

**PATIENT PAYMENTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**  
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## **Existence of formal and informal patient payments in Europe**

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### **Abstract:**

Informal patient payments have been reported in many European countries, most often in Eastern Europe and less frequently in Western Europe. At the same time, formal patient charges for health care services are implemented in about 60 percent of the European countries but irrespective of the geographical location. A question arises on why some countries rely on formal patient charges and others not, and why informal patient payments exist in some countries and not in others. This question is analysed using country-level data for 36 European countries.

In total, five groups of countries in Europe are identified based on the existence of formal and informal patient payments reported in research documents. In addition to this, measurable indicators related to the theoretical explanations of the existence of formal and informal patient payments are selected based on a review of secondary data. The differences in the level of indicators between the groups of countries are tested statistically.

The results indicate that countries, which are characterised by both formal and widespread informal patient payments, score worst in economic, politic and cultural indicators. Insufficient financial resources and poor quality of country governance may predispose the existence of informal patient payments. This indicates possible strategies for dealing with this type of payments, namely securing more resource for health care provision and improving the governance of the health care sector. Formal patient payments are present irrespective of economic situation, country governance or cultural values, which indicate their wider acceptance by policy-makers in Europe.

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