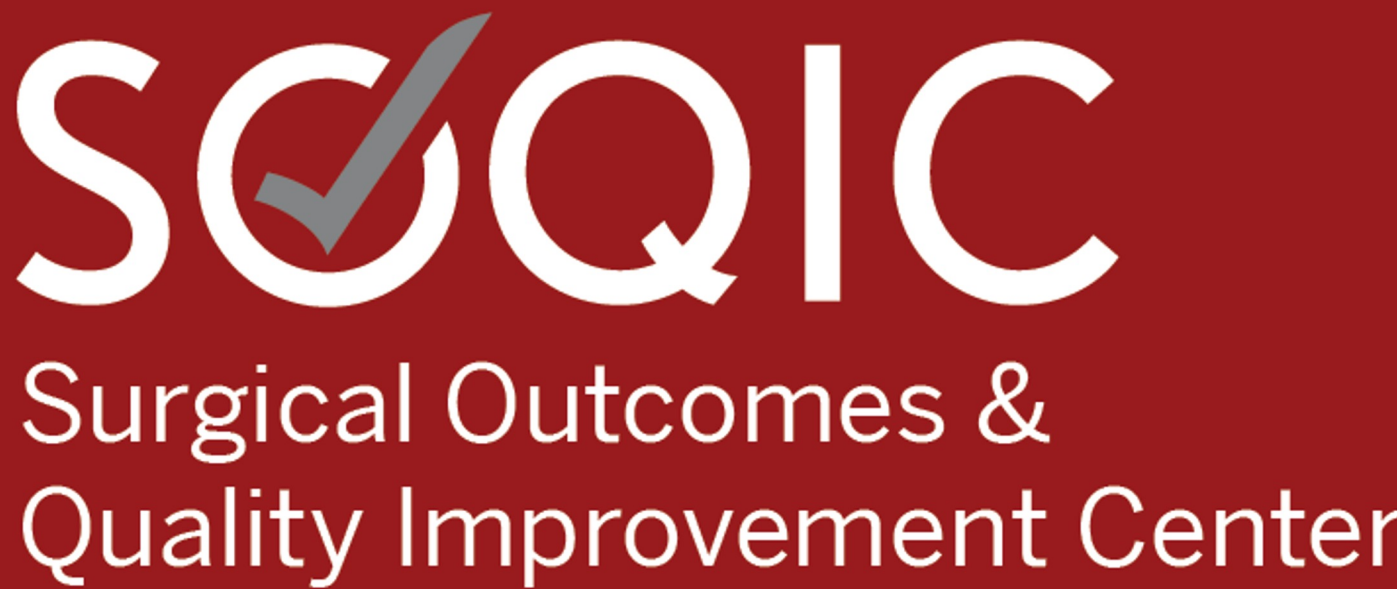




Swallowing the Costs: Procedural Reimbursement & Patient Out-of-Pocket Costs for Heller Myotomy vs POEM for Treatment of Achalasia

Austin E. Airhart, MD; Brian Ruedinger, PhD; Marios Alogakos, MBBS; Sang Yoon Na, MD, MS; Dimitrios Stefanidis, MD, PhD; Tarik K. Yuce, MD, MS
Surgical Outcomes & Quality Improvement Center, Department of Surgery, Indiana University School of Medicine



Background



- Increasing adoption of POEM for treatment of achalasia in recent years
- Unique CPT code introduced



- POEM utilization and reimbursement improving
- Unclear if private reimbursement rates have similarly improved



- Heller performed inpatient while POEM is outpatient
- Limited data directly comparing patient out-of-pocket (OOP) costs

Research question: *Are there differences in the patient population undergoing POEM vs Heller Myotomy? How do patient OOP costs compare between these two procedures?*

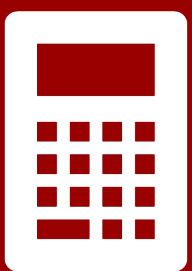
Methods

Data:

- Merative MarketScan 2022-2023
- Commercial claims database
- Primary diagnosis achalasia
- Treated with POEM or Heller

Characteristics:

- Patient age, sex, geographic region, hx GERD
- Type of insurance plan: high deductible, managed care
- Procedure year, inpatient vs outpatient



Analysis:

- Stratify by procedure and year
- Univariate analysis of baseline patient and case characteristics
- Wilcoxon rank-sum to compare costs of Heller vs POEM

Outcomes:

- Gross procedural reimbursement
- Patient out-of-pocket costs

Results

Figure 1. Median Gross Procedural Reimbursement by Procedure & Year

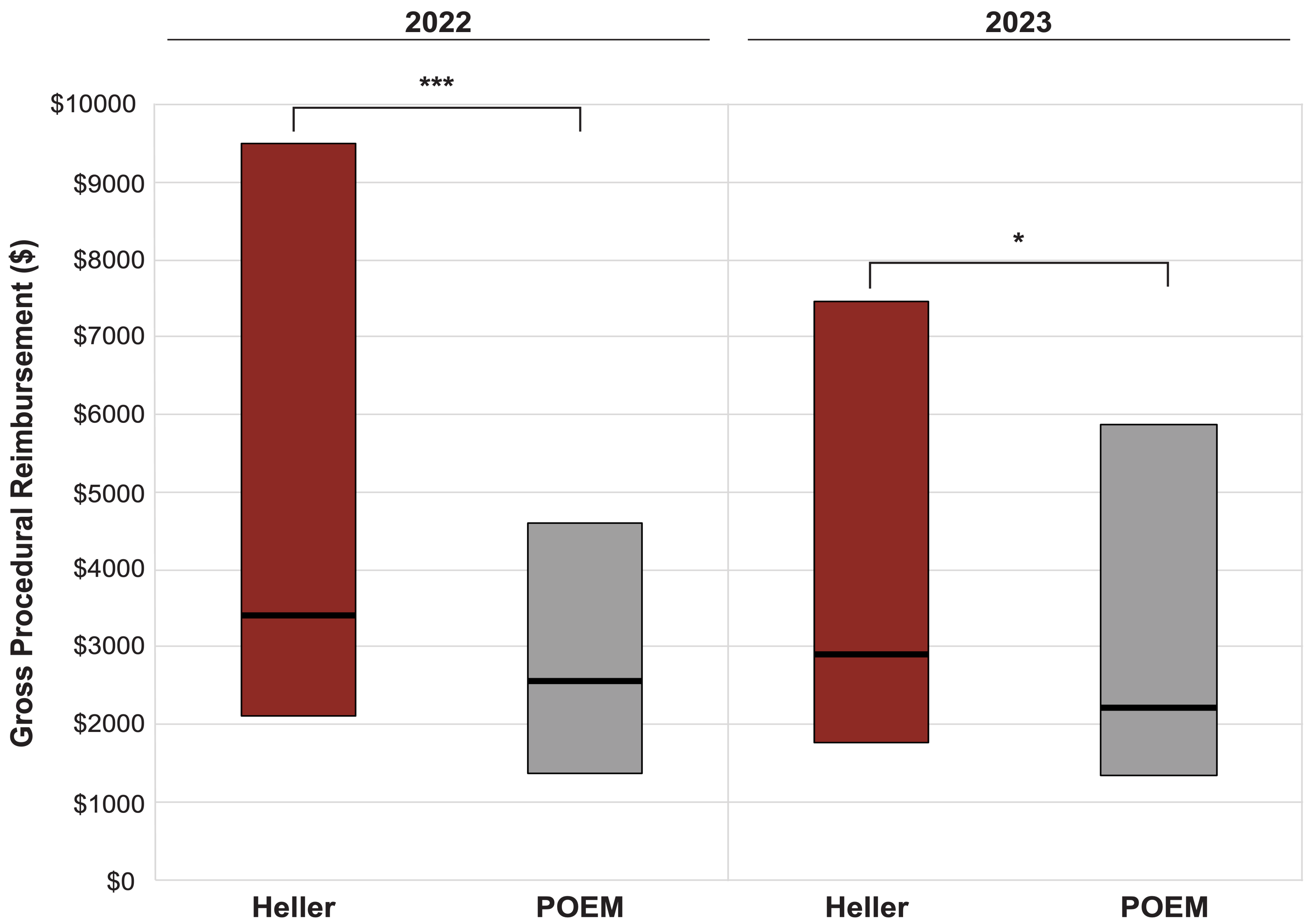
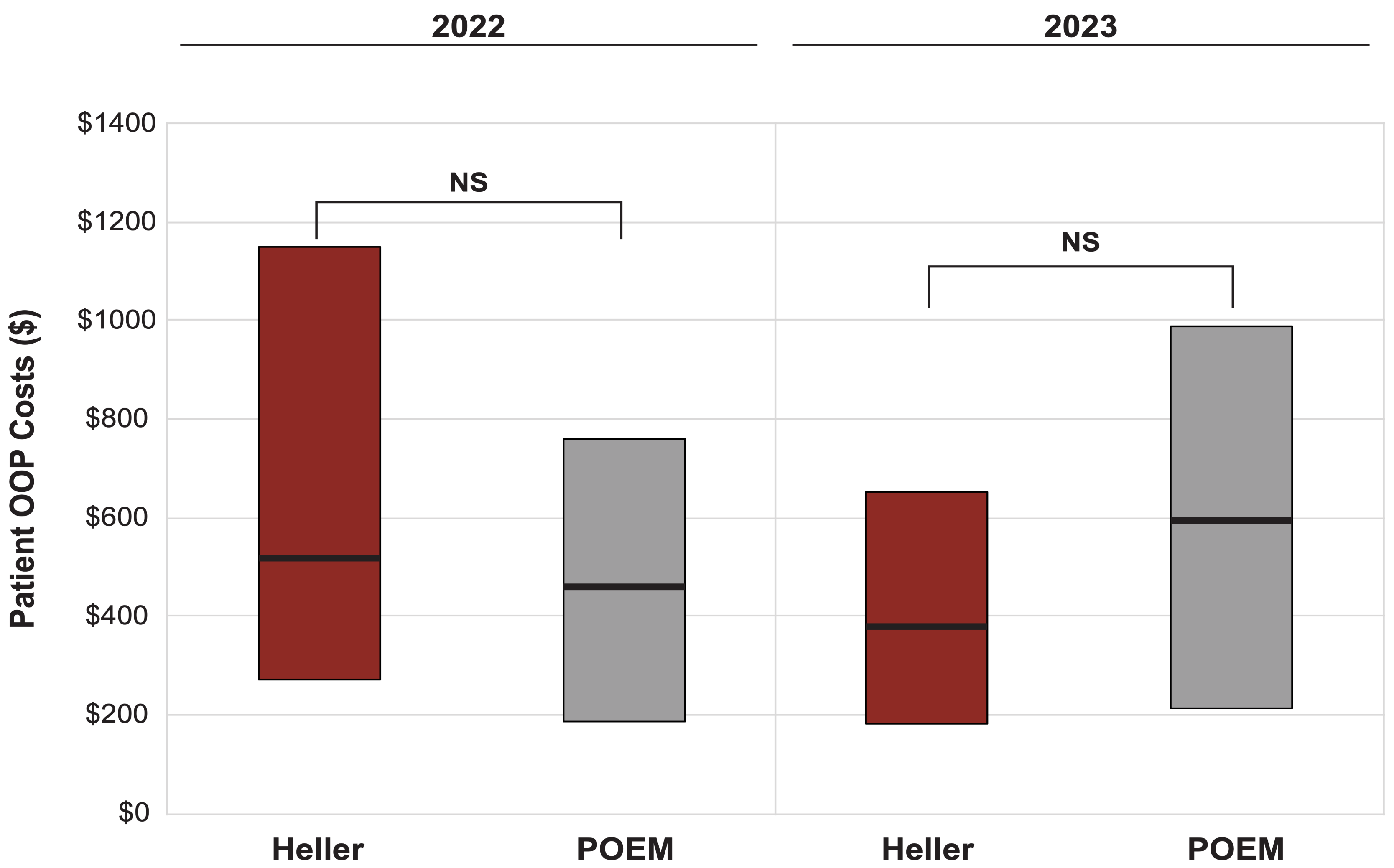


Figure 2. Median Patient OOP Costs by Procedure & Year



	Heller	POEM	p
Year of Procedure			0.08
2022	144 (51%)	106 (43%)	
2023	138 (49%)	138 (57%)	
Female Sex	153 (54%)	128 (52%)	0.7
High-Deductible Care Plan	76 (27%)	53 (22%)	0.2
Inpatient Procedure	122 (43%)	22 (9.0%)	<0.001

Conclusions



Higher gross hospital reimbursement for Heller → likely attributable to differences in operative setting (inpatient vs outpatient) and payment bundling.



No difference in patient OOP costs between procedures → similar cost sharing. Does not account for those needing fundoplication or PPI for GERD after POEM.