

# Study shows health care costs lower for patients treated by female surgeons

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Health care costs are lower for patients treated by female surgeons versus those treated by male surgeons, according to a study published online Nov. 29 in *JAMA Surgery*.

Christopher J. D. Wallis, M.D., Ph.D., from the University of Toronto, and colleagues examined associations between surgeon sex and costs of surgical care using data from 1.2 million [adult patients](#) undergoing one of 25 common elective or emergent surgical procedures from 2007 through 2019.

The researchers found that at the procedure-specific level and when adjusting for patient-, surgeon-, anesthesiologist-, and hospital-level covariates, one-year total [health care costs](#) were higher for patients treated by male surgeons (\$24,882) versus [female surgeons](#) (\$18,517; adjusted relative risk, 1.10). At 30 and 90 days, similar patterns persisted (adjusted absolute differences, \$3,115 and \$4,228, respectively).

"These data further underscore the importance of creating inclusive policies and environments supportive of women surgeons to improve recruitment and retention of a more diverse and representative workforce," the authors write. "Furthermore, they justify work to better understand the [personality traits](#) and practice behaviors that underpin these sex-based differences in outcomes. Together, these actions are vital for offering the highest value care for all patients undergoing surgery."

**More information:** Christopher J. D. Wallis et al, Surgeon Sex and Health Care Costs for Patients Undergoing Common Surgical Procedures, *JAMA Surgery* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamasurg.2023.6031](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamasurg.2023.6031)

Ursula Adams et al, Empowering Surgeons to Help Increase Value in Health Care Requires Better Data, *JAMA Surgery* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamasurg.2023.6032](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamasurg.2023.6032)

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