



Impact des soins intégrés sur les dépenses de santé

Do we care about high cost patients ? Estimating the savings on health spending by integrated care. *The European Journal of Health Economics*

Abstract

A [recent integrated health care initiative in Belgium](#) supports 12 regional pilot projects scattered across the country and representing 21% of the population. As in shared savings programs, part of the estimated savings in health spending are paid out to the projects to reinvest in new actions. Short-term savings are expected in particular from cost reductions among high-cost patients.

We estimate the effect of the projects on spending using a difference-in-difference model. The sensitivity of the results to the right-skewness of spending is commonly addressed by removing or top-coding high-cost cases. However, this leads to an underestimation of realized savings at the top end of the distribution, therefore lowering incentives for cost reduction.

We show that this trade-off can be weakened by an alternative approach in which cost categories that fall out of the scope of the projects' interventions are excluded from the dependent variable. We find that this approach leads to improvements in precision and model fit that are of the same magnitude as excluding high-cost cases altogether. At the same time, it sharpens the incentives for cost reduction because the model better reflects the costs that projects can affect.

P.-S.

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