

Introduction

Disparity in healthcare access has been specifically identified as having a potential impact on patient outcomes in bariatric surgery. Socioeconomic factors may play a role in patients’ ability to access bariatric surgery, as well as complications and unplanned readmissions. This study seeks to identify differences in 30 day readmission rates following bariatric surgery, based on level of income and type of insurance.

Methods

This is a retrospective, multicenter analysis of bariatric operations performed at eight hospitals over approximately 40 months. Demographic, operative and readmission data were collected. Patient primary residence zip codes were recorded and US census data was used to find the median household income for each zip code, as a surrogate for patient income level. Patients were stratified into quintiles based on level of income, and readmission rates were calculated for each quintile. Insurance status, in terms of public or privately administered insurance, was also noted. Statistical analysis was used to identify any significant differences in readmission rates, based on income levels and insurance type.

Results

A total of 4,978 consecutive patients underwent bariatric operations over a 40 month period. These patients were stratified into five quintiles based on median household income. The quintiles were: \$0 - \$50,000, \$50,001 - \$100,000, \$100,001 - \$150,000, \$150,001 - \$200,000, and \$200,001 - \$250,000. About 98.1% of patients fell within the bottom three quintiles (Figure 1). There were a total of 179 readmissions overall, for a rate of 3.60%. Readmission rates by quintile are seen in Figure 1. No significant difference was found between these groups ($p=0.79$). About 31.98% of patients had public insurance and 68.02% had private (Figure 2), without a significant difference in readmission rates (4.08% and 3.37%, respectively; $p=0.21$).

	Median Income Quintile					
	\$0 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$150,000	\$150,001 - \$200,000	\$200,001 - \$250,000	
Number of Patients (%)	1105 (22.20%)	2594 (52.11%)	1185 (23.80%)	75 (1.51%)	19 (0.38%)	4978 (100%)
Thirty Day Readmission Rate	3.98%	3.35%	3.62%	5.33%	5.26%	$p=0.79$

Figure 1. Breakdown of patients and readmission rates by income quintile

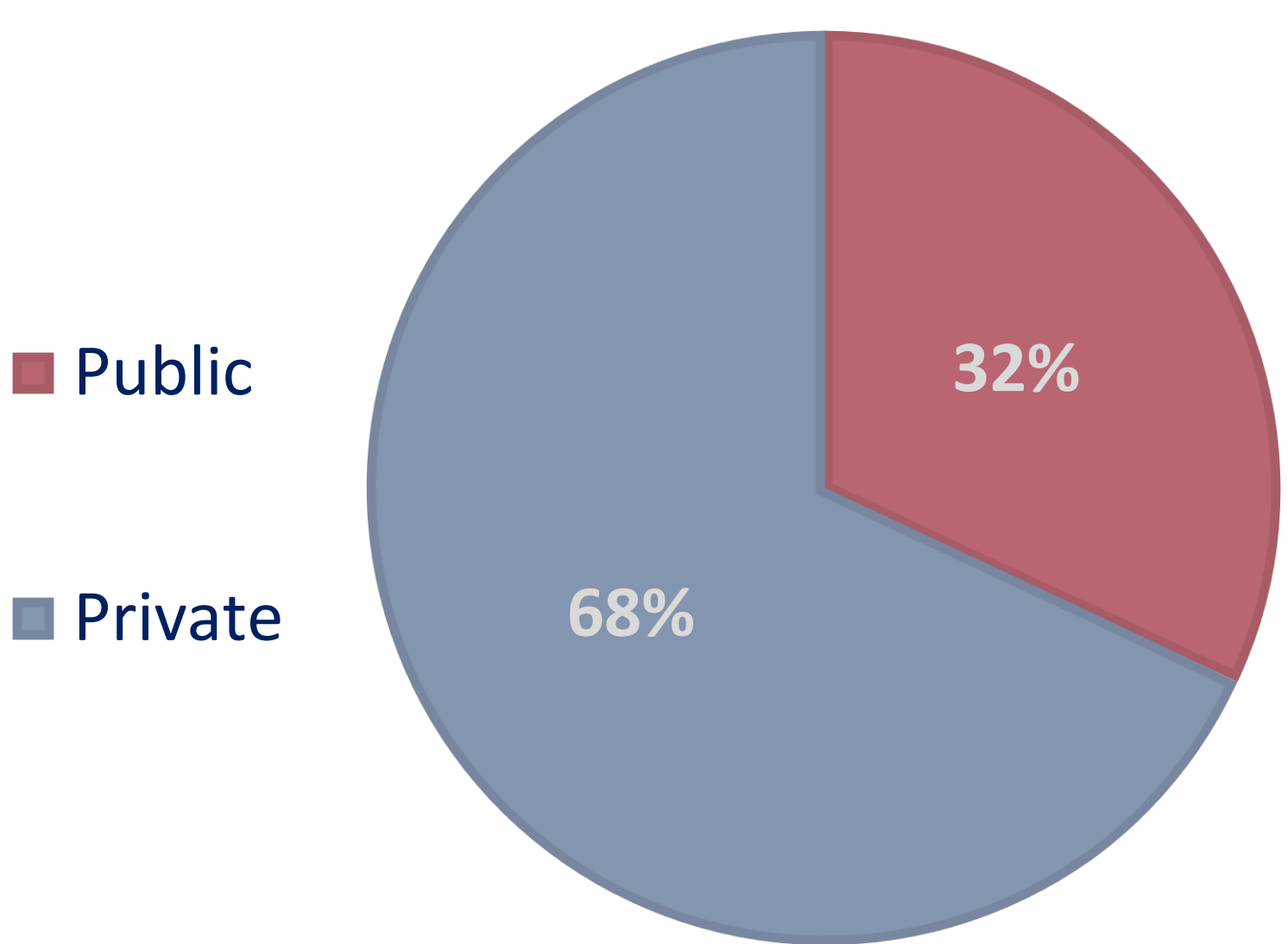


Figure 2. Breakdown of insurance type

Conclusion

In a large multicenter dataset of patients, no significant difference was found in readmission rates when accounting for patients’ level of income and type of insurance. This suggests that despite any disparities in initially obtaining bariatric surgery, post-operative outcomes are comparable and may not be affected by selected socioeconomic characteristics.

Contact

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