

Utilization of Outpatient Rehabilitation-Related Therapies by Patients with Catastrophic Illness and Disability under the National Health Insurance Program in Taiwan

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Purpose: To examine the utilization and growth of rehabilitation-related therapies for catastrophic ill, disabled, and other types of patients in regard to level of health services, and the referring departments (rehabilitation and others). **Methods:** This study was based on the rehabilitation-related therapies outpatient data from January to April in 1997 and 1998 provided by the Bureau of National Health Insurance in Taiwan. Four therapies (general, physical, occupational and speech therapies) were processed and analyzed by three patient categories, two institutional levels, and two referral sources (rehabilitation or other departments) using SAS software. **Results:** Utilization frequency of patients in 1997 and 1998 (January to April) with catastrophic illness was 1.8% and 2.2% respectively, 1.0% and 1.7% for disabled patients. Seventy percent utilization in catastrophic illness and 90% in other types of patients were physical therapy and mainly at local hospitals and clinics, while 53%-68% utilization by disabled patients in physical therapy was for regional hospitals and medical centers. Disabled patients had low utilization of rehabilitation-related therapies at local hospitals and clinics and even lower rate of services at rehabilitation doctor clinics. **Conclusions:** Poor availability of rehabilitation-related therapies for disabled patients was noted. We suggested more rational use of rehabilitation-related therapies and systemic referral for home and community care for those with catastrophic illness or disability. (FJPT 2002;27(1):1-9)

Key Words: Rehabilitation-related therapy, Catastrophic illness, Disabled, Out-patient services