

## Summary

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 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. With the objective of providing health care services to refugees at similar levels to the host community, UNHCR promotes refugee access by supporting a network of PHC centres across Lebanon. Currently, UNHCR covers costs for the vast majority of refugees presenting at partner facilities, however UNHCR is unable to meet full coverage needs.

For PHC, refugees contribute a nominal fee for services as do the Lebanese nationals. Referral care is however, very expensive 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

- There were 41,168 referrals for secondary and tertiary health care in Lebanon in 2013; referrals by region were Bekaa 15,252 (37%), Beirut and Mt Lebanon 10,244 (25%), North Lebanon 10,420 (25%) and South Lebanon 5,252 (13%)
- The referral rate was 7.9 per 100 refugees per year. The referral trends show a steep decline towards the end of the year in all regions. This may partly be attributed to lack of knowledge by newly arriving refugees of the availability of health services, lack of capacity to handle the increasing numbers within the current hospital network or by agencies responsible for referrals, or over utilisation of services in the early part of the year
- Referrals were reported from 82 hospitals across the country. The top 20 hospitals accounted for 96% of referrals
- Approx. 71% of patients were female and almost a quarter (23%) 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 reproductive health care including deliveries
- About 41% of referrals were for obstetric care. Other main reasons for referrals were gastrointestinal conditions (8%), and trauma and other injuries (7%)
- The estimated total hospital bill for 2013 was USD 24 million. Approx. 78% of cost was paid for by UNHCR through its partner agencies. The estimated annual per capita hospital cost was USD 48 per registered refugee. Per capita cost was highest in Beirut (USD 68) and lowest in Bekaa (USD 41)
- The average hospital cost per referral was USD 580; the highest average cost was observed among cases with neonatal or congenital conditions (USD 1,258)
- Adjusted for disease category, gender and age, the average cost was lowest at Taanayel hospital (USD 331) and highest at Notre Dame du Liban - Jounieh (USD 1,357)

1. Demographic information

1.1 Cases referrals

**41,168**  
were referred  
between January  
and December

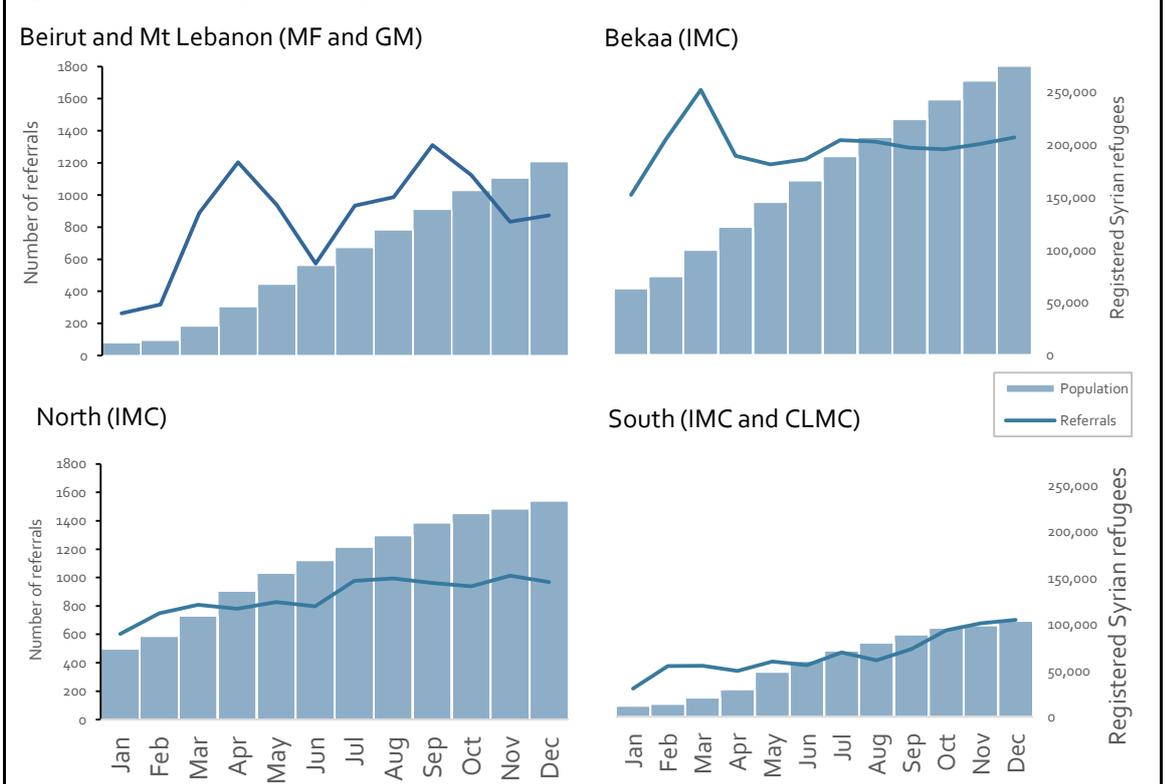
**15,252**  
referrals in Bekaa

**10,244**  
referrals in Beirut &  
Mt Lebanon

**10,420**  
referrals in North

**5,252**  
referrals in South

Fig 1 - Trends by region and agency



Clockwise from top left, the referring agencies are Makhsoumi Foundation (MF), GlobeMed (GM), International Medical Corps (IMC), and Caritas Lebanon Migrant Centre (CLMC)

1.2 Gender

**71.1%**  
Female

1.3 Age group

**23.0%**  
were under 5 years

**13.2%**  
were under 1 years

Fig 2 - Cases by age and gender

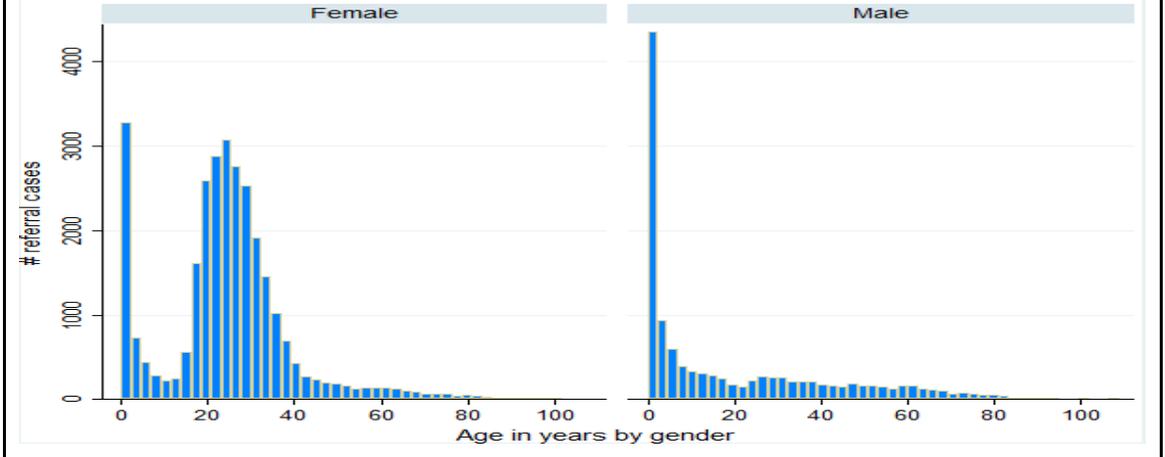


Fig 3 - Distribution by region and agency

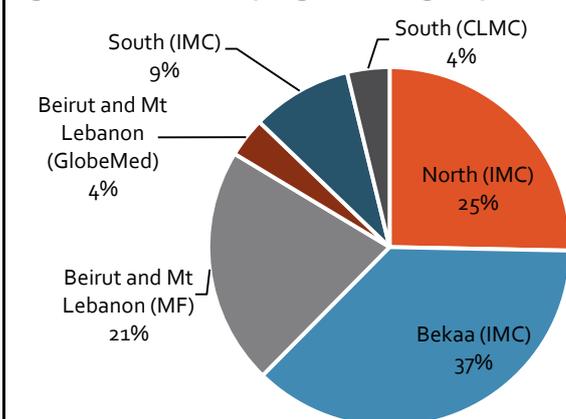
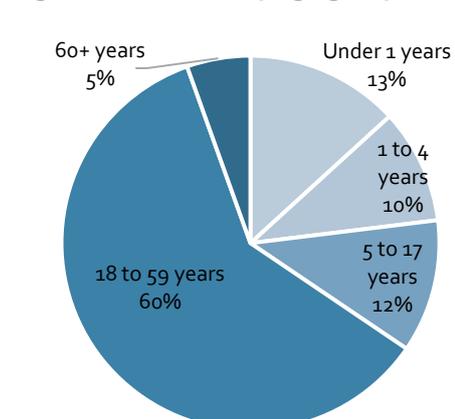


Fig 4 - Distribution by age group



2. Distribution by diagnosis

2.1 Reasons for referrals

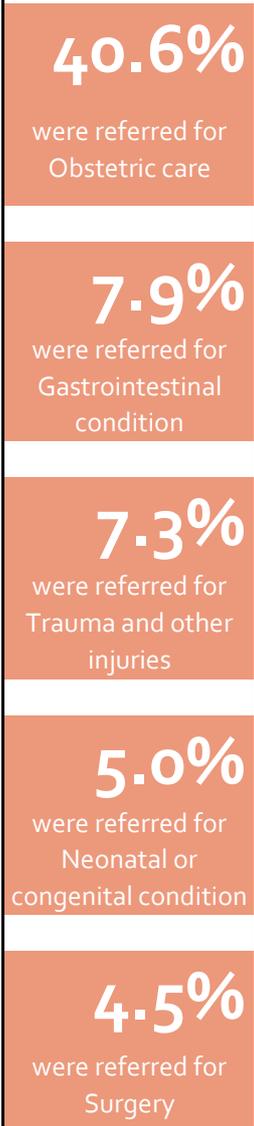
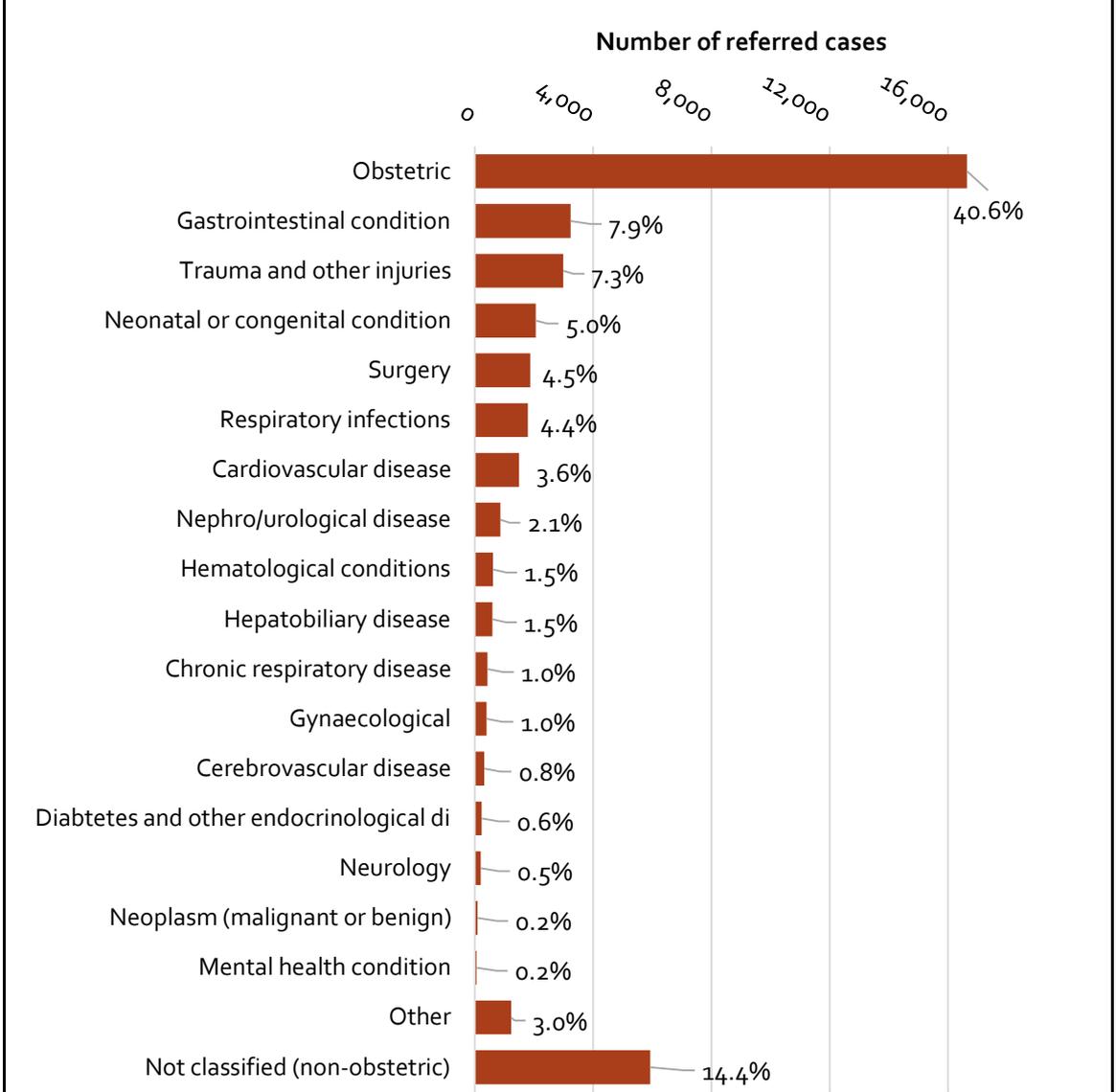


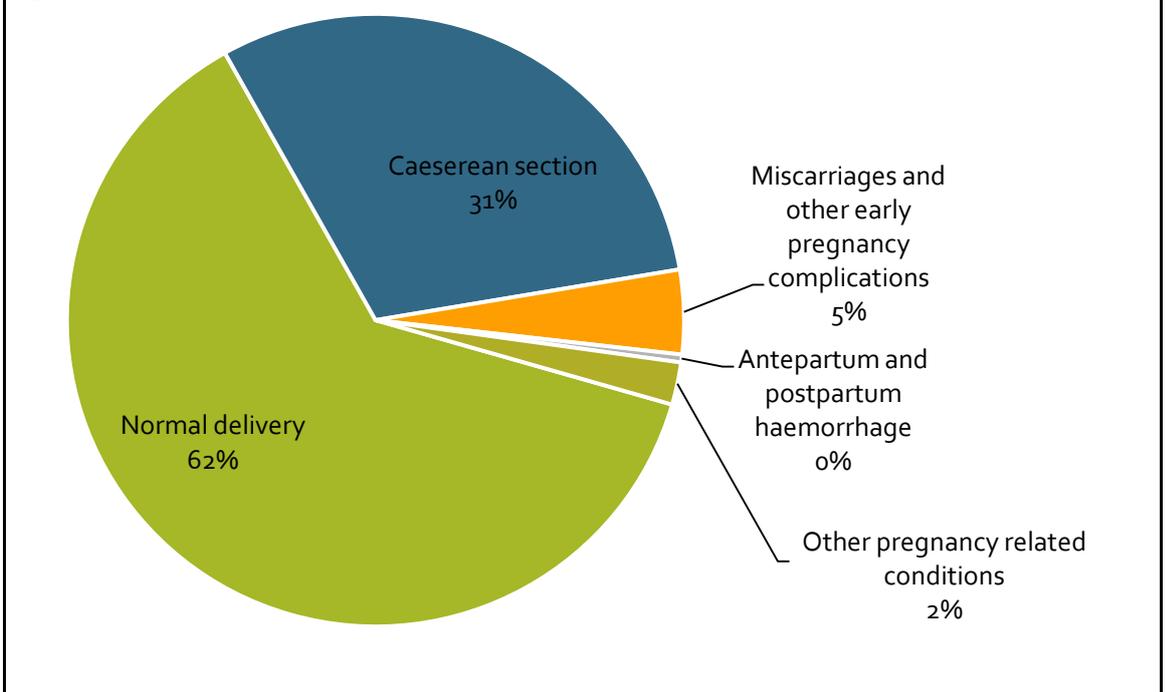
Fig 5 - Distribution of referral cases by diagnosis category



2.2 What were the obstetric referrals?



Fig 6 - Reasons for obstetric referrals



3. Hospital receiving referrals

3.1 Hospital counts

**82**  
hospitals received referrals

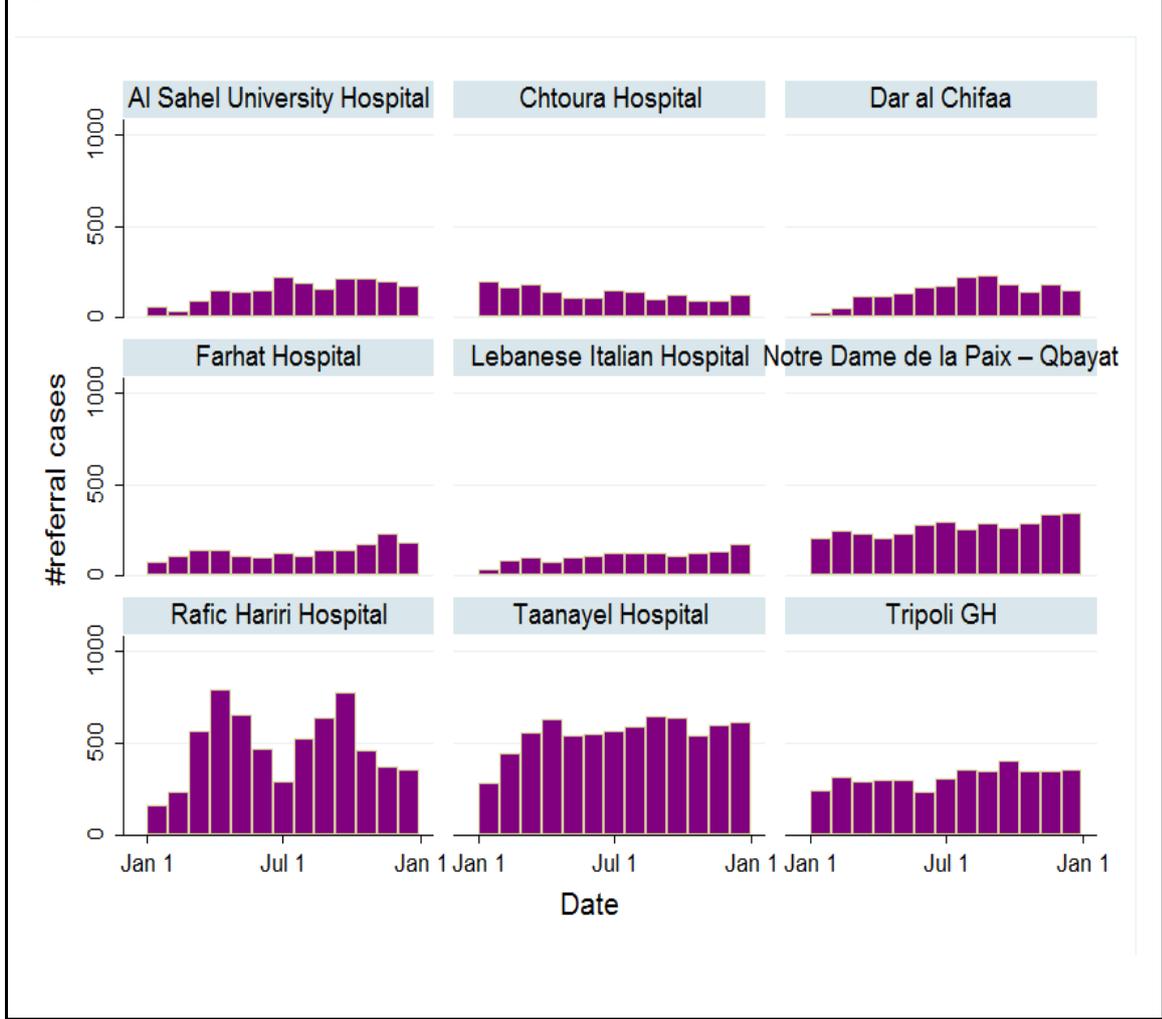
**13**  
hospitals received referrals from Bekaa

**45**  
hospitals received referrals from Beirut & Mt Leb

**24**  
hospitals received referrals from North

**20**  
hospitals received referrals from South

Fig 7 - Trends of hospitalisations in the top nine hospitals



3.2 Referrals by hospital

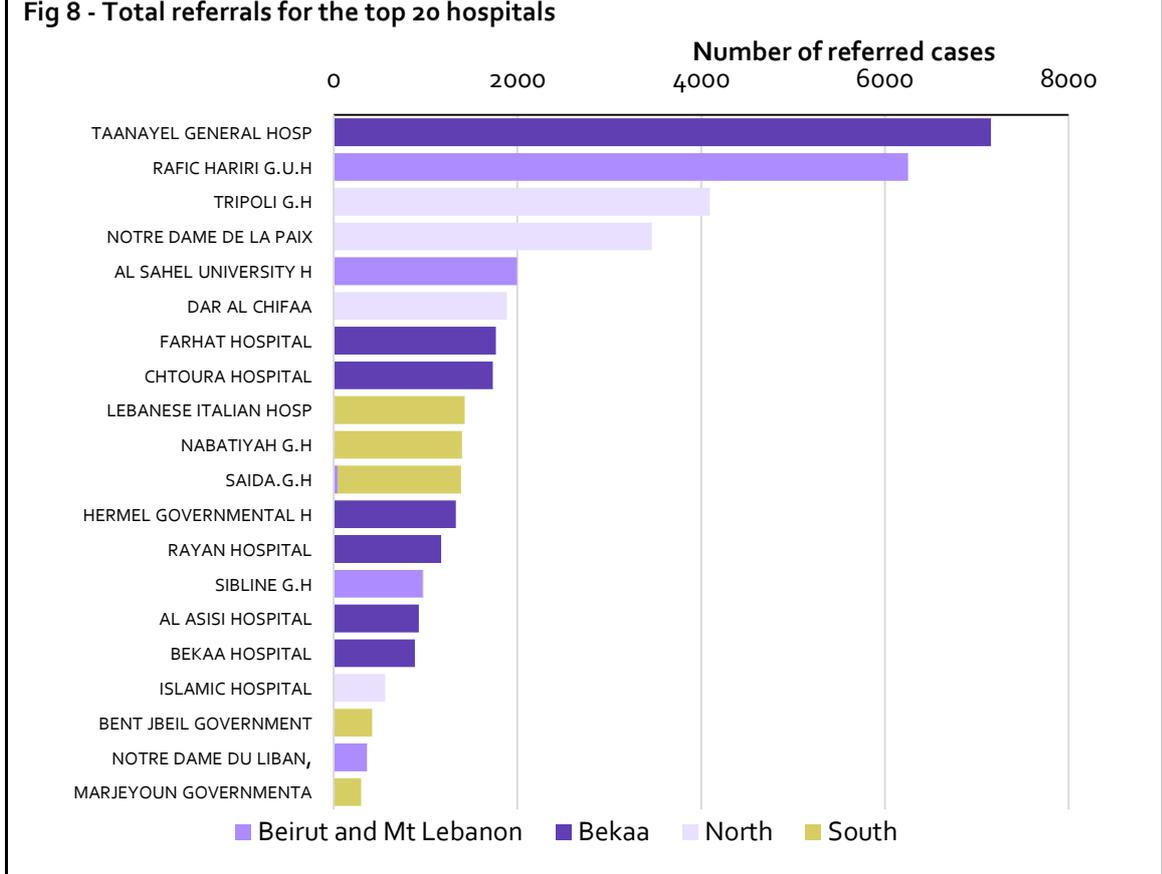
**7155**  
received by Taanayel Gen Hospital in Bekaa

**6254**  
received by Rafic Hariri Hospital in Beirut

**4095**  
received by Tripoli Gen Hospital in North

**1386**  
received by Saida Gen Hospital in South

Fig 8 - Total referrals for the top 20 hospitals



4. Estimated direct hospital costs of referrals

4.1 Overall

**23,854,327**

Estimated total hospital bill in USD

**77.6%**

Estimated proportion paid by UNHCR partners

**35.1%**

Estimated proportion paid for obstetric care

**14.5%**

Estimated proportion paid for surgery including for trauma and other injuries

**10.9%**

Estimated proportion paid for neonatal and congenital conditions

4.2 Average costs

**580**

Average cost in USD per referral

**1258**

Highest average cost observed in cases with Neonatal or congenital condition

**407**

Average cost in USD for normal delivery

**723**

Average cost in USD for caesarian section

Fig 9 - Estimated total hospital cost and estimated proportion paid by UNHCR by month

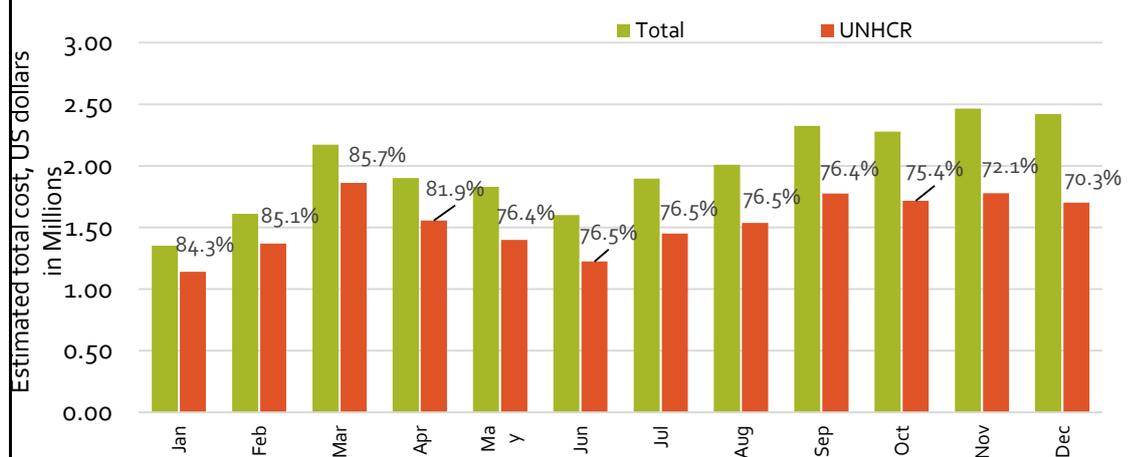


Fig 10 - Proportion of hospital costs by diagnosis category

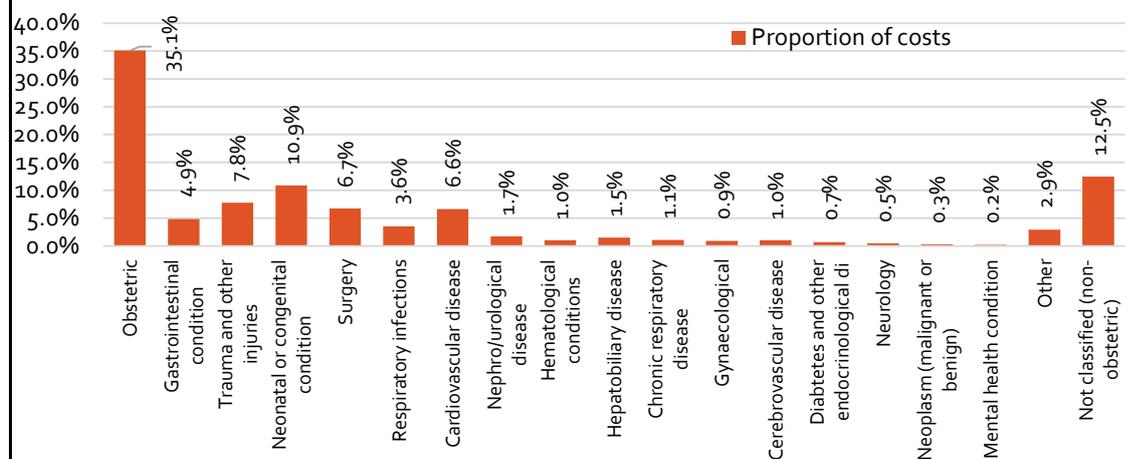
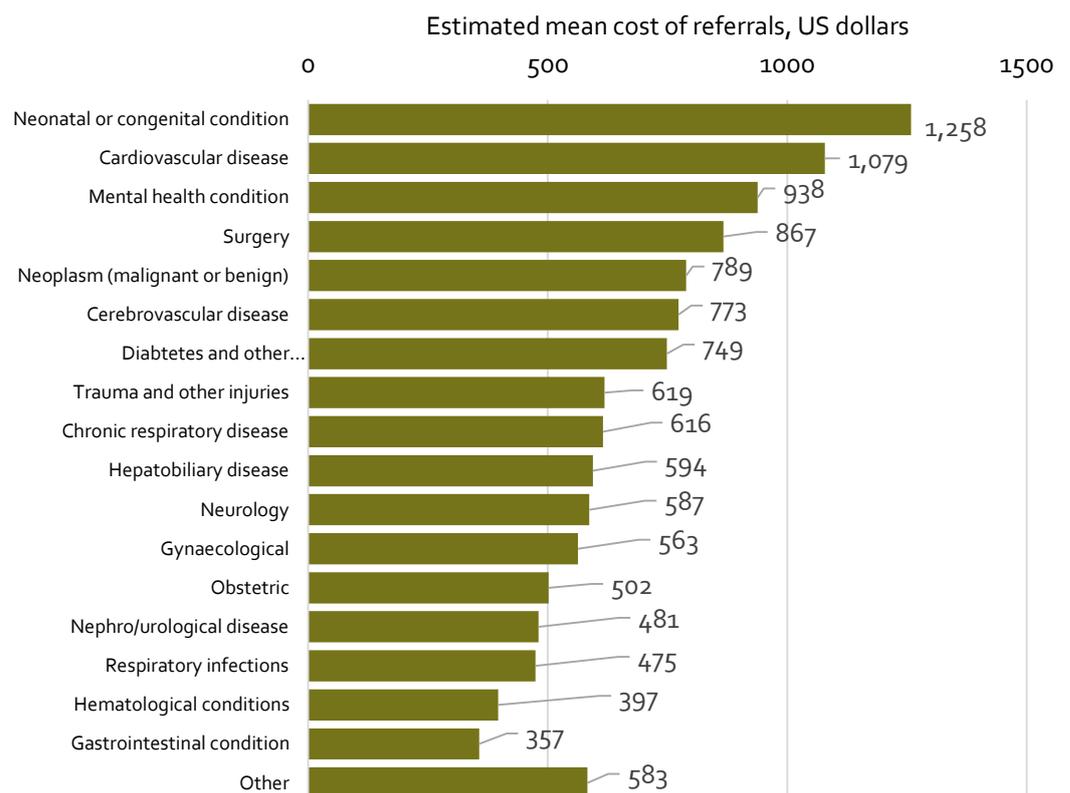


Fig 11 - Estimated average hospital cost per referral by diagnosis category



5. Costs and referrals per capita

5.1 Overall

**48**  
Estimated annual per capita hospital cost in USD

**41**  
estimated annual per capita hospital cost for Bekaa

**68**  
estimated annual per capita hospital cost for Beirut & Mt Lebanon

**41**  
estimated annual per capita hospital cost for North

**56**  
estimated annual per capita hospital cost for South

Fig 12 - Trends of referrals by region

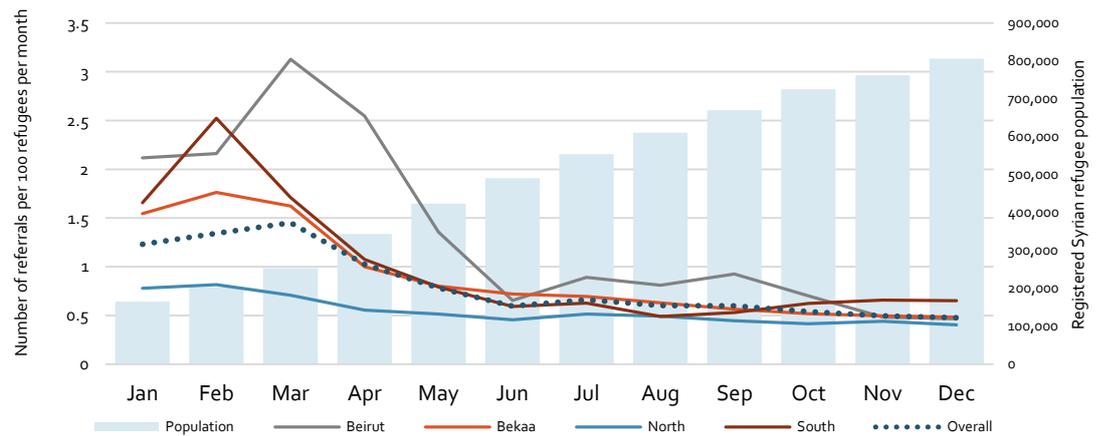
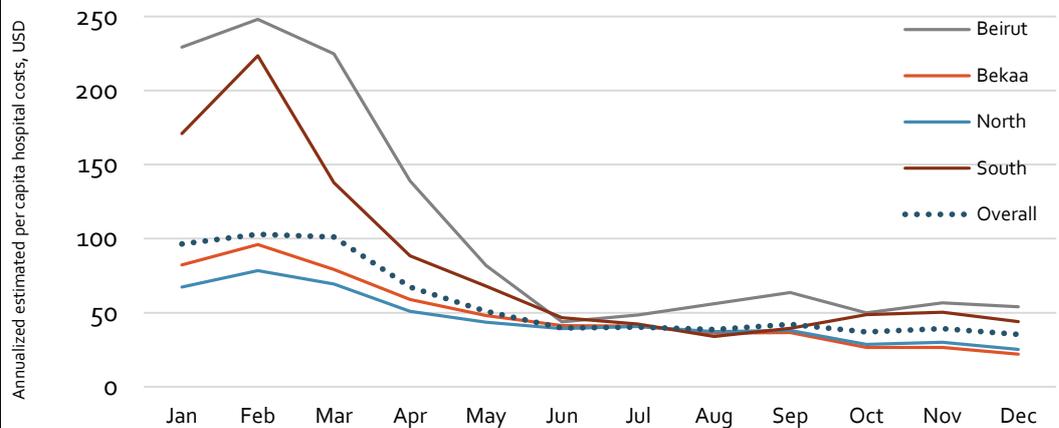


Fig 13 - Trends of per capita hospitals costs by region



4.2 Average costs

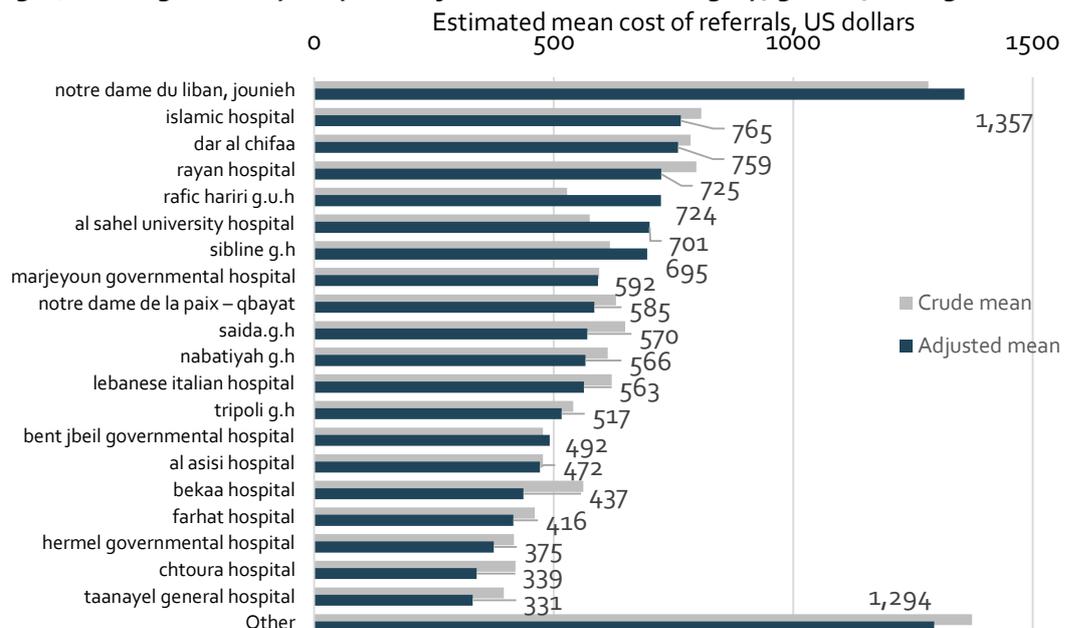
**1357**  
Adjusted average cost estimate for Notre dame du Liban (Jounieh)

**1294**  
Adjusted average cost estimate for small providers

**765**  
Adjusted average cost estimate for Islamic hospital

**331**  
Adjusted average cost estimate for Taanayel hospital

Fig 14 - 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.