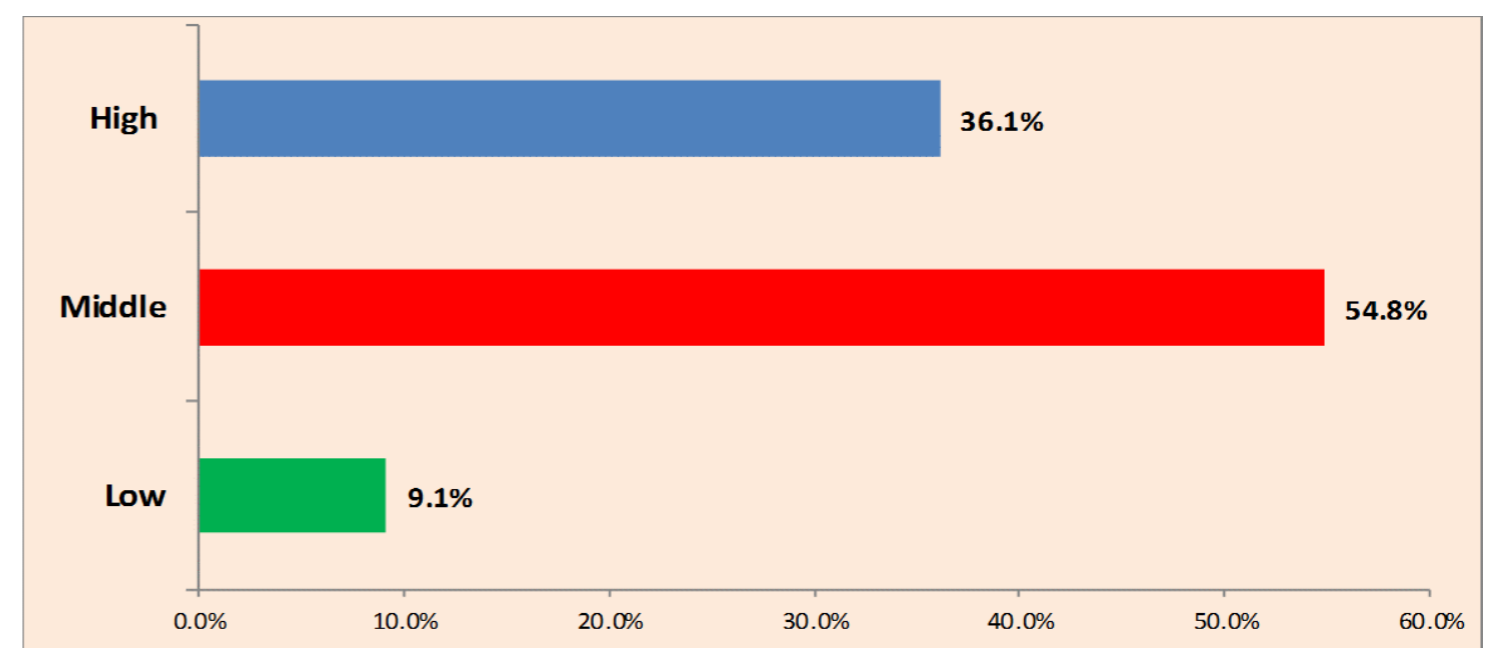


Fig. 3. Distribution of income level of the patients

Figure 3 shows that 36.1% of the patient in the study have a high income level, 54.8 have a middle and only 9.1% have a low income level.

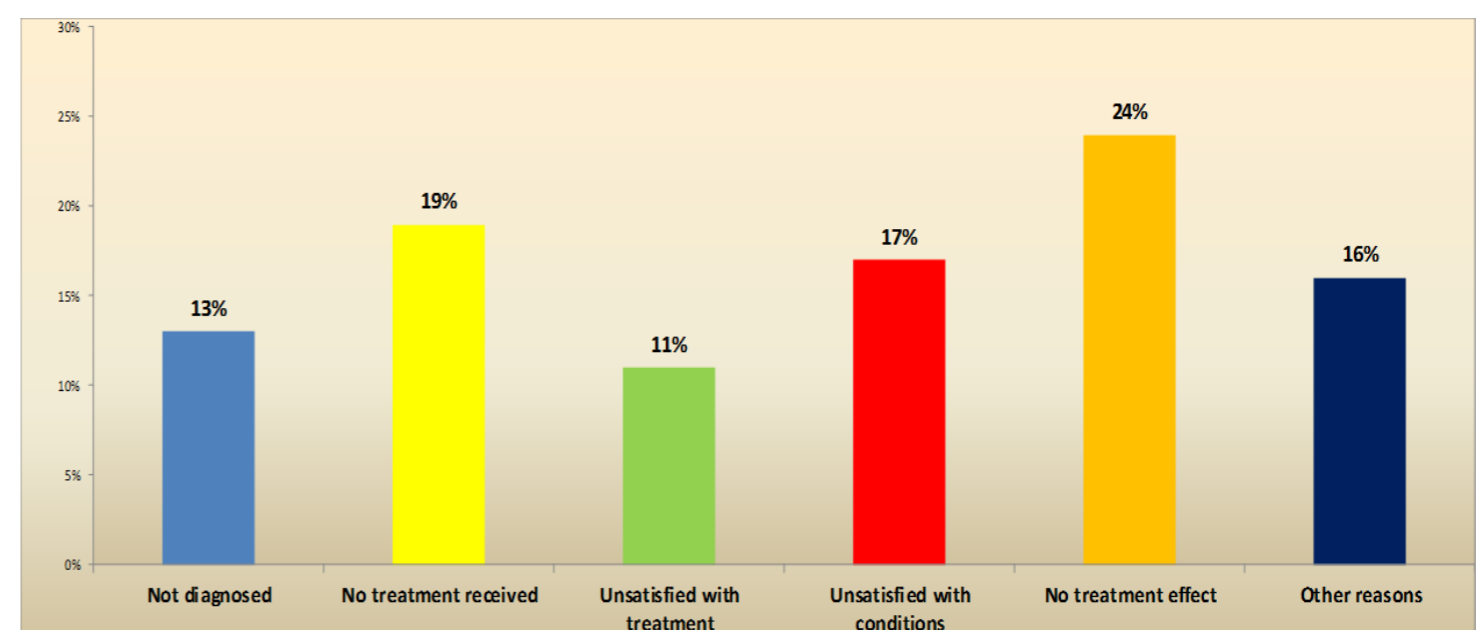


Fig. 4. Reasons for seeking care in Turkey

Regarding the data in figure 4 shows that 24% of the patients seek care in Turkey because the treatment performed in Albania had no effect, 19% of patients had not received treatment in Albania, 17% of patients are unsatisfied with health care conditions, 13% are not diagnosed, 11% are unsatisfied with treatment, and 16% had other reasons.

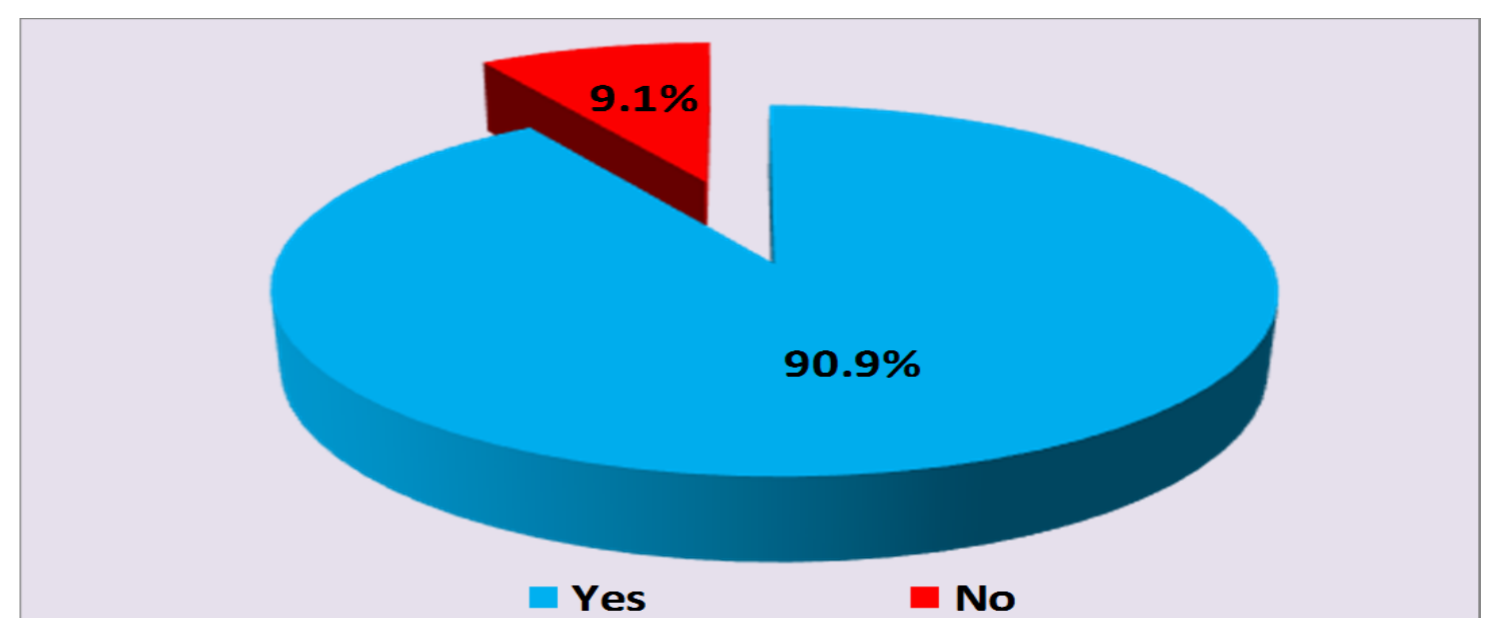


Fig. 5. Recommended for seeking care in Turkey

As the data shows in study most of the patients, 90.9% of them are recommended for seeking care in Turkey.

HEALTH EXPENDITURE

The total budget spent over 4 years by 507 patients is 2,586,790 Euro.

DISCUSSION

Many Albanian patients are constantly obliged to go to this hospital network in Istanbul (Turkey) due to lack of specific medical services or technology, for more advanced diagnoses in Albania.

The amount spent is still higher as the current figures on health expenditure do not include travel costs, hotel accommodation, and the costs of accompanying the patients (at least one family member).

Also, included in this study are immigrant patients who have been treated in the health system of European Union countries, as well as other countries.

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