

Press Release

Main Findings of the Access to Health Services Survey-2003

**4.0% of persons received health services needed over an hour to reach health facility compared to 0.4% as was the case before the Intifada.
33.3% were unable to receive health services due to high costs.**

Within the PCBS's plan to provide comprehensive statistics on various topics, and in light of the lack of data concerning health services, a special survey was conducted to detect accessibility of households to health services. The survey, which is the first of its kind at the national level, was conducted in the period between November 15th, 2003 and January 7th, 2004.

The objectives of the survey was to identify the extent of availability of health services, assess satisfaction of beneficiaries and to provide data base on accessibility to health institutions.

The sample covered a total of 4,077 households of whom 2,745 households were from the West Bank and 1,332 from Gaza Strip.

Availability of Health Services:

94.3% of households in the Palestinian Territory have health center at their same locality (92.6% in the West Bank and 97.7% in Gaza Strip). 38.9% have hospitals at the same locality (25.2% in the West Bank and 66.2% in Gaza Strip).

Receiving of Health Services:

88.9% of those in need to health services in the Palestinian Territory managed to do so. (91.7% in the West Bank and 83.5% in Gaza Strip). Of these 61.9% suffered from Physical Health Problems, 18.3% from chronic diseases while 4.9% were considered emergency cases.

- 29.9% of those receiving health services in the Palestinian Territory visited MD clinics (36% in the West Bank and 16.7% in the Gaza Strip).

42.5% of those who visited the MD clinic stated that they had no other choice, while 25.2% stated that they resorted to government hospitals because the service provided was better. 22.8% sought UNRWA health services due to the availability of health insurance.

Provider of Health Services:

47.8% received treatment in the Palestinian Territory resorted to a general practitioner (42.5% in the West Bank and 59.2% in Gaza Strip), while 40.1% were treated by specialized Physician (43.2% in the West Bank and 33.3% in Gaza Strip).

Access to Health Facilities:

Currently 4.0% of person received health services in the Palestinian Territory needs more than an hour to reach the health facility (5.4% in the West Bank and 0.2% in Gaza Strip), compared to 0.4% prior to the Intifada (0.6% in the West Bank and 0.0% in Gaza Strip).

Difficulties while Receiving Health Services:

29.5% of persons had wait for too long before receiving the service, while 28.9% complained from the lack of medicaments.

34.7% of those receiving health services in the West Bank considered waiting for too long as a problem, while 38.5% in Gaza Strip considered that the main problem was the lack of medicaments. 24.4% of those living in rural areas considered Israeli siege and closures as a major problem.

Reasons for not Receiving Health Services:

33.3% didn't receive health services due to high costs. The results indicate that 56.0% of West Bankers didn't receive health services due to high costs while 84.6% in the Gaza Strip had no desire to receive services.

Medical Consultation:

27.1% had medical consultation at a MD clinic, 18.2% at a pharmacy and 11.3% at a public health center.

39.9% consulted a specialized Physician (33.7% in the West Bank and 58.0% in Gaza Strip). This was followed by the general practitioner at 30.9%.

5.9% of those seeking medical consultation faced difficulties to receiving it, 81.2% felt that waiting for too long was a major problem for not receiving consultation (80.3% in the West Bank and 100% in Gaza).

64.1% of those who needed medical consultation and did not get it was due to waiting for too long.