

# Surgical expenses cause financial catastrophe for millions each year

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According to an analysis of publicly available data from 186 countries, direct medical costs of surgery put an estimated 43.9 per cent of the world's population at risk of financial catastrophe and between 30.8 and 57.0 per cent at risk of falling below national and international poverty lines.

Direct medical expenditures on [surgery](#) will push approximately 30 million individuals into financial catastrophe and 11 million below their country's poverty line every year.

"Five billion people around the world lack access to safe, affordable, and timely surgery; fixing this problem should be a global health priority. However, this research highlights the fact that surgery is expensive and can drive patients into financial destitution," said Dr. Mark Shrime, lead author of the *British Journal of Surgery* study. "Scaling up surgical systems to meet the unmet need of the 5 billion should not happen at the cost of scaling up financial catastrophe."

**More information:** M. G. Shrime et al. A global country-level comparison of the financial burden of surgery, *British Journal of Surgery* (2016). [DOI: 10.1002/bjs.10249](https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.10249)

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