

ABSTRACT

**Comparative Costing of Health Services used
by the Elderly and other Adults at the
University Hospital of the West Indies
in 1988**

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A shift in focus of health towards "Health for all by the year 2000" made it imperative that health services are cost-effective and cost-efficient. This study compared the elderly with other adults using the University Hospital of the West Indies in 1988. This provided data on the distribution of health service and its cost between the groups.

A sample of 224 clients were selected and matched for age groups and sex. Many gave addresses far from the hospital and lack of confidence in local facilities may be contributing to this pattern. Among the sample, frequency of marriage increased with age, but being married did not seem to reduce length of stay in hospital as expected.

The mean cost for treating the elderly was generally higher than for other adults. In health services for the elderly the mean cost was \$696.43 while for other adults \$571.42. The mean cost of investigations for the elderly was \$73.00 almost double that of other adults \$42.00. With medication, young adults had a higher mean cost \$64.00 over \$22.00 for the elderly.

This was significantly reduced when three atypical controls were removed and became \$19.00 for cases and \$17.00 for controls. Many young adults had conditions related to infections and were treated with expensive antibiotics, while the elderly may have had medication and only needed revision of dosage reducing the cost of their prescriptions.