

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

41,168were referred
between January
and December**15,252**

referrals in Bekaa

10,244referrals in Beirut &
Mt Lebanon**10,420**

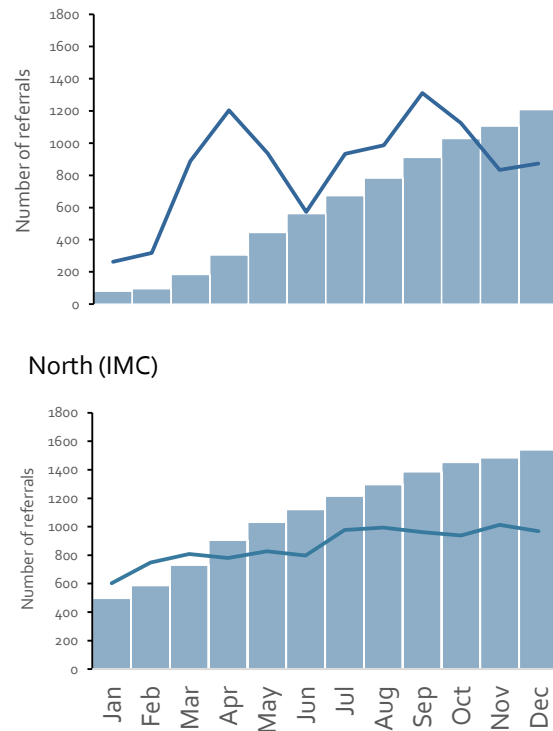
referrals in North

5,252

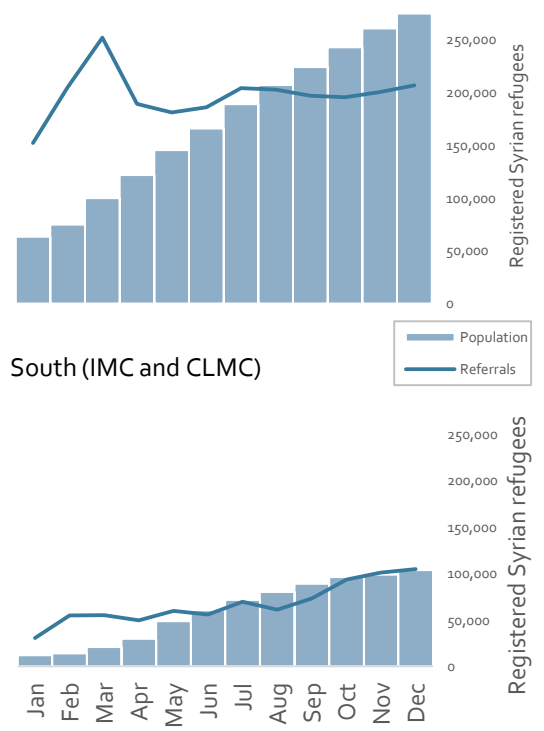
referrals in South

Fig 1 - Trends by region and agency

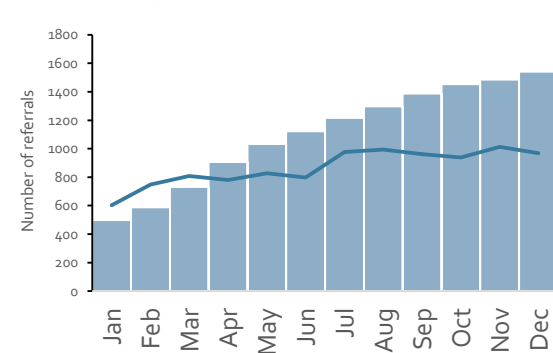
Beirut and Mt Lebanon (MF and GM)



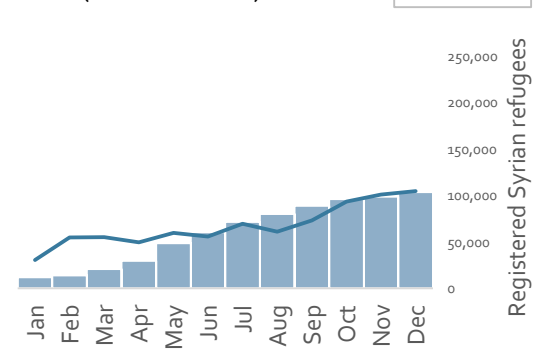
Bekaa (IMC)



North (IMC)



South (IMC and CLMC)



Clockwise from top left, the referring agencies are Makhsumi 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

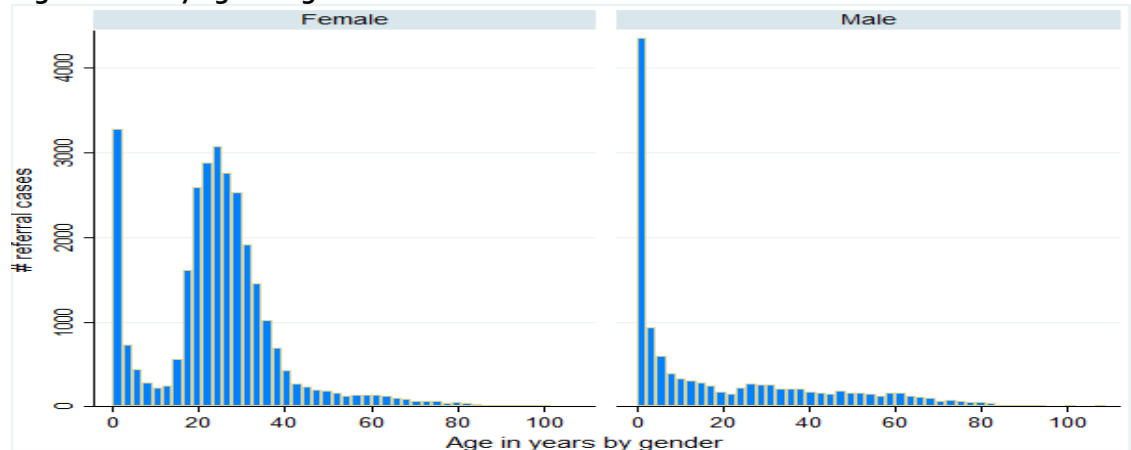


Fig 3 - Distribution by region and agency

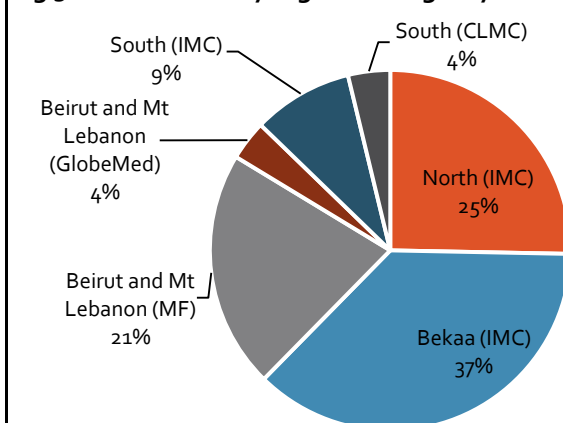
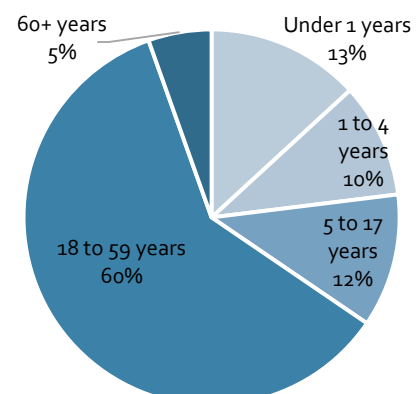


Fig 4 - Distribution by age group



2. Distribution by diagnosis

2.1 Reasons for referrals

40.6%

were referred for
Obstetric care

7.9%

were referred for
Gastrointestinal
condition

7.3%

were referred for
Trauma and other
injuries

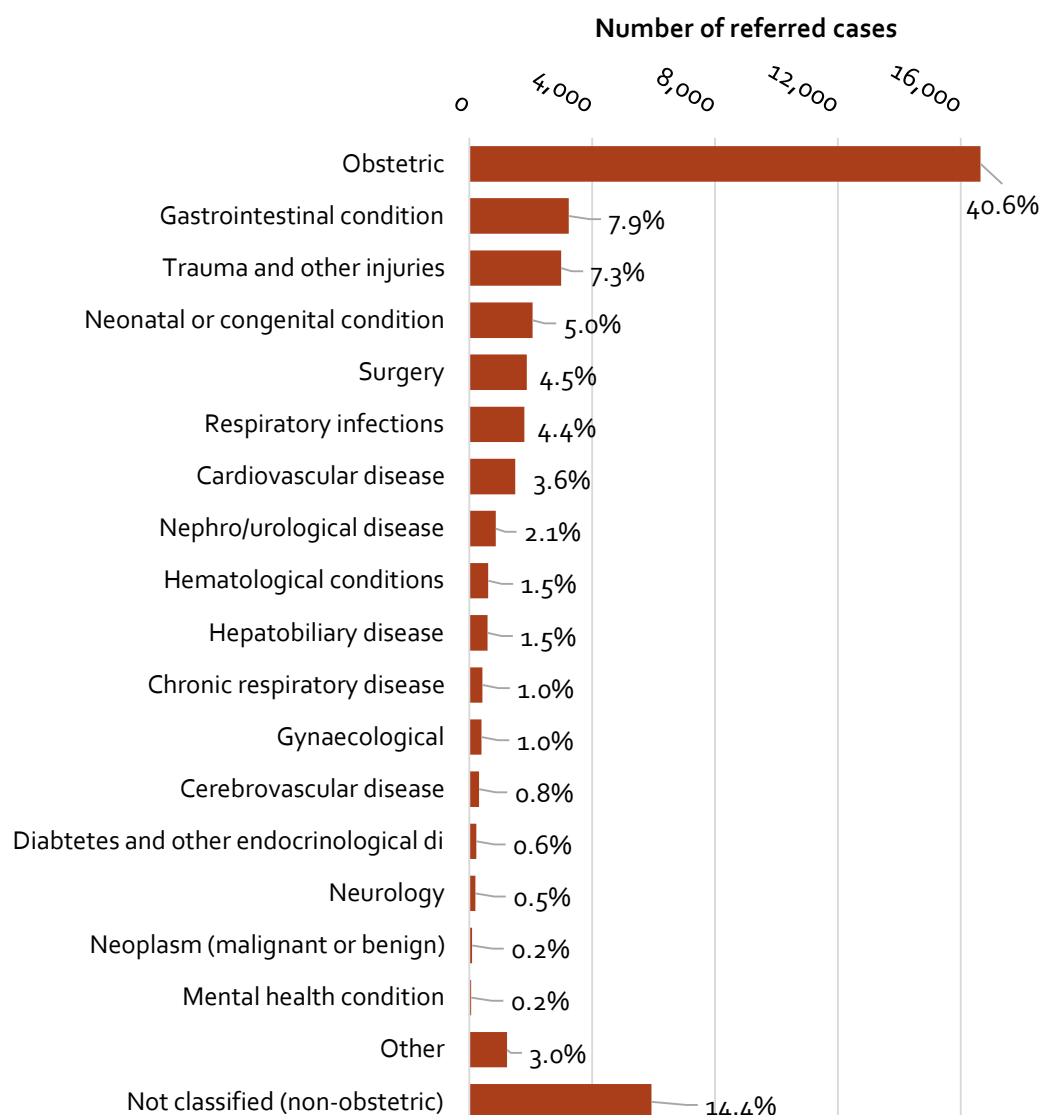
5.0%

were referred for
Neonatal or
congenital condition

4.5%

were referred for
Surgery

Fig 5 - Distribution of referral cases by diagnosis category



2.2 What were the obstetric referrals?

62.4%

for Normal delivery

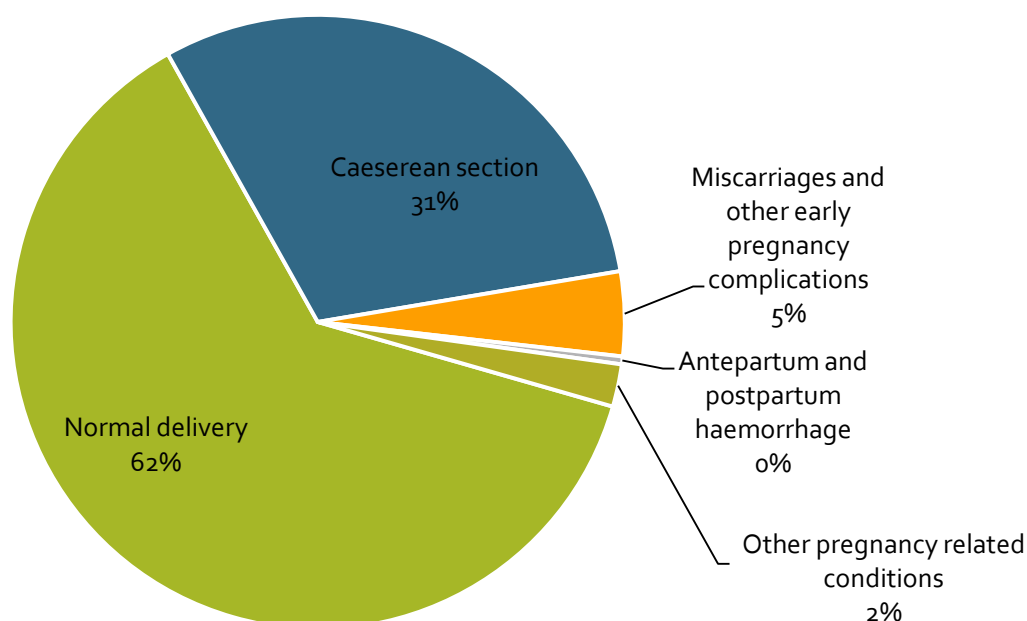
30.5%

for Caesarean section

4.4%

for Miscarriages and
other early
pregnancy
complications

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

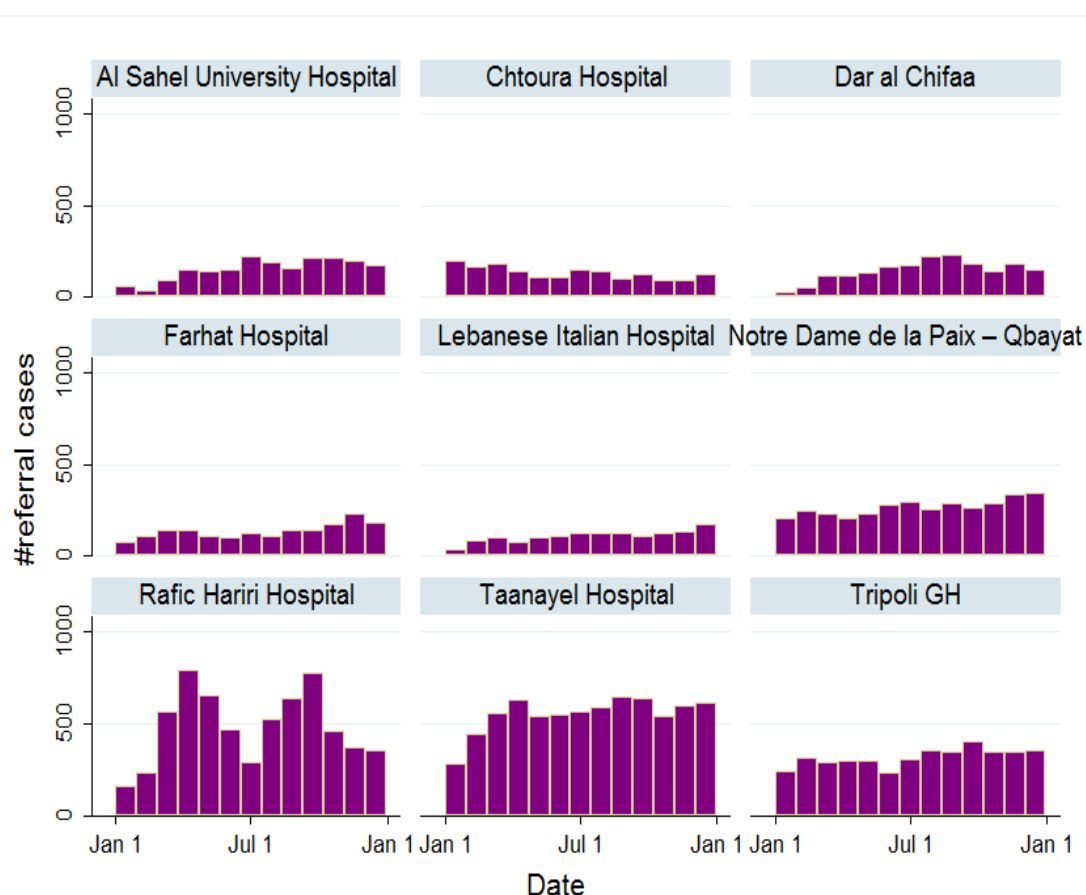
24

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

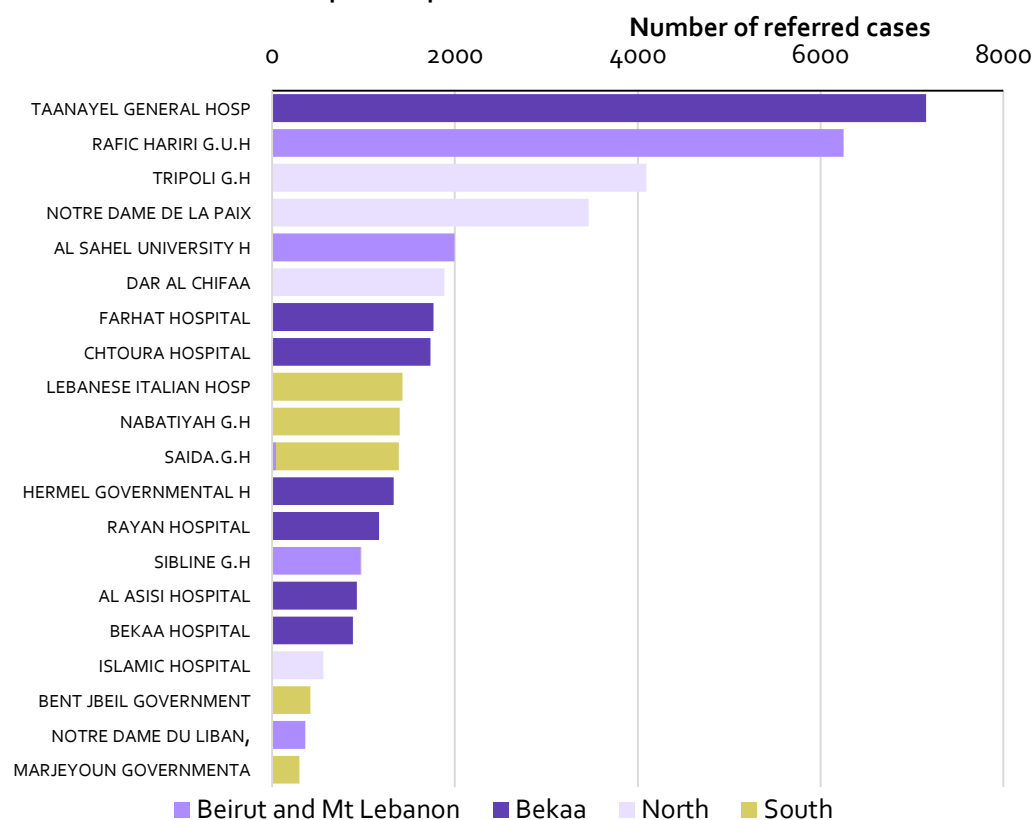
4095

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

23,854,327Estimated 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

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

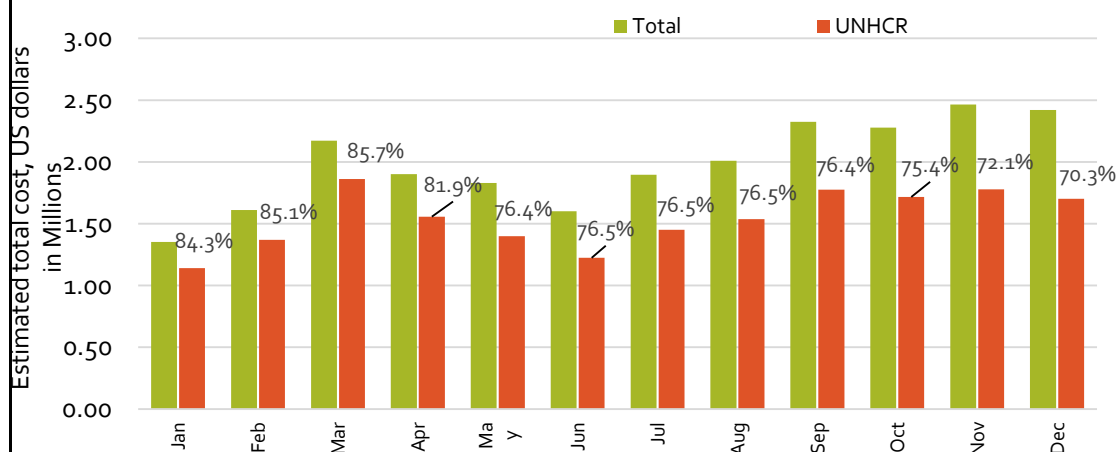
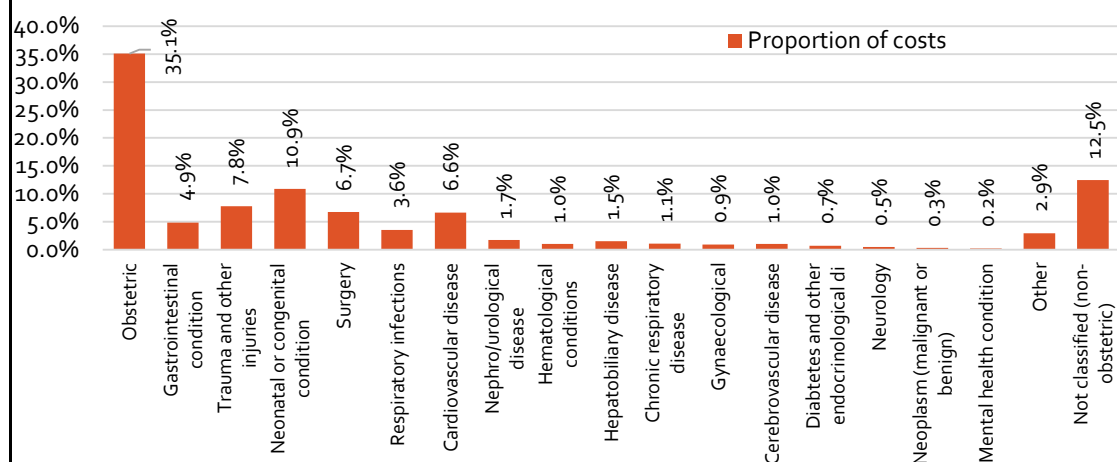


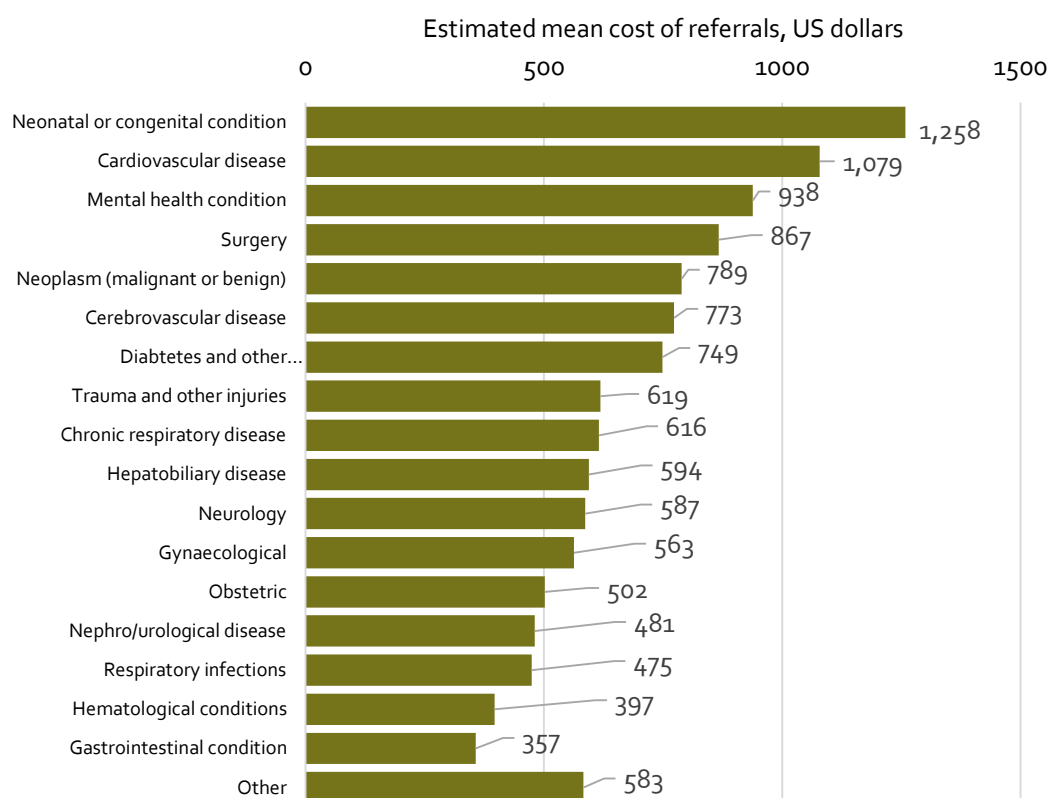
Fig 10 - Proportion of hospital costs by diagnosis category



4.2 Average costs

580Average 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 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

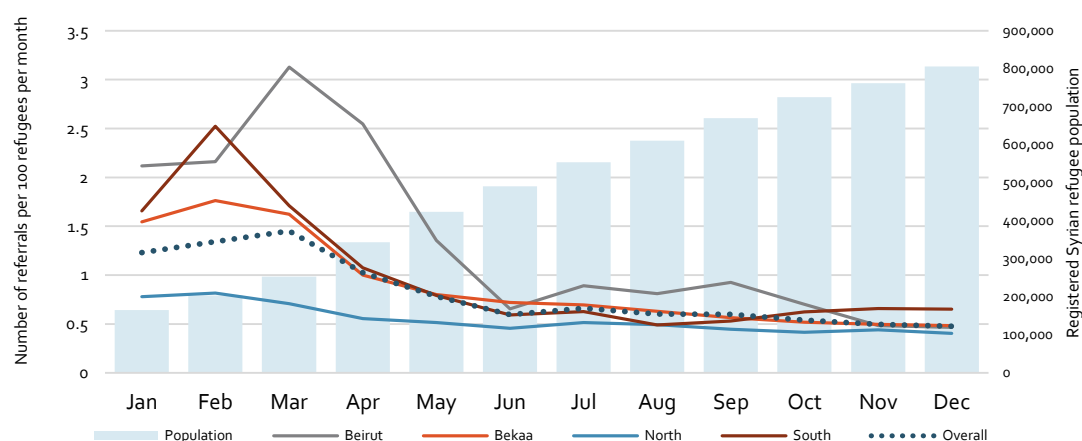
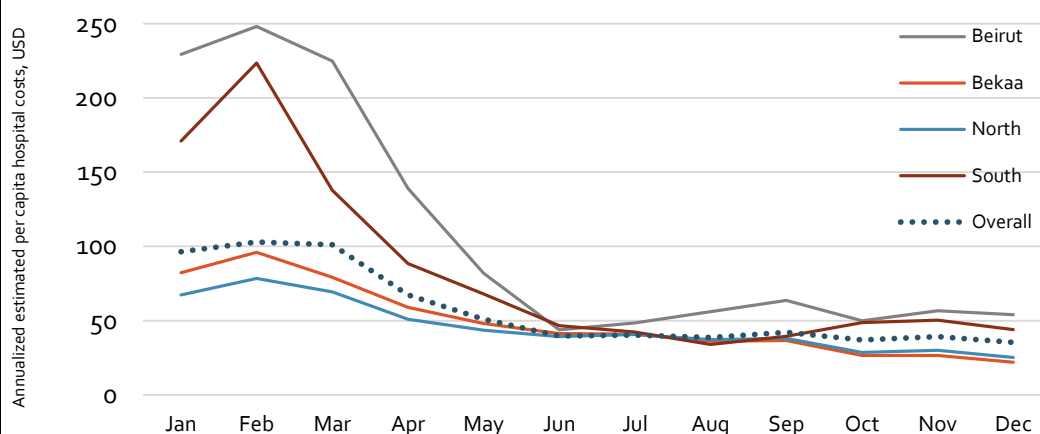


Fig 13 - Trends of per capita hospitals costs by region



4.2 Average costs

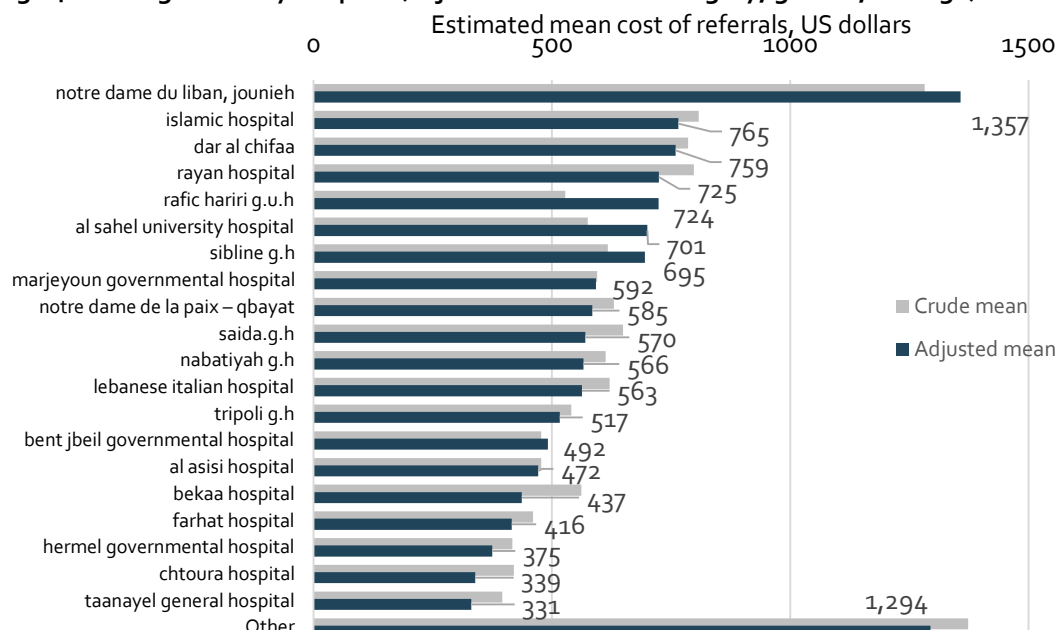
1357
Adjusted average cost
estimate for Notre dame
du Liban (Jounieh)

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.