

**SESSION 2: CORRUPTION AND INFORMAL PATIENT PAYMENTS****PRESENTATION KEYNOTE SPEAKER:****“INFORMAL PAYMENTS IN HEALTH CARE. POLISH PERSPECTIVE AND EXPERIENCES”**

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**ABSTRACT:**

Informal patient payments are a common phenomenon for the former-socialist countries though they are reported in other European countries, as well. There are various definitions of informal patient payments and various theories that explain this phenomenon (including the fee-for-service theory, the donation hypothesis, the governance hypothesis, and the ethics hypothesis). The definitions of informal patient payments and the theories applied for their explanation determine the measures, which are taken in order to eradicate informal patient payments.

The topic of informal patient payments in Poland, discussed within the corruption debate, had been neglected for a long time. However, due to the pressure from international organizations, since the close of the 90s, the presence of corruption generally and informal patient payments in particular have been acknowledged. This has resulted in various studies on informal patient payments as well as in measures undertaken by governmental and nongovernmental organizations in order to eliminate these forms of payment.

This paper presents a review of the empirical studies on informal patient payments, which have been carried out in Poland over the past two decades. The types, scope, and levels of informal payments, as well as the opinions on informal payments, are analyzed. Moreover, time series data allow us to study the dynamics of informal patient payments and to draw some conclusions on the effectiveness of the measures, which have been implemented by the Polish government to deal with them.

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