

U.S. still spends the most on healthcare

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Johns Hopkins University researchers say the United States continues to spend significantly more on health care than any other nation.

In 2002, Americans spent \$5,267 per capita on healthcare -- 53 percent per capita more than the next highest country, Switzerland, and 140 percent above the median industrialized country, according to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Researchers analyzed whether two possible reasons -- supply constraints and malpractice litigation -- might explain the higher healthcare costs. They found neither factor accounted for a large portion of the U.S. spending differential.

"It is commonly believed that waiting lists in other countries and malpractice litigation in the United States are major reasons why the United States spends so much more on healthcare than other countries, said Gerald Anderson, lead author of the study. "We found they only explain a small part of the difference.

"Paying more (for healthcare goods and services) is okay if our outcomes were better than other countries. But we are paying more for comparable outcomes," said Anderson.

The study appears in the July-August issue of the journal *Health Affairs*.

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