Are You Being Served?:
Implications of Public Health Care in Spain

Sara Arnoudse
Spanish, International Affairs
Undergraduate Research Conference
Background

• National Health Service (NHS) developed in 1986

• Health center for every 200K-250K people

• Health care administration transferred to the 17 autonomous communities in 2002

• Funded by general taxation
• The impersonalized nature of the Spanish NHS causes a lack of choice in health care options and creates an inefficient health care system and poor health indicators among the Spanish population
The freedom of choice argument

• The quality of health care is enhanced by...

  – ability to choose health care providers
  – preventative health care information, which leads to informed consumers
  – timely care; available to consumers with flexible care options
  – options for long term care
Constraints of the Spanish NHS

- Health care centers, hospitals, specialists are assigned, not chosen
- Limited preventative health care information
- Long waiting lists and wait-times
- Long term care underdeveloped
BUT...

99.5% COVERED!

http://www.flickr.com/photos/62697903@N00/478889671
...strong health indicators...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>European Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy in years</td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality per 1000 live births</td>
<td><strong>4.31</strong></td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of people reporting NO long-standing health problem</td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td>--</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...important resources...

• 3.8 practicing physicians per 1000 people; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries practicing physicians per 1000 people average = 3

• Ranked 5th in the world for vaccine coverage

Increasing user satisfaction...

- In 1985: below 50% user satisfaction
- Today: 67% of users believe the NHS functions “well or quite well”
- Positive survey responses

...and relatively inexpensive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>8.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollars spent per capita on health</td>
<td><strong>2094</strong></td>
<td><strong>6102</strong></td>
<td><strong>2560</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

- Data suggests positive correlation between NHS and health indicators

- NHS is a system with less personal choice, more coverage

- NHS is a transparent body; constantly evolving

- On a global scale
Thank you.

http://blogs.ya.com/tocalaotravez/files/Preguntas.jpg