



Announcement

Statistics Netherlands

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Belgium spends less on health care than the Netherlands

The Netherlands spends more per person on health care than Belgium but less than France and Germany, according to Statistics Netherlands' "International Comparison of Health Care Data" published today (in English). This book, published by Kluwer Academic Publishers, contains the results of a study by Statistics Netherlands which compared health care costs in the Netherlands with those in Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and Switzerland. Overall, Belgium spent the least on health care, Switzerland the most. The same pattern applies to intramural health care, while for extramural health care Switzerland also has the highest expenditure, but the Netherlands the lowest. The Danes spend least on medicine and medical aids, the French most.

Spending on medicine lowest in Denmark

In Denmark, expenditure on pharmaceuticals and therapeutic appliances is relatively low, 7% less than in the Netherlands. The French spend 60% more than the Dutch.

In the Netherlands 15% of the total spending on health care is spent on pharmaceuticals and therapeutic appliances, in Belgium more than 20 percent.

Relatively much spent on in-patient care

The share of expenditure on in-patient care is very large in the six countries included in the study. In percentages of the total health care costs, the share for in-patient care ranges from 46% in Germany to 66% in Denmark. In the Netherlands it is 59%. The relatively low share in Germany is compensated by a relatively large share of spending on non-institutional health care: 35% compared with 20% in the Netherlands.

Statistics Netherlands
Press Office

P.O. Box 4000
2270 JM Voorburg
The Netherlands
tel. +31 70 337 58 16
fax +31 70 337 59 71
e-mail:
persdienst@cbs.nl

Statistics Netherlands
is a department of
the Ministry of
Economic Affairs

Prevention in money terms not important

Measured in terms of money, all six countries spend relatively little on preventive health care. In five of the six countries about 2% of the total budget is used for prevention programmes; in Denmark 4%.

Explanatory note

“International Comparison of Health Care Data” is the title of a new book published by Kluwer Academic Publishers. For the publication the authors, C.J.P.M. van Mosseveld and P. van Son, adapted two research reports written for the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports. In 1994 this Ministry requested Statistics Netherlands to examine the comparability of data on selected parameters in health care between the Netherlands and some other countries in Europe, and to improve this comparability where possible.

Together with the Netherlands the following countries were involved: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France and Switzerland.

The first stage of the project (1994-1995) focused on in-patient care, the second (1996-1997) on out-patient care, prevention, medical goods and other services.

The publication contains the results of both stages and the description of the developed research methods. Health care related activities were the starting point for the description of national health care systems and their boundaries. Bilateral comparable care packages were compiled i.e. comparisons between the Netherlands and each of the other countries involved. A subsequent rearrangement produced a multilateral comparable package of care, the so-called “common comparable package” (CCP), an instrument for further international comparison.

This new survey constituted a first attempt to compare parts of health care systems in the various countries by using packages of care based on the activities performed by the care providers. The approach used by Statistics Netherlands measured smaller differences (for 1994 and 1995) between the countries than studies by the OECD.

In this case Statistics Netherlands’ method was applied to financial data in health care, but it can equally be applied to other data categories and other economic fields.

Notes for the editor

For further information, please contact Cor van Mosseveld, tel. +31 70 337 52 92; e-mail: cmsd@cbs.nl. The publication (302 pages, ISBN 0-7923-5715-9, price NLG 250) can be ordered from: Kluwer Academic Publishers, attn. Ordering office; fax +31 78 639 23 77.

Additional information can be obtained at the press office Statistics Netherlands, tel. (070) 337 58 16.