

Explaining health care expenditure variation: Large-sample evidence using linked survey and health administrative data

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Key Words:

income, health expenditure, socio-demographic differences, larger study

Research aim:

In this paper, we link a cross-sectional survey of 267 188 Australians age 45 and over to a panel dataset of annual healthcare costs calculated from several years of hospital, medical and pharmaceutical records. We use this data to distinguish between cost variations due to health shocks and those that are intrinsic (fixed) to an individual over three years.

Results/Conclusion:

We find that high fixed expenditures are positively associated with age, especially older males, poor health, obesity, smoking, cancer, stroke and heart conditions. Being foreign born, speaking a foreign language at home and low income are more strongly associated with higher time-varying expenditures, suggesting greater exposure to adverse health shocks.

Implications:

Cultural Group(s):

Foreign born, speak a foreign language at home (compared to other groups)

Location of study:

Age group:

45+

Number included in study:

267,188

Type of participants:

Australians age 45 and over

Research approach:

Quantitative

Type of data:

Secondary

Secondary data sources used:

Hospital, medical, pharmaceutical records

Specific scales or analytical techniques used:

Implications/ Recommendations:

Notes: