

UTILIZATION OF PRIVATE HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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DOI: 10.5937/BatutPHCO24171M

Background: Health care represents the basic segment of every developed social community, with the aim of preserving and improving the health of the population. Utilization of healthcare encompasses various aspects, including prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. Factors influencing healthcare utilization are numerous and complex, including the availability and accessibility to the healthcare services, an individual's economic status, educational attainment, demographic characteristics, and cultural and social norms.

Methods: The goal was to determine, through descriptive statistics, the characteristics of attitudes and factors that influence the utilization of Private Healthcare Services in Serbia of the population aged 15 years and over. We used data from the 2019 National Health Survey (NHS). The final sample thus included 13,178 participants.

Results: According to the data obtained in this study, Private Healthcare Services was used more often by women 57.2%. Among the age groups, respondents aged 35 to 54 (37.6%) and older than 55 to 74 (37.6%) most often used Private Healthcare Services, as well as those with secondary education (46.5%) and good health (55.3%). Of the four observed regions, 32.5% are most often in Belgrade.

Conclusion: Unmet health needs of the population present a significant challenge for the health care system. Understanding the factors associated with the utilization of private outpatient services could help in the development of effective initiatives designed to enhance outpatient care access among the population of Serbia and balance the burden of outpatient care provision on the public and private sector.

Keywords: Utilization, Private Healthcare Services, National health survey