

Oral Session 14

Research Study

Title: "Assessment of Urologic Care Accessibility in Florida by Insurance Type"

Nathan VanderVeer-Harris; Maria Kolesova; Hugo Ernesto Dueñas, M.A.; Nikhil Kulkarni; Juan Carlos Alvarez Jr.

Category: Health Services Research; Health Disparities

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Introduction and Objective. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men in the United States with an average age of 66 years at diagnosis. When a patient with a positive prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening test seeks urological care, they are subjected to multifactorial influences on their capacity including health insurance status. As of 2021, over 2 million Floridians enrolled in Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans, under the assumption of increased access and quality, assessment of their ability to access care versus those with private plans is warranted. This study aims to investigate the association between health care insurance status and accessibility of urologic prostate care in Florida.

Methods. Employing a cross-sectional design, Healthgrades.com was used to search within 25 miles of the five most populous zip codes in Florida for "top rated urologist." The independent variable was insurance type, which included four groups: Cigna (commercial), Humana Gold Plus HMO, Florida Blue Select PPO, and traditional Medicare. Urologists' practices were called utilizing a fabricated script to assess the primary outcome of time to next appointment due to elevated PSA screening for their father. Summary statistics, ANOVA, and chi-squared analysis were performed to compare groups.

Results. Of 108 urologists sampled, 50 were successfully queried for all four insurance groups. The average number of days until the next available appointment was 23.2 for Cigna (SD=18.0), 27.0 for Humana Gold (SD=22.0), 23.8 for Florida Blue (SD=19.5) and 27.0 for Medicare (SD=22.9). There was no significant difference between the groups ($p=0.704$). There was no statically significant association between the type of insurance and whether it was accepted by a given urologist ($p=0.564$).

Conclusions-Implications. This study utilized a "secret-shopper" method to query the top-rated urologists practicing in Florida, demonstrating that there was no significant difference between type of insurance and time to next available appointment although urologists were less likely to accept Humana Gold Plus. Aging patients in Florida may feel more comfortable knowing that enrolling in government insurance will afford them comparable access to routine urologic care as individuals with other insurance. Future work should aim to validate this data in other populations.