Abstract

Objective, Compare patterns of catastrophic health expenditures in 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Material and Methods: Prevalence of catastrophic expenses was estimated uniformly at the household level using household surveys. Two types of prevalence indicators were used based on out-of-pocket health expense, a) relative to an international poverty line, and b) relative to the household’s ability to pay net of their food basket. Ratios of catastrophic expenditures were estimated across subgroups defined by economic and social variables. Results, The percent of households with catastrophic health expenditures ranged from 1 to 25% in the twelve countries. In general, rural residence, lowest quintile of income, presence of older adults, and lack of health insurance in the household are associated with higher propensity of catastrophic health expenditures. However, there is vast heterogeneity by country. Conclusions, Cross national studies may serve to examine how health systems contribute to the social protection of Latin American households.

Keywords

Health expenditures, social policy, health, Latin America.