

OP14**Funding Trends of Medical Colleges and Universities in China: 1998-2013**

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Introduction: Medical education is arguably the most expensive tertiary education. In recent years, especially after 2008, the Chinese central government has adjusted the financial policy to allocate more funding for medical colleges and universities. Although a certain number of studies have examined the cost and financial demand of general tertiary education, few of them have focused specifically on that of medical education. Existing studies can hardly provide an overall picture of the funding level and diversity among medical colleges and universities in China. The current study aims to address the gap by analyzing the funding trends from 1998 to 2013 for medical colleges and universities.

Method: We base our study on the restricted-use institutional data during the period of 1998-2013 reported to China's Ministry of Education for national statistical purpose. Our sample contains 186 medical colleges and universities from Eastern, Central and Western China. Statistics are calculated to describe funding level (e.g., mean) and disparity (e.g., GINI coefficient, Theil coefficient) as well as their trends over years.

Findings: We find that: 1) Currently, medical colleges and universities in China on average has a relatively low level of funding. 2) Although the funding level for medical colleges and universities has increased for 6.3 times since 1998, the funding level per student has only limited increase (30%) during the same period. 3) Level of funding among medical colleges and universities varies substantially, with the Gini coefficient for overall funding level being 0.41 and that for funding level per student being 0.23.

Conclusion: The current paper provides an overall picture of education finance for medical colleges and universities in China, which is important for understanding the current challenges facing medical education in the country. We call for a further increase in per-student funding for medical schools and a reduction of the funding disparity to make possible goals of Health China 2030.