

## The Cost of Healthcare among Malaysian Community-Dwelling Elderly with Dementia

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**Abstract :** An ageing population has huge implications for virtually every aspect of Malaysian societies. The elderly consume a greater volume of healthcare facilities not because they are older, but because of they are sick. The chronic comorbidities and deterioration of cognitive ability would lead the elderly's health to become worst. This study aims to provide a comprehensive estimate of the direct and indirect costs of health care used in a nationally representative sample of community-dwelling elderly with dementia and as well as the determinants of healthcare cost. A survey using multi-stage random sampling techniques recruited a final sample of 2274 elderly people (60 years and above) in the state of Johor, Perak, Selangor and Kelantan. Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE) score was used to measure the cognitive capability among the elderly. Only the elderly with a score less than 19 marks were selected for further analysis and were classified as dementia. By using a two-part model findings also indicate household income and education level are variables that strongly significantly influence the healthcare cost among elderly with dementia. A number of visits and admission are also significantly affect healthcare expenditure. The comorbidity that highly influences healthcare cost is cancer and seeking the treatment in private facilities is also significantly affected the healthcare cost among the demented elderly. The level of dementia severity is not significant in determining the cost. This study is expected to attract the government's attention and act as a wake-up call for them to be more concerned about the elderly who are at high risk of having chronic comorbidities and cognitive problems by providing more appropriate health and social care facilities. The comorbidities are one of the factor that could cause dementia among elderly. It is hoped that this study will promote the issues of dementia as a priority in public health and social care in Malaysia.

**Keywords :** ageing population, dementia, elderly, healthcare cost, healthcare utilization

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