OBJECTIVES: During 2013, Argentina (AR) suffered severe currency depreciation (above 52%) and an annual inflation rate of 28%. Increases in imported medical devices prices (MDs) plus a weakened AR peso might have impacted their access. The objective of this research was to evaluate the impact of the 2013 Argentinean economic crisis in the healthcare (HC) sector and the access of imported medical devices. METHODS: Specific analysis to evaluate MDs’ cost in HC system (private payers and providers) was performed. Primary cost information was obtained and analyzed from the HC System and ADECRA (Argentinean Healthcare Private Providers Association). The information includes inflation-adjusted costs incurred by the provision of HC services through a sample of national and non-local medical supplies and devices. RESULTS: From 2009-2014, MDs’ cost increased to 113.6% in local currency and 25.3% in USD. CONCLUSIONS: By 2013, the government allowed private providers to increase their fees by 20%. As a consequence, labor costs increased by 25.7%, affecting private payers and providers. For private healthcare providers, the cost to delivery care rose to 26.9%, whereas medical supplies and devices increased was 33.4%. Manufacturers raised their prices in 22%, while their sales rose in 28% in current currency, but only 5% in USD. CONCLUSIONS: 2013 AR crisis affected the HC system. HC providers were mainly harmed as the result of price increases for MDs and supplies above the increase of its charges (services fees paid by the private system) and even below the increase in HC charges (currencies), which rose up to 28% to 33% (Table 2). This represents a burden for patients, who had to absorb the price increase for the high cost of imported MDs in order to provide access to their population.

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