

The effect of Taiwan's National Health Insurance on infants' preventive care use and inpatient care use

林恆慶

Liu TC;Chen CH;Lin HC;Tian WH

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To test whether utilization of infant preventive care services has reduced utilization of inpatient care and to determine whether implementation of Taiwan's National Health Insurance (NHI) has brought about any differences in the utilization of infant health care services. **DATA SOURCES:** Data were taken from the 1989 and 1996 National Maternal and Infant Health Surveys (NMIHSs). In total, 1662 and 3623 effective samples were used in the study from the 2 years. **STUDY DESIGN:** We constructed a simultaneous recursive model to obtain efficient estimates by treating preventive care (neonatal care and well-baby care) and inpatient care (hospitalization admissions) as dependent variables. **PRINCIPAL FINDINGS:** Utilization of neonatal care had strongly negative significant coefficients for the likelihood of being admitted to the hospital. The impact of the NHI was found to be significant. **CONCLUSIONS:** The hypothesis that the NHI interferes with the effectiveness of preventive care at reducing inpatient care use was not reinforced. Since support from the NHI depends on a balance of push and pull between access to inpatient care and the benefits of preventive care, it can further improve infant health by promoting the benefits of preventive care while making both types of care more accessible.