

CHAPTER: 07

IMPORTANCE OF CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS IN INDIA DESPITE HAVING UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

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INTRODUCTION

India has undertaken substantial initiatives in the healthcare sector, ranging from investments in the nation's health infrastructure to the formulation of policies and deliberate actions aimed at reducing the burden of diseases and addressing health disparities prevalent in the country. India is committed to achieving Universal Health Coverage, a pledge that aims to ensure access to healthcare facilities for those in need [1].

According to the WHO Report of 2019 on Global Health spending, there is reduction in OoPE on Health and an increase in public spending globally by 60 % from 2000-2017 yet, a significant portion of the global population lacks complete access to essential health services. In India, over 50% of the population is driven below the poverty line after undergoing a single hospitalization [2]. Thus, it is of utmost importance that individuals should be protected from the financial risks of using Health Services. The inception of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) aims at achieving this by the year 2030. The provision of Universal Health Coverage has been a landmark decision, but universal coverage does not necessarily guarantee accessibility. A disparity exists between the government's provision of health services and the practical accessibility of these services. In India, more than 600 million people either have limited or no access to healthcare. [3].

Medical crowdfunding has paved its way in this as a utilitarian platform to provide financial assistance to people in need of certain health services. Even after having universal coverage, there is an unmet health care need due to the financial load due to expensive costs of such services and certain experimental therapies which are not covered through insurance [4].

AIM

The aim of the study was to explore the various diseases for which people opt for crowd funding in India and to also analyse the various unmet needs which these crowdfunding platforms help in fulfilling.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What was the importance and reason for increase in the usage of Medical Crowdfunding despite having Universal Health coverage in India?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

1. To understand the increase in the usage in medical crowdfunding in India, even when India has made efforts to provide Universal Health coverage to its people.

Specific Objectives:

1. To assess the various diseases which are not covered by health insurance schemes by the government under Universal coverage scheme.
2. To assess the various health care services and unmet needs which are funded by medical crowdfunding.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted to examine the kinds of diseases people seek crowdfunding for & the amount they fundraise for. This helped in understanding what were the gaps and the diseases which were not covered by Universal Health Coverage. The research involved gathering information from 500 crowdfunding campaigns that were active on the platform over a three-month period from April to June. The analysis focused on aspects such as the specific illness afflicting the patient, the targeted fundraising goal, and the categories of expenses the campaign organizers sought to address through crowdfunding.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The research findings indicated that individuals resort to crowdfunding for critical illnesses, including cancer (20.2%), respiratory disorders (14%), COVID-19 (22%), and other transplant cases. Despite having some form of insurance or health coverage, a significant number

of people turn to alternative methods like crowdfunding during crises. This is attributed to the high costs of healthcare and gaps in service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The research demonstrated that despite government-initiated coverage and health insurance, individuals still require additional funds for costly treatments. Critical illnesses demand continuous care and treatment, necessitating a substantial financial corpus. Relying solely on salary and insurance for funding such treatments was considered unfeasible. Therefore, individuals embraced crowdfunding platforms as they provided a means to leverage social networks for fundraising without the obligation of repayment.

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