Geographic Variance of Cost Associated With Hysterectomy

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1. Discuss the National Inpatient Survey (NIS) database and health care costs used for the data in this analysis. What are the database’s strengths and weaknesses?

2. What is the breakdown of type of hysterectomy in your practice? How many are performed abdominally, vaginally, laparoscopically, and robotically? In the interest of cost savings, how would you propose to decrease costs by increasing the number of women who undergo vaginal hysterectomy? What barriers are there to performing vaginal hysterectomy in your practice?

3. How many women are admitted for hysterectomy in your practice and what proportion are outpatient cases? How might inclusion of all hysterectomies influence the conclusions of this article?

4. The authors report medians and interquartile ranges of hysterectomy costs. Discuss why the results were compared using medians rather than means.

5. From the perspective of an insurer in the Pacific region, what actions might you propose to bring costs into alignment with those in the Northeast region?

6. The various odds ratios reported in Table 5 range widely. The authors state that an odds ratio may be statistically but not clinically significant. What is a significant odds ratio? Are there standard cutoffs in odds ratios for observational studies that are below or above where the strength of the association should be questioned?

7. Given the increasing emphasis on delivery of value-based care, what are the implications of the authors’ conclusions?

8. Discuss the conclusions of the study. Are you in a high-cost or low-cost geographic area for hysterectomies? What do you think drives cost in your area?