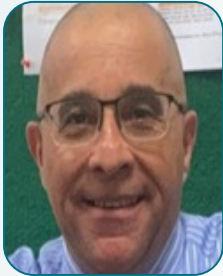


## Global Congress on Integrated Healthcare

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### Healthcare Utilization with Drug Acquisition and Expenses at the National Health Insurance Fund in Sudan

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#### Abstract

**Background** Understanding the pattern of care use among users of the National Health Insurance Fund in Sudan can provide valuable information for reform interventions.

**Objective:** This study investigates the pattern of healthcare utilization and its association with drug acquisition patterns and expenses in the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) of Al Jazira State in Sudan.

**Method:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted at NHIF primary healthcare centers of Al Jazirah state in Sudan.

**Results:** A total of 768 beneficiaries were interviewed, of which 63.2% reported using out-of-network physician care, while 36.8% receive care from the NHIF physician network only. More than half (60.8%) of NHIF-interviewed clients reported a heavy burden of medication costs. The pattern of physician utilization was significantly associated with the number and source of regular drugs, the burden of out-of-pocket payment, and monthly out-of-pocket expenditures on medications, ( $p < 0.001$ ). The regression analysis revealed that gender, marital status, number of chronic diseases, and number of regular drugs were the significant predictors of the pattern of physician care utilization; these factors explained nearly 36% of the variance in respondents' pattern of physician care utilization.

**Conclusion:** An impressive proportion of out-of-network care was found in Al Jazirah State in Sudan. The NHIF stakeholders should consider medication subsidy as a potential strategy for decreasing patient leakage to out-of-network services.

**Keywords:** out-of-network utilization; health insurance; drug acquisition; medication costs; National Health Insurance Fund; Sudan; catastrophic health expenditure.

#### Biography

Dr. Ashraf Zaghloul, a Professor of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Mutah University, Mutah, Jordan. I received my bachelor degree in Medicine and Surgery (1986) and master's degree in Public Health (1991) and subsequently received my Doctorate in Public Health (major Health Planning and Administration) from Alexandria University, Egypt. During the period 2003-2019, I served as the Head of Department of Health Information Management, College of Health Sciences, King Faisal University, Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Head of Department of Health Services Administration, University of Sharjah, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (seconded from the High Institute of Public Health, University of Alexandria, Egypt). I am CPHQ certified by the National Association for Healthcare Quality, USA, and a member of the International Epidemiological Association (IEA).