

Title: Gender differences in health expenditure of rural cancer patients: evidence from a public tertiary care facility in India.

Abstract: This paper investigates if there are gender differences in health expenditures and treatment seeking behavior among cancer patients and finds that the results are consistent with gender discrimination. Using a survey on rural patients suffering from cancer in a public tertiary health center in an Indian state Odisha, the study finds that expenditures on female patients are significantly lesser than those on males. Even after controlling for other covariates, in particular the type of cancer, demographic and socio-economic variables, 73% of the difference persists. Our paper attributes it to gender discrimination. Moreover, the biggest reason for the difference in expenditure is attributed to differences in treatment seeking and medical expenditures before coming to the tertiary center. These results are corroborated using a nationally representative survey on health for the whole country.

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