

Appendicectomies in Albanians in Greece: outcomes in a highly mobile immigrant patient population

ABSTRACT

Albanian immigrants in Greece are at high risk for negative appendicectomies. Socioeconomic, cultural and language parameters underlying health care inequalities in highly mobile immigrant populations need better study.

INTRODUCTION

Background Immigrant populations may present with peculiarities and/or inequalities in access to and delivery of health care worldwide. Most studies of health care among immigrants have been performed in minorities already residing in their new country. Other immigrant populations may be more mobile, crossing the borders repeatedly without necessarily establishing a new permanent residence. Such populations are very difficult to study epidemiologically and their health care profile remains elusive. Albanian immigrants in Greece comprise one such highly mobile, elusive population. In this study, we evaluated comparatively the outcomes of Albanian immigrants and matched Greek subjects in terms of suspected acute appendicitis resulting in appendicectomy. Acute appendicitis is the most common acute serious surgical condition and preoperative diagnosis is often difficult. Our aim was to evaluate whether Albanian immigrants were more likely to be misdiagnosed with resulting excess in negative appendicectomies (laparotomies that show no appendicitis) and/or perforation.

CONCLUSION

We have targeted a highly mobile immigrant population that poses major challenges in its epidemiologic evaluation. Our findings show a clear inequality in the diagnosis and management of the most common serious acute surgical abdominal condition. Other aspects of health care need to be studied in this population. Mobile immigrants without permanent residence may increasingly appear in several Western societies. Legal limitations and restrictions to immigration may foster transient, illegal immigration for many disadvantaged people seeking a better outlook. The spectrum and reasons for health care inequalities such as those suggested by the difference in negative appendicectomy rates are important to evaluate in these populations and efforts should be made to dissolve the existing inequalities. Contributions: The original idea for the study was proposed by Dr. Ioannidis and the protocol was developed by Drs. Ioannidis and Tatsioni. The data were collected and organized by Drs. Tatsioni, Charchanti, and Kitsiou. Dr. Ioannidis is responsible for the statistical analysis. The manuscript was first written by Dr. Ioannidis and Dr. Tatsioni and edited/commented critically by the other authors. Competing interests none declared Are there any non-financial competing interests you would like to declare in relation to this paper? NO