

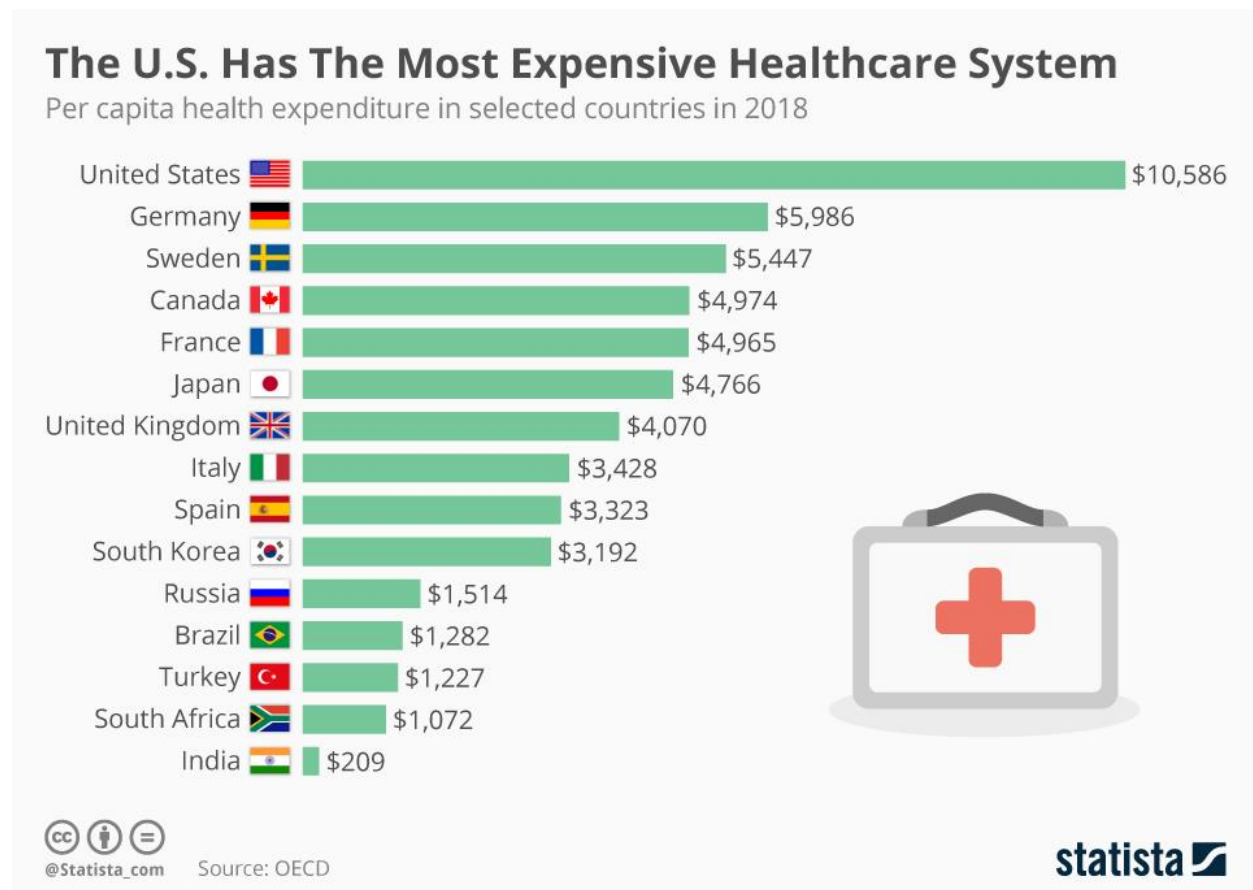
Final Project Topic Research#3

Cost & Quality of Healthcare system in the United States

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In 2019, Senator Bernie Sanders criticized the American healthcare system. He mentioned: "the incredible corruption and greed" of the pharmaceutical industry. The graph below shows how much more the United States spends on healthcare compared to other countries. Still, according to [US News](#), the United States is not even included in the top 10 healthcare systems in the world and is way behind the countries that spend less on healthcare. The problem here is that why cannot have the best healthcare system in the world when we spend the most money compared to other countries. Sweden was ranked #1 by US News, and they spend almost half as much money as we do.



Statista. (2019b, August 8). *The U.S. Has the Most Expensive Healthcare System in the World*

[Graph]. Statista Infographics. <https://www.statista.com/chart/8658/health-spending-per-capita/>

Now we will dig deeper into the topic and analyze two articles that further explain the reasoning behind this problem in the healthcare system.

The New York Times Article, “Why Is U.S. Health Care So Expensive? Some of the Reasons You’ve Heard Turn Out to Be Myths” by Margot Sanger-Katz

Margot Sanger-Katz briefly explains the condition of the healthcare system in her article: “Why Is U.S. Health Care So Expensive?”. This article reveals: why our healthcare is expensive, the areas we spend the most money on, and breaks some myths. Margot currently writes articles for the New York Times and holds a master’s degree in Journalism from Columbia University. In this article, she compares the cost and quality of healthcare in the United States. According to Margot, the US healthcare system is not the best and the worst if we compare it with other countries. It is average considering the amount of money we spend. The reason why we think our healthcare is lagging is the relatively low life expectancy. However, we do not realize that it might not be just the fault of the healthcare system itself that has to lead to a shorter life span. Other than the healthcare system, another major cause of the shorter life span is our diet. According to CDC, “The US [obesity prevalence](#) was 42.4% in 2017 – 2018, and it increased by 11.9% since 1999-2000” (*Obesity Is a Common, Serious, and Costly Disease*, 2021). Therefore, we cannot just blame the healthcare system for not providing optimal results and thus a decreased life expectancy. But still, some flaws also exist in the healthcare system, and there are areas where we spend more than our peers. This article also provides research-based evidence using Dr. Ashish Jha, an Indian-American physician and the Dean of the Brown University School of Public Health. Research reveals that we spend comparatively more money on medical services, which includes the cost of hospitalization, doctors' visits, and prescription drugs.

Yale Insights Article, “Why Is Healthcare So Expensive?” by Professor Zack Cooper

This research article by Zack Cooper, the Assistant Professor of Health Policy at Yale School of Public Health, explains the different prices charged by the hospital for the same treatment. Professor Cooper’s research found out that insurance premiums have made healthcare cost less transparent in the United States. “Across the country, the price of a knee replacement can vary by up to a factor of 17—the most expensive hospital is 17 times as expensive as the least expensive hospital”. It is absurd for hospitals to have such a massive price difference. If we can provide our society with cheaper yet effective healthcare services, why do we need to spend 17 times more? One must question this problem and look for possible solutions to this problem. According to this research, this price difference is not because one hospital provides a better service or quality; instead, this is due to the lack of transparency in the healthcare system. Another question that one would ask is whether having more non-profit hospitals will solve the problem. But that approach seems not to solve this solution and instead further increases the problem because the price difference is not different for the nonprofit and for-profit hospitals. Some non-profit hospitals that are the only ones in that area and hold the monopoly tend to receive \$30 billion annually in subsidies in the form of tax exemption. Therefore, we must find a better solution to this problem. We do find a solution from Professor Cooper's research, which is a reasonable approach, encouraging media and government to increase transparency in the healthcare system.

References

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