

Factors Contributing to Patient Dumping in Taiwan

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: Little research has been carried out to explore the issues surrounding patient dumping outside of the US. This study, therefore, uses a national research survey to examine the factors contributing to patient dumping within Taiwan. **METHODS:** A self-administered postal survey was undertaken to assess the prevalence of patient dumping in Taiwan, with the study subjects being superintendents of general hospitals. Data from the Bureau of Medical Affairs at the Department of Health in Taiwan were used in conjunction with the Taiwan National Health Insurance Research Database (NHIRD) to obtain estimates of factors potentially contributing to patient dumping. A multiple logistic regression analysis was performed to determine the relationships between the perceived extent of patient dumping occurring within the respondents' healthcare networks, as well as other factors, including the total number of hospitals, total number of hospital beds, the percentages of beds in public, for-profit and teaching hospitals (vis-à-vis all hospital beds), discharges, discharges covered under the case payment system, transferred inpatients, and the perceived degree of competition within each healthcare market. **RESULTS:** A total of 485 survey questionnaires were distributed, of which 251 were returned, giving a response rate of 51.75%. The responses from 29.9% of the sample group indicated that the perceived extent of patient dumping occurring in their service area was 'serious' or 'very serious'. The regression analysis showed that after controlling for other factors, the superintendents' perceived extent of the patient dumping occurring within their healthcare networks was positively related to the total number of patients covered under the case payment system, the total number of discharged patients, the extent of healthcare market competition and the number of respondent's hospital beds. **CONCLUSIONS:** We conclude from our findings that, under the National Health Insurance system, patient dumping is a widespread problem within Taiwan's healthcare industry.