

Syrian refugees in Lebanon

Secondary and tertiary health care, January – April 2014



Photo credit: McConnell/UNHCR

UNHCR's public health approach is based on the primary health care (PHC) strategy. In Lebanon, the government provides services through the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and the Ministry of Social Affairs with nationals paying part of the cost. In addition, PHC services are provided by private practitioners, local and international NGOs and other charities.

Public secondary and tertiary health care institutions in Lebanon are semi-autonomous and referral care is expensive. Not all adhere strictly to the MOPH flat rate for hospital care. To harmonise access to secondary health care and manage costs, UNHCR has put in place referral guidelines in Lebanon. The costs covered by UNHCR vary by estimated cost of care, vulnerability status, and type of care (e.g. emergency life-saving, obstetric, medical and surgical). For estimated costs of USD <1500, 75% of costs are covered and the refugees cover the remaining 25%. If estimated costs are USD ≥1500 or refugees present outside the pre-approved hospital network, partner agencies are required to consult with UNHCR. Emergency UNHCR approval is strictly for immediate life-saving or limb-saving cases. UNHCR refers all non-emergency cases to an Exceptional Care Committee that is responsible for authorisation of coverage. For the extremely vulnerable refugees, UNHCR covers 100% of the costs.

Key findings

- Between January and April 2014, there were 19,214 referrals for secondary and tertiary health care in Lebanon; referrals by region were Bekaa 6,615 (34%), North Lebanon 4,922 (26%), Beirut and Mt Lebanon 4,471 (23%) and South Lebanon 3,206 (17%).
- The referral rate was 5.7 per 100 refugees per year; the rate for 2013 was 7.9 per 100 refugees per year.
- Referrals were reported from 88 hospitals across the country. The top 20 hospitals accounted for 78% of referral. The proportion of referrals to contracted hospitals by region was Beirut and Mt Lebanon 60%, Bekaa 86%, North Lebanon 86% and South Lebanon 78%.
- Approx. 70% of patients were female and a quarter (25%) were among children younger than 5 years old. Considering that only 52% of the population is female, the disproportionate referral among females is due to referrals for obstetric care including deliveries.
- About 48% of referrals were for obstetric care. Other main reasons for referrals were respiratory infections (9%), and trauma and other injuries (6%). Among obstetric care referrals, main reasons for seeking care were deliveries (84%), miscarriages and other early pregnancy complications, and complications of labour and delivery. Among hospital deliveries, the proportion of caesarean deliveries was 27% – a decline from the 33% observed in 2013. A peak in referrals due to respiratory infections was observed in Bekaa in February.
- The estimated total hospital bill for January to April 2014 was USD 11.3 million. The estimated share of the cost for UNHCR was 8.3 million (73%). The finalised bill for January to April referrals (as of 23 May 2014) was USD 3.3 million. The estimated annualised per capita hospital cost was USD 37 per registered refugee. Per capita cost was highest in South Lebanon (USD 46) and lowest in North Lebanon (USD 34).
- The average hospital cost per referral was USD 606; the highest average cost was observed among cases with neonatal or congenital conditions (USD 1,774).
- Adjusted for disease category, gender and age, the average cost among the top 20 hospitals was lowest at Hermel hospital

17,874

Number of refugees referred
between January and April 2014

16,769

referred once

925

referred twice

137

referred thrice

43

referred 4 or more
times

19,214

Total number of referrals between
January and April 2014

17,321

approved
directly or by
ECC*

33

approved after
consultations
with UNHCR

1,860

not approved**

*ECC: exceptional care committee tasked with reviewing referrals exceeding USD 1500

**Did not meet guidelines as per Standard Operating Procedure

1. Demographic information - Referrals

1.1 Referral cases

19,214

referrals between
January and April

6,615

referrals in Bekaa

4,471

referrals in Beirut &
Mt Lebanon

4,922

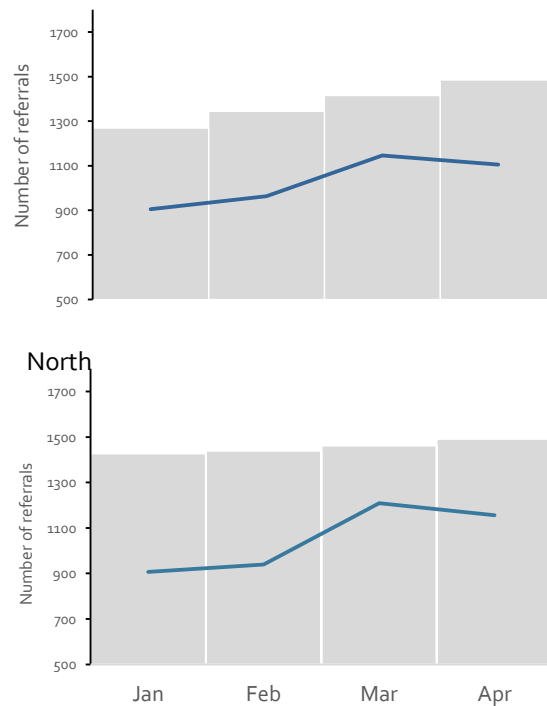
referrals in North

3,206

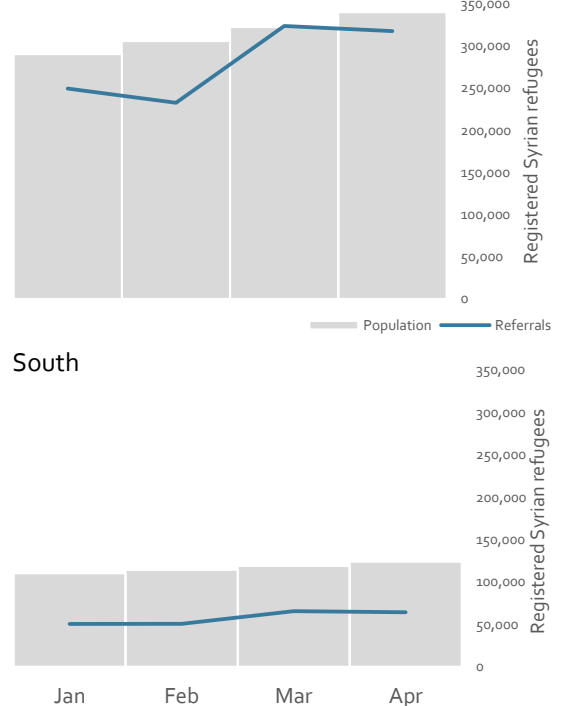
referrals in South

Trends of referrals and population by region

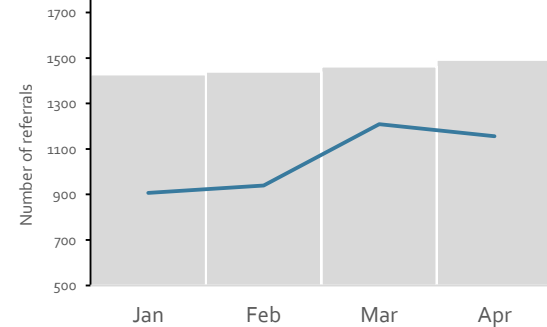
Beirut and Mt Lebanon



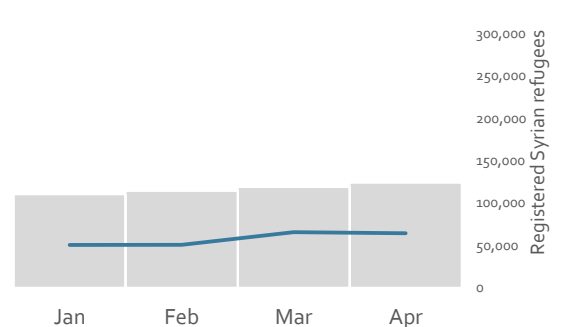
Bekaa



North



South



1.2 Gender

70.3%

Female

1.3 Age group

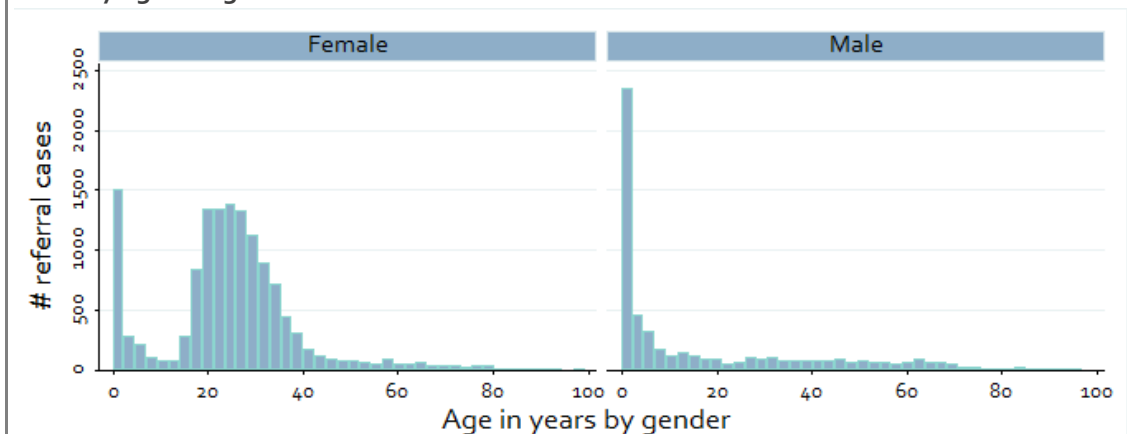
24.5%

were under 5 years

14.4%

were under 1 years

Cases by age and gender



1.2 Approval status

90.2%

Approved

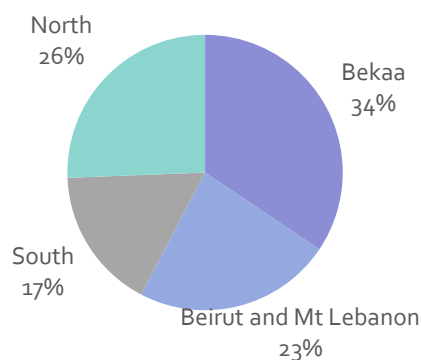
0.2%

Approved after
consultations

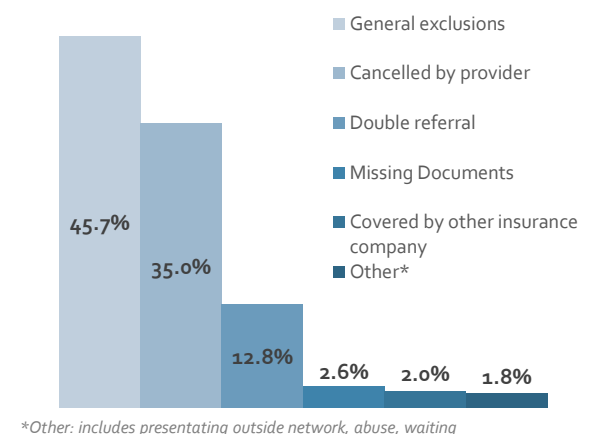
9.7%

Not approved

Distribution by region



Reasons referrals were not approved



2. Distribution by diagnosis

2.1 Referral reasons

48.0%

were referred for
Obstetric care

9.2%

were referred for
Respiratory
infections

6.3%

were referred for
Trauma and other
injuries

5.9%

were referred for
Gastrointestinal
condition

4.7%

were referred for
Neonatal or
congenital condition

2.2 What were the obstetric referrals?

61.5%

for Normal delivery

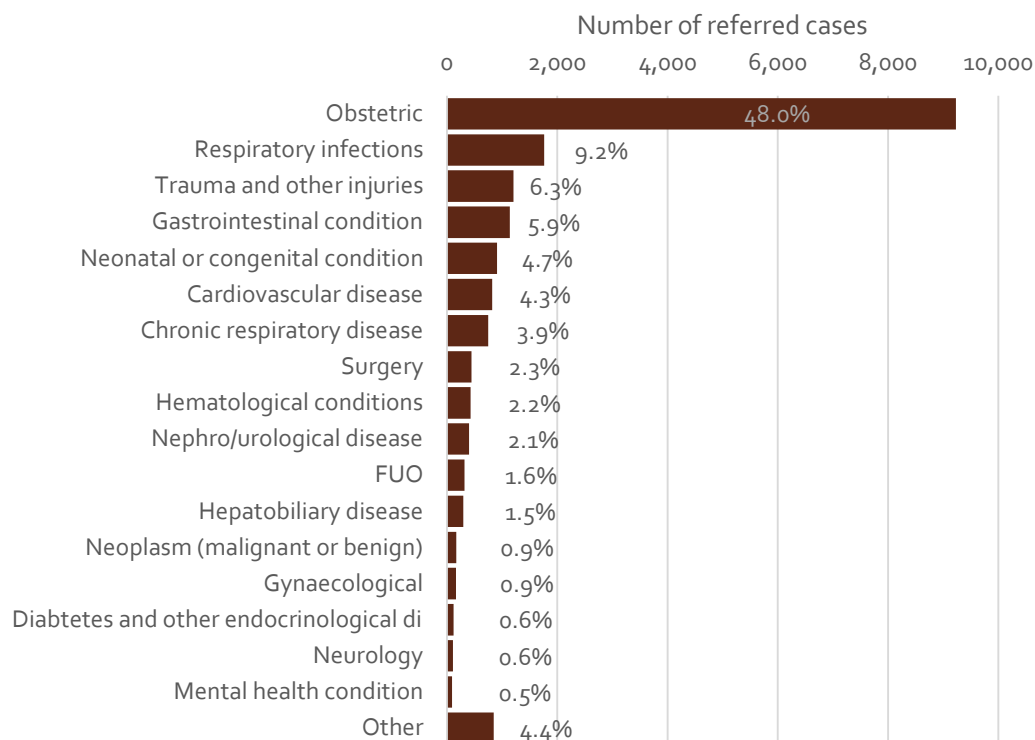
22.8%

for Caeserean section

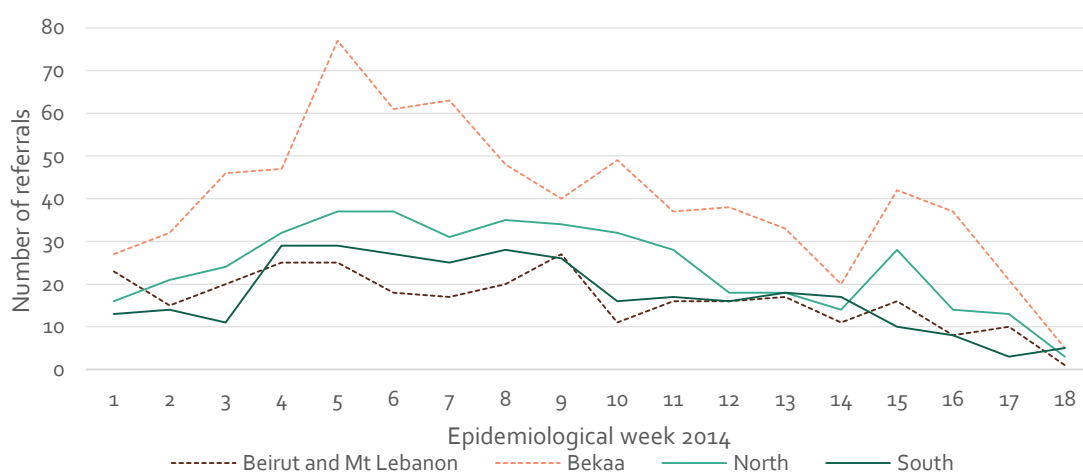
5.7%

for Miscarriages and
other early
pregnancy
complications

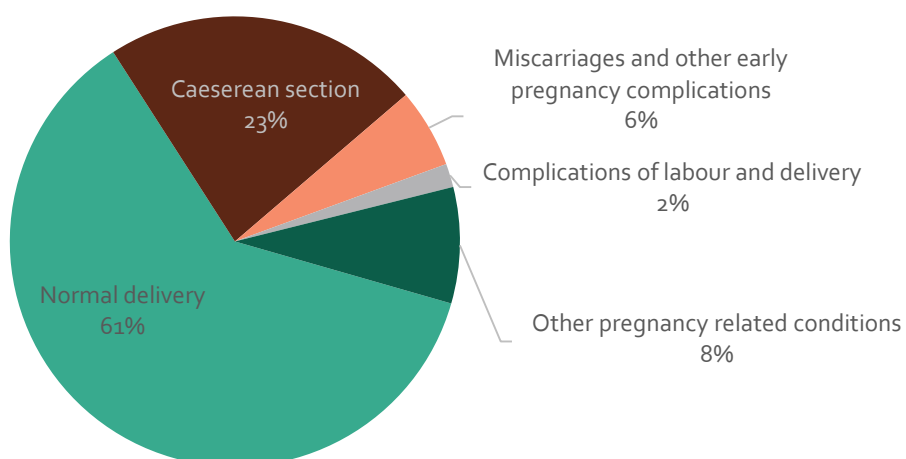
Distribution of referral cases by diagnosis category



Trends of admissions due to respiratory infections by region



Reasons for obstetric referrals



3. Hospital receiving referrals

3.1 Hospital counts

88
hospitals received referrals

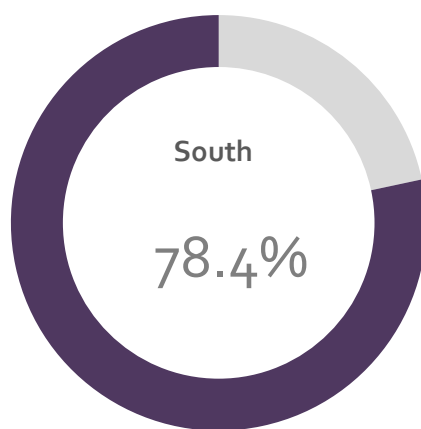
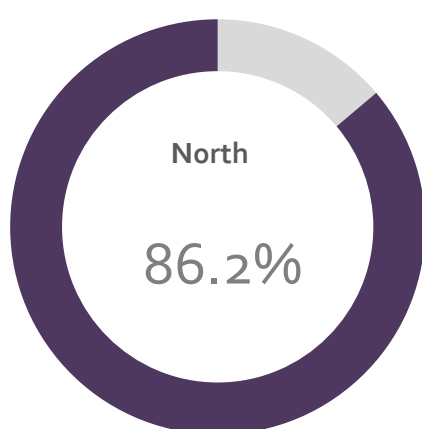
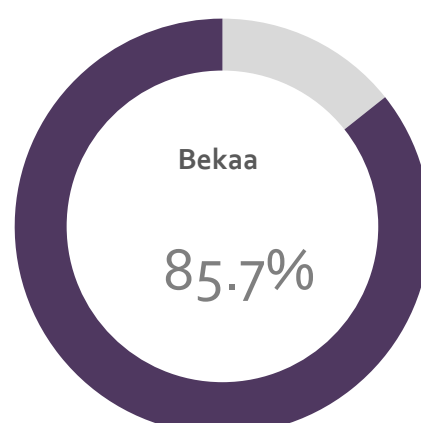
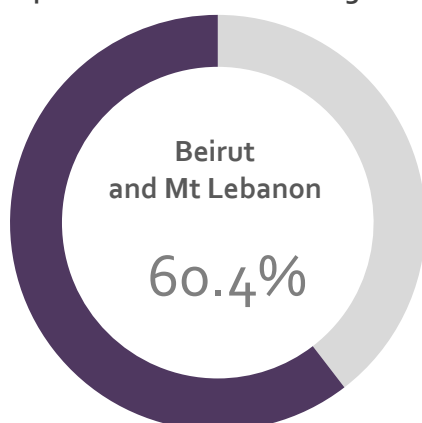
60
hospitals received referrals from Bekaa

69
hospitals received referrals from Beirut & Mt Leb

57
hospitals received referrals from North

56
hospitals received referrals from South

Proportion of referrals utilising contracted* hospitals



*contracted hospitals list as per the "Guidelines for Referral Health Care in Lebanon, UNHCR 2014"

3.2 Referrals by hospital

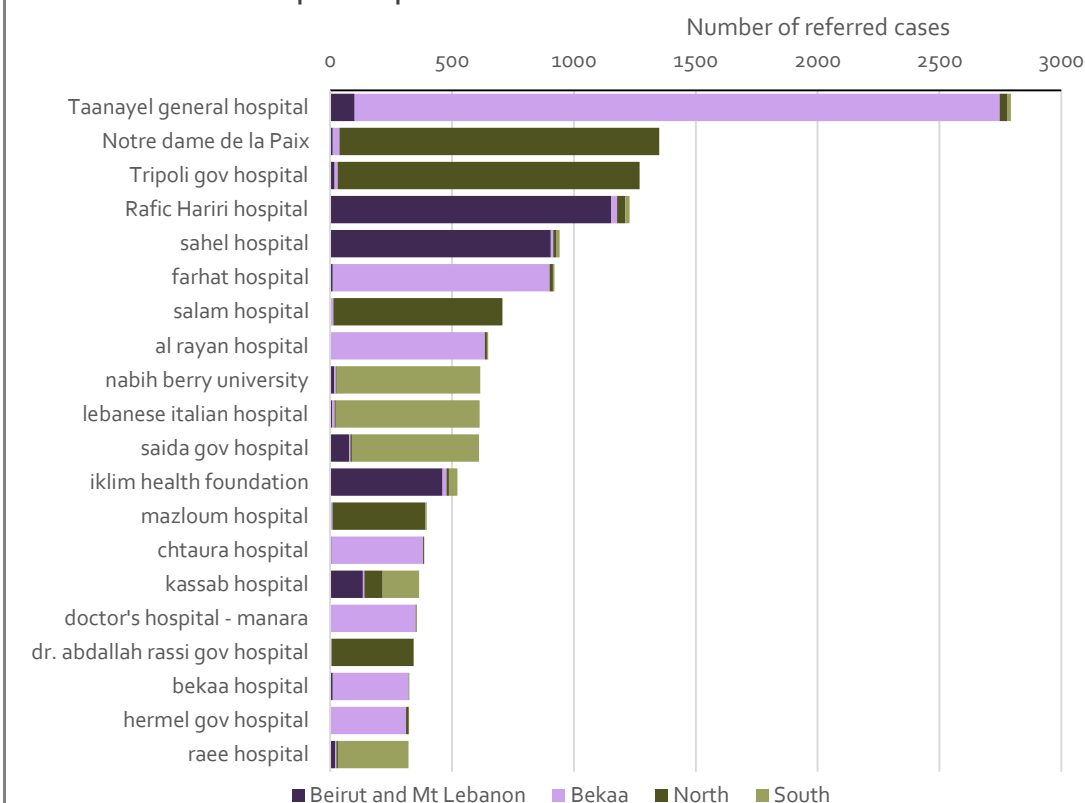
2793
received by Taanayel general hospital

1351
received by Notre dame de la Paix

1271
received by Tripoli gov hospital

1229
received by Rafic Hariri hospital

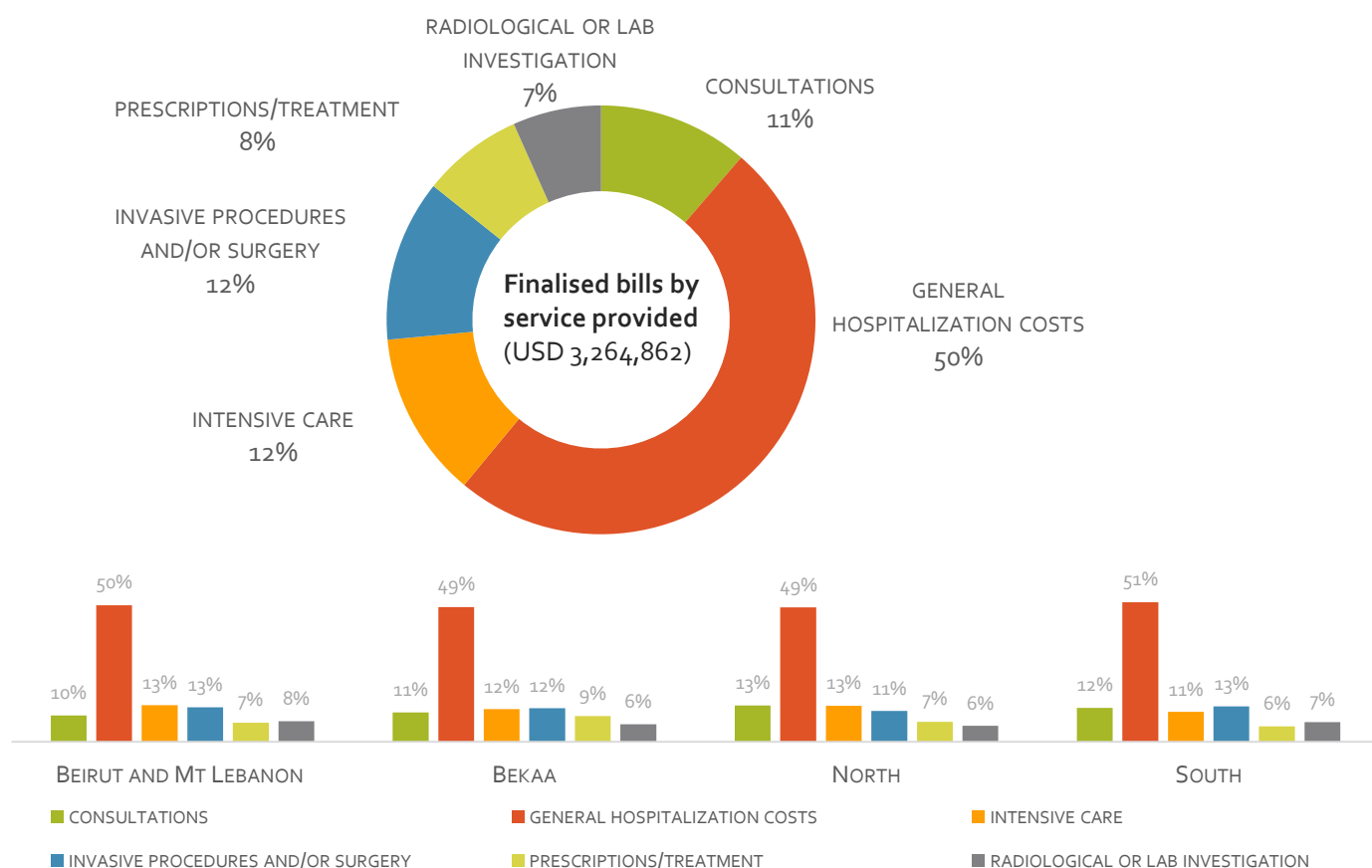
Total referrals for the top 20 hospitals



4. Costs snapshot by approval status and service provided



Finalised bills as of 23 May 2014 by provided service



5. Costs snapshot for key diagnosis categories by service provided. Total finalised bill in parenthesis



CONSULTATIONS
 GENERAL HOSPITALIZATION COST
 INTENSIVE CARE

INVASIVE PROCEDURES AND/OR SURGERY
 PRESCRIPTIONS/TREATMENT
 RADIOLOGICAL OR LAB INVESTIGATION

6. Estimated direct hospital costs of referrals

6.1 Overall

11,325,232

Estimated total hospital bill in USD

73.2%

Estimated proportion paid by UNHCR partners

35.7%

Estimated proportion paid for obstetric care

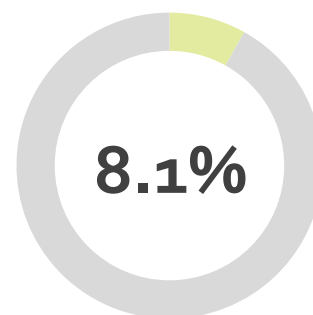
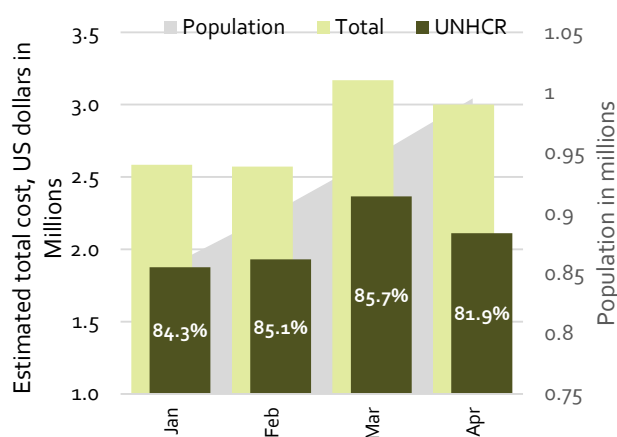
8.3%

Estimated proportion paid for surgery including for trauma and other injuries

13.6%

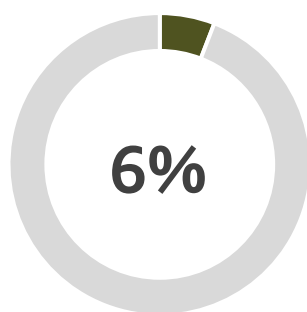
Estimated proportion paid for neonatal and congenital conditions

Estimated total hospital cost and estimated proportion paid by UNHCR by month

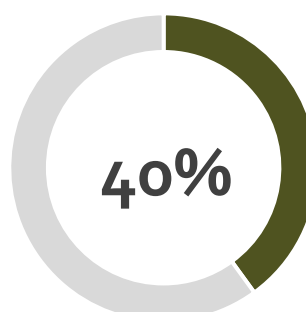


Proportion for whom UNHCR paid at least 90% of cost

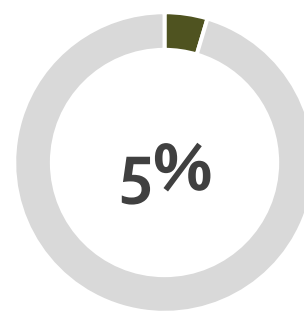
Percent of hospital costs above USD 1500 by approval status



Approved directly or by ECC



Approved after consultations with UNHCR



Not approved

6.2 Average costs

606

Average cost in USD per referral

1,774

Highest average cost observed in cases with Neonatal or congenital condition

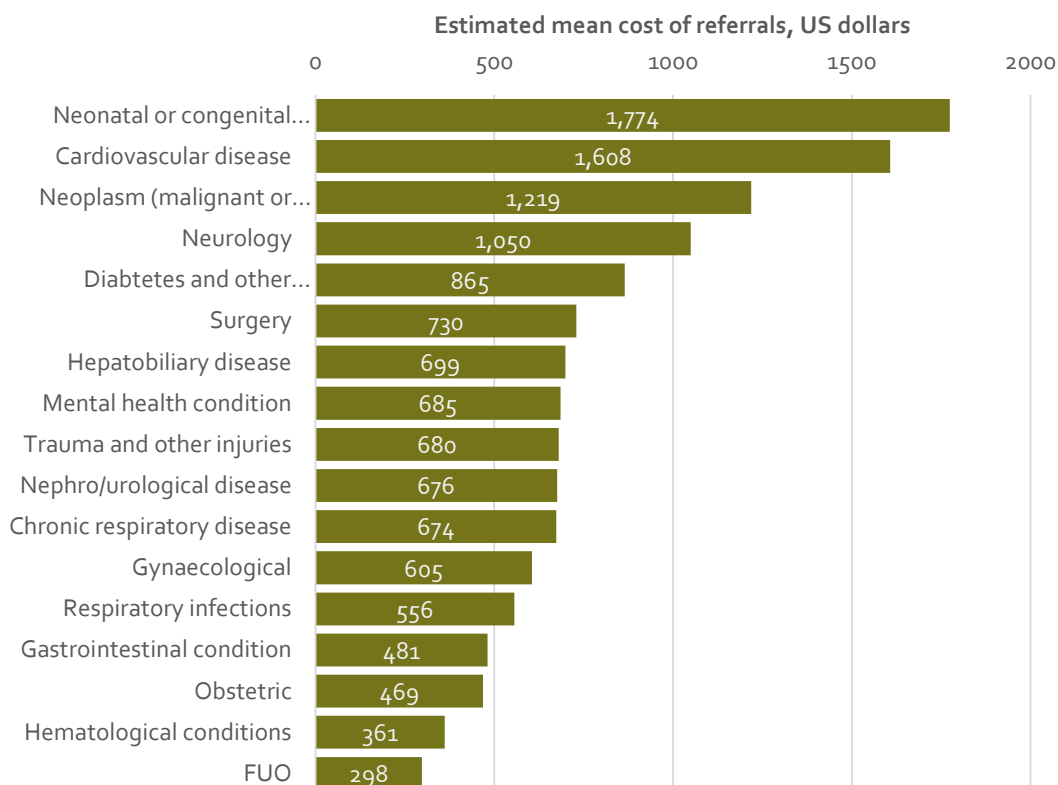
368

Average cost in USD for normal delivery

675.8

Average cost in USD for caesarian section

Estimated average hospital cost per referral by diagnosis category



7. Costs and referrals per capita

7.1 Overall

37
Estimated annualised
per capita hospital cost
in USD

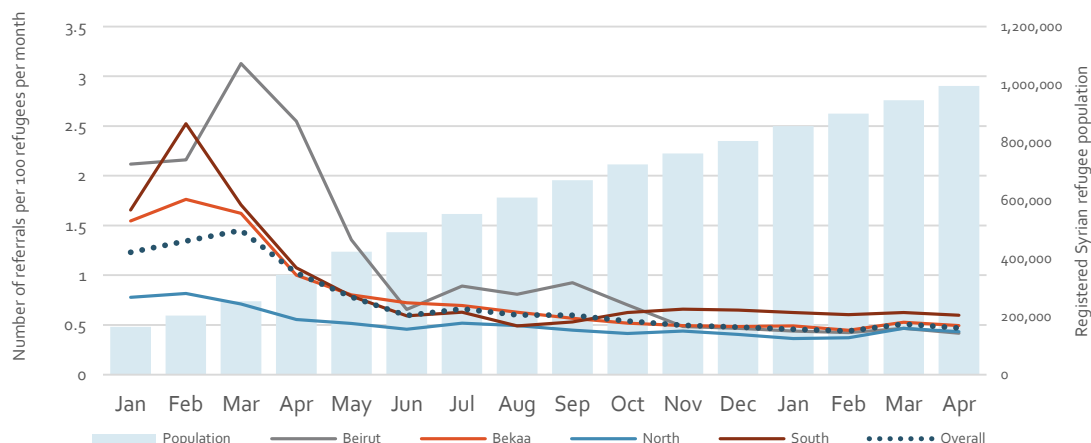
34
estimated annualised
per capita hospital cost
for Bekaa

41
estimated annualised
per capita hospital cost
for Beirut & Mt
Lebanon

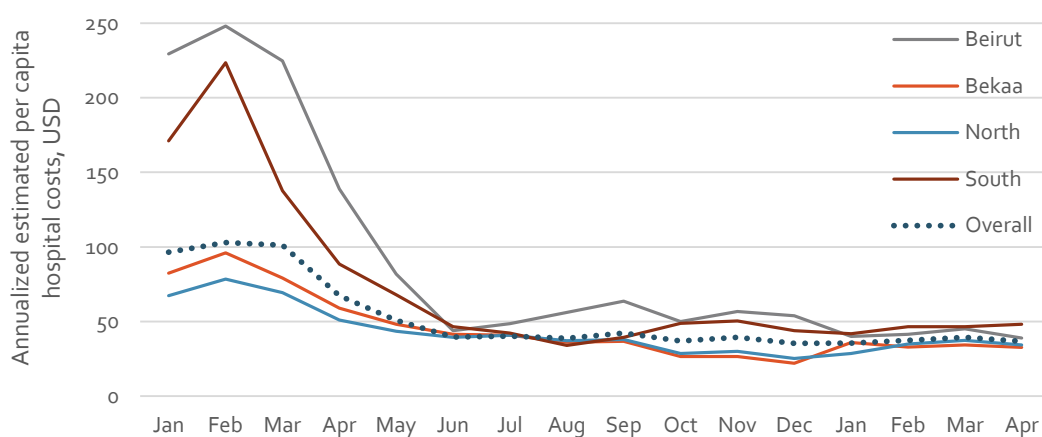
34
estimated annualised
per capita hospital cost
for North

46
estimated annualised
per capita hospital cost
for South

Trends of referrals by region since January 2013



Trends of per capita hospital cost by region since January 2013



7.2 Average costs

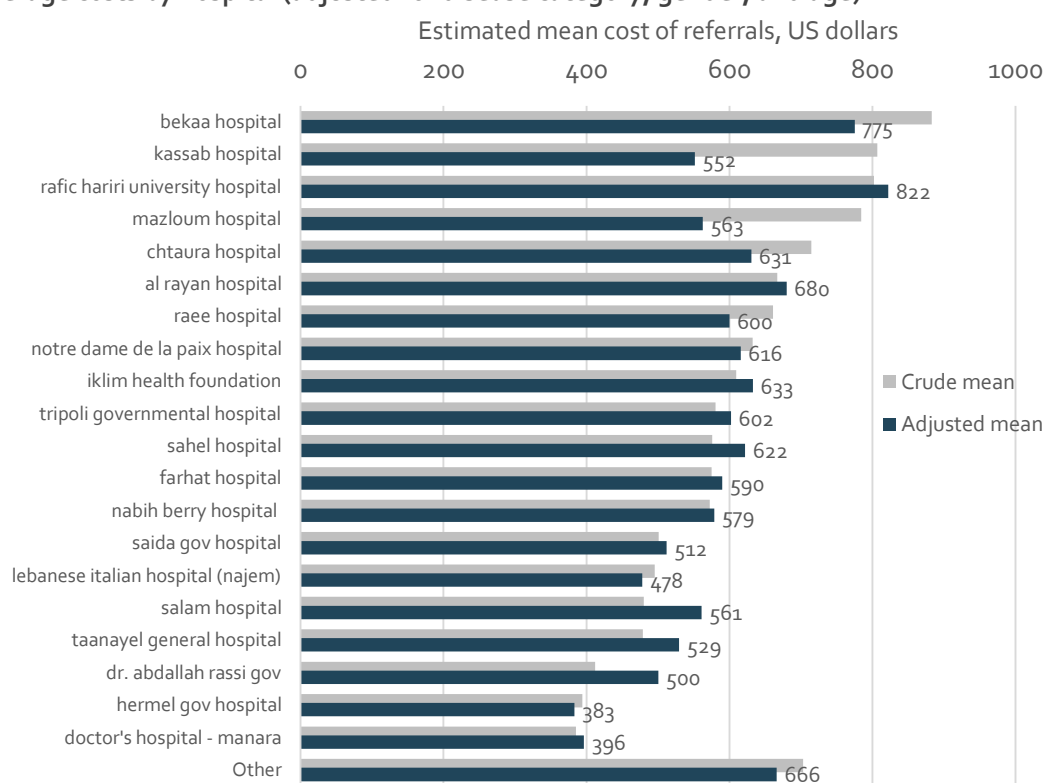
822
Adjusted average cost
estimate for Rafic Hariri
hospital

775
Adjusted average cost
estimate for Bekaa
hospital

680
Adjusted average cost
estimate for Al Rayan
hospital

383
Adjusted average cost
estimate for Hermel
hospital

Average costs by hospital (adjusted for disease category, gender, and age)





Note: The information presented is based on the most recent and best available data. We are grateful to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, UNHCR Lebanon, the International Medical Corps, Makhzoumi Foundation, Caritas Lebanese Migrant Centre, GlobMed and other local and international actors for providing services and/or data. Analysis of data and preparation of information sheets was carried out by UNHCR Public Health Section, Geneva. UNHCR and its partners will continually update and, where necessary, modify the data and analysis provided, in order to ensure that the most current and accurate view is available to key stakeholders and the public.