The Impact of Payer Status on Hospital Admissions: Evidence from an Academic Medical Center

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Abstract

Background: Inequity exists in accessing to care for patients with different payer statuses. However, there are few studies on the difference of hospital admissions. This study aims to examine how the payer status affects patients hospitalization from the perspective of a safety-net hospital.

Methods: We extracted all patients with visiting record in this medical center between 5/1/2009-4/30/2014, and then linked the outpatient and inpatient records three year before target admission time to patients. We conduct a retrospective observational study using a conditional logistic regression methodology. To control the illness of patients with different diseases in training the model, we construct a three-dimension variable with data stratification technology. The model is validated on a dataset distinct from the one used for training.

Results: Payer status is strongly associated with a patient's admission. Patients covered by private insurance or uninsured are less likely to be admitted than those totally or partially insured by government. For uninsured patients, inequity in access to hospitalization is observed. Among all non-clinical influential factors considered in our study, payer status is a significant important factor.

Conclusion: Attention is needed on improving the access to care for vulnerable (low-income) patients, for example, by actively advertising free care programs, reaching out to community organizations with better access to these individuals, or offering assurances that access to care is not linked to immigration procedures. Also, in order to reduce preventable admissions, basic preventive care services should be enhanced.

Full Text

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Figures

Figure 1

ROC curve to reveal the model's prediction performance

Supplementary Files

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- [Additionalfile1Appendix.pdf](#)