

THE ARGENTINE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Healthcare in Argentina is often very good quality and is considered among the best in Latin America. However, the level of care often depends on the social protection system you are covered by.

The Argentine healthcare system is divided into three different sectors: *the public sector, the private sector and the social security sector*, which is operated by several health funds for employees.

The public sector



In general, the public sector is available to all. A system of public medical facilities is maintained by the government, with free care provided in accredited hospitals.

However, waiting times for care, treatment, or surgery are rather long and the quality of treatment can be very random. Currently, about half of the population uses this system.

Pictures: Hospital Córdoba

The private sector



The private sector consists of over 200 organizations and covers nearly two million Argentinians. It is operated through private insurers who generally provide good health care coverage. Private hospitals are often better equipped, and the level of care is often superior. You are also able to choose from a list of physicians.

Picture: Sanatorio Allende

The social security sector



The Social Security Sector is funded and managed by Obras Sociales (Insurance Plans), which are umbrella organisations for the Argentine workers' unions. There are over 300 Obras Sociales in Argentina, and each one is organised according to the occupation of the beneficiary. These organisations vary greatly in quality and effectiveness.

Picture: Hospital Ferreyra

The Health Care System

3 Sectors:

Sectors	Population
Private Sector	The wealthy (10% of the population)
Obras Sociales	Workers in unions
Public Sector	Everyone

Each Sector has a separate network of hospitals ranging from rundown public hospitals to high tech private hospitals

Finance:

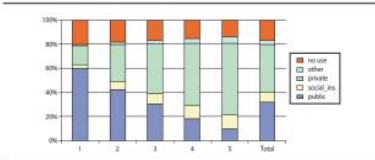
Taxes paid by everyone finances the public sector

Obras Sociales is funded by compulsory payroll contribution

The private sector is an out of pocket expenditure

Total health expenditure makes of 8% of the GDP^[2]

Figure 2. Utilization of Outpatient Health Facilities (by income quintiles)



Source: Simoes, Conditions of Life Survey, 1997

The Population

Major causes of mortality and morbidity^[1]:

Children:

- Congenital anomalies
- Premature birth

The Argentine infant mortality rate is 117‰, which is 55% higher than would be expected for its per capita income

Young Adults:

- Sexually Transmitted Infections

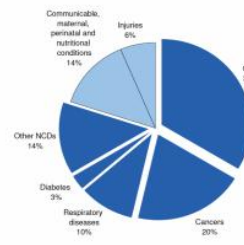
Condoms are available for free at almost every public and private venue

Adults:

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Pneumonia

In the past 20 years there has been a decline in exercise and fruit and vegetable consumption

Proportional mortality (% of total deaths, all ages)



NCDs are estimated to account for 80% of all deaths.

The Politics

Until 2001 the Argentine pesos was pegged to the U.S dollar. In 2001 the market crashed

Hundreds of thousands lost jobs and government had limited revenue to give to hospitals

Not until recently has Argentina been able to recover economically

The health care budgets are distributed equally to each county without consideration of needs because of a lack of specific guidelines in health care policy

CONCLUSION

While there are a lot of kinks in the system Argentina may become a model that the US can use to find solutions to its health care system problems as Argentina's economy recovers fully.



References

- [1] Argentina, H. M. (2009). National Health Survey.
 [2] Casagrandi, E., Carrin, O., Xu, K., & Aguilar-Rivera, A. M. (2010). Health Financing in Argentina: An Empirical Study of Health Care Expenditures and Utilization. Instituto Nacional de Salud Publica.

Health System

Sub - sector	Public	Social security	Private
Providers	Public hospitals + primary health care centers + GPs	Private health centers and public hospitals	Private health centers and public hospitals
Funders	Government + others funders	National Social Insurance + Province Social Insurance + other Law Social Insurances + I.N.S.S.J.P. + Work Risk Insurance	Private insurance
Regulators	Nation, provinces and municipalities	S.S.Salud + S. ART.	S.S.Salud
Population in charge	100%	Workers and their families	Clients
Others	COFESA – COFELESA	Supportive Redistribution Fund	