

ABSTRACT

A Community Demand Analysis of Health Services in Suburban Jamaica: Focus on Hermitage-August Town

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A demand analysis of health services for the Hermitage-August Town community was done in the month of November 1986. This cross-sectional study focussed on the economic variables involved in service utilisation principally household income and health insurance.

The Community Health Centre at the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, University of the West Indies accounted for 51.2% of overall demand with university-related services accounting for over 75%. The public-to-private demand ratio was 6:1, with health insurance featuring as a major enabling factor towards the use of private services.

There is a strikingly higher rise in the cumulative demand in the very low income group, (household income per capita less than J\$166.54) compared to the 'higher' income group. This means that the income elasticity of demand for all types of health services decreases as household income rises.

The need for development of health services research especially in relation to the economic aspects of health care in Jamaica and for outreach activities aimed at very low income groups is stressed.