

Charge data influence patient surgical treatment decisions

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(HealthDay)—When presented with procedural charge data, people tend to choose the less expensive technique, according to a study published online Sept. 1 in the *Annals of Surgery*.

Katie W. Russell, M.D., from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, and colleagues randomly assigned nonobese children admitted to a children's hospital with uncomplicated appendicitis to view one of two videos discussing open and laparoscopic appendectomy. Except for presentation of surgical materials charges (49 viewers), the videos were identical. Influencers of surgery choice were assessed with a survey.

The researchers found that 63 percent of those exposed to charge data chose the open technique, compared to 35 percent of those not presented with charge data ($P = 0.005$). When charge estimates were given,

patients were 1.8 times more likely to choose the less expensive option. For those who had open technique, the median total hospital charges were \$1,554 less (P technique).

"A discussion of treatment options, which includes charge information, may represent an unrealized opportunity to affect change in [health care spending](#)," the authors write.

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