We dedicate this paper to the memory of our coauthor Zachary Johnson.

Contributors: AWM had the original idea for the study, participated in interpreting data and writing the article, and is the guarantor for the study. PKP discussed core ideas, organised data analysis, and participated in interpreting data and writing the article. GB discussed core ideas and participated in interpreting data and writing the article. CL, FL, and ZJ participated in data retrieval and analysis. JW participated in interpreting data and writing the article.

Funding: None.

Competing interests: AWM, PKP, GB, and ZJ were authors of the previous article that suggested the present study hypothesis.<sup>2</sup>

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Private funding of elective hospital treatment in England and Wales, 1997-8: national survey

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BMJ 2000;320:904-5

The longest delays for admission to NHS hospitals have been reduced, and hospital throughput has increased in recent years. Whether the NHS has become more self sufficient in terms of elective treatment in hospital is not known. In 1981 the proportion of elective treatments purchased privately in England and Wales was 13.2%, and in 1986 it was 14.8%.<sup>1</sup> For 1992-3 it was 14.1% (BT Williams, JP Nicholl, unpublished data). Using the same methods as in these previous studies we compared the volume and nature of elective hospital care funded publicly and privately in England and Wales in 1997-8.

## Methods and results

Information on patients admitted as inpatients or day cases during sample periods in financial year 1997-8 were obtained from 215 of 221 acute independent hospitals with operating departments in England and Wales2; data obtained included the patient's clinical status, demographic information, and source of funding for the procedure. Numbers for the whole year were estimated by weighting the sample data according to the duration of sampling, the time of year, and the number of hospitals that did not respond; these numbers were validated as previously described.3 Extracts of the latest data (for 1996-7) were obtained from the Department of Health and the Welsh Information Agency's hospital episodes statistics for waiting lists and scheduled admissions for NHS and private patients admitted for non-psychiatric, non-maternity care. Data for first consultant episodes (98% of all consultant episodes for elective patients and equivalent to the number of admissions) and data from independent hospitals were analysed using SPSS statistical software. Although these two sources of data were out of phase by a year, hospital episodes in the NHS for general and acute specialties rose only 2% between 1996-7 and 1997-8 (NHS Executive, personal communication, 1999).

Altogether 739 810 of 5 094 404 patients (14.5%) had had private funding, and 591 755 of 4 415 334 surgical patients (13.4%) had had private funding (table). One in 10 private patients were treated in NHS hospitals, and 1% of NHS patients were treated in independent hospitals. Of the private admissions, 81% were funded by insurance and 18% were funded by the patient.

## Comment

The proportion of elective treatments purchased privately has remained constant over nearly two decades. Although NHS patients and private patients receive a similar range of treatments the types of procedure differ proportionately. A higher than average proportion of patients pay for operations that relieve severe disability or discomfort-such as total replacement of the hip joint, which had a median NHS waiting time of 168 days in 1996-7, and lens operations for cataract (median waiting time 144 days)-and for those for which delay may increase the risk of dying, such as coronary artery operations (94 days). However, it is unlikely that all surgery performed privately would have been carried out on NHS patients. Procedures for which an above average proportion were funded privately included cosmetic operations for non-pathological conditions and gender reassignment. These have low priority in the NHS. The effectiveness of some other operations, such as middle ear drainage with grommets and stripping and ligation of varicose veins, is debatable, and some NHS authorities are refusing to fund them. Operations such as hysterectomy, prostatectomy, and cholecystectomy may be chosen in some instances instead of alternative, non-surgical forms of treatment. Lower thresholds for intervention apply to the use of some operations for private patients.<sup>5</sup> Different clinical guidelines may also apply.

One of the functions of the Commission for Health Improvement is to ensure that clinical practice is evidence based. Its remit does not cover the private sector. Some health insurance companies already evaluate clinical indications for certain procedures before authorising them. Individual payers have no arbiter. The new national care standards commission, Number of elective treatments (excluding abortions) according to source of funding for residents of England and Wales, 1997-8

Operations or procedure   Private   NHS   Total   Private   NHS   Total   Interded     Eyes and ara, nose, and threat		Independent hospitals			NHS hospitals			% privatoly
Fyrs and arr, nose, and throat   29 159   3 921   3 921   3 218   4 81 7   168 282   173 099   16.5     Differ greaprations   8 572   270   8 899   2 652   138 295   140 947   7.5     Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy   11 23   1730   13 036   604   86 098   86 702   11.9     Diner arr, nose, and throat   23 540   1944   25 700   2 500   168 657   189 357   12.1     Dantal operations   20 184   733   21 186   753   153 300   154 133   11.9     Mach or bindor dvessis   110 24 005   80 673   83 478   14.1   12 1202   23 18   630   441   90 316   90 757   17.4     Other yeat operations   10 540   533   11 172   20 83   52 493   531 868   11.8     Diagostic or threspatic endococoy of gatrimistraini at 2 20 530   66 61   33   6 684   1389   524 993   531 488   15.0     Diagostic or threspatic endococoy of gatrinitistraini at 2 20 50   <	Operation or procedure	Private	NHS	Total*	Private	NHS	Total	funded
Lens operations   29   159   39   21   33   218   44   817   166.222   173   019     Other exp operations   8.572   270   8.699   2.652   138.292   140.947   7.5     Drainage of middle aar   10.413   425   10.672   390   52.649   53.039   16.9     Dental operations   20.184   733   21.186   753   153.380   154.133   11.9     Vestor   Volad Vessels   0   164.9   11113   21.205   22.218   20.22     All other heart operations   10.540   538   11.162   2.805   80.377   17.4     Ligation or stripping of varicose veins   12.722   18.88   15.058   50.95   48.340   48.45   20.8     Diagnostic or therapotic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62.655   0.079   65.99   6.693   52.493   53.1686   11.8     Abdominal hemia repair   20.942   3.36   6.491   10.4   80.638   17.7	Eyes and ear, nose, and throat							
Other eye operations   6   572   270   8.899   2.652   133 285   140 947   7.5     Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy   11 223   1 730   13 036   604   86 995   86 702   11.9     Dimer acr, noes, and throat   23 540   1964   25 700   2.600   186 857   189 357   12.1     Dental operations   20 184   733   21 186   753   153 380   154 133   11.9     Heat or Mood vessels   -   -   753   153 380   154 133   11.9     At other heat operations   10 540   583   11 162   2.000 73   83 78   14.1     Ligation or stripping of varices veins   12 72   188   15 559   505   48 340   48 845   2.02     Satisfinitisting of varices veins   12 72   188   15 559   505   48 340   48 845   2.08     Diagestici or therapeutic endoscoy of gastrointestinal tract   6 651   33   6 684   1539   524 993   531 686   11.6     Abdo	Lens operations	29 159	3 921	33 218	4 817	168 282	173 099	16.5
Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy   11 223   17 30   13 036   604   86 098   87 022   11.9     Drainage of middle ear   10 413   425   10 672   390   65 649   53 039   16.9     Dental operations   20 184   733   21 186   753   153 380   154 133   11.9     Dental operations   20 184   733   21 186   753   153 380   154 133   11.9     All other heart operations   10 540   583   11 162   2.05   80 673   83 473   1.4.1     Ligation or stripping of varicose veims   12 782   1888   15 658   5050   48 340   84 845   2.0.2     All other heart optartions   6 622   336   6 390   441   303 316   30 757   17.4     Other may rotice veims   2.0424   1388   1973   11.04   80 633   81 737   2.0.8     Adominal hemistring regin   2.0424   1388   1973   11.04   80 633   81 737   2.0.8     Hamorrobide	Other eye operations	8 572	270	8 899	2 652	138 295	140 947	7.5
Drainage of middle ear   10 413   425   10 872   990   52 649   53 039   16.9     Other act, nose, and throat   23 540   1964   25 700   156 867   189 357   12.1     Dental operations   20 144   733   21 186   753   153 380   154 133   11.9     Heart or Mood vessels   0   543   11 162   22 605   80 673   83 478   14.1     Ligation or stripping of varices velims   12 782   1888   15 055   505   48 340   48 445   20.8     Satisfinitisfinit tack   Color   336   6 630   441   30 316   30 757   17.4     Other major intra-abdominal operations   6 602   336   6 634   1 664   52 493   53 1686   11.6     Diagnostic or threquilic endocopy of gastrointestinal tract   2 6265   30 79   6 595   6 639   52 493   37 103   6.2     Circumckion   3 236   0 90   430   6 544   57 14   35 544   40 095   14.3	Tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy	11 223	1 730	13 036	604	86 098	86 702	11.9
Other air, nose, and threat   23 540   1964   25 700   2 500   186 857   189 357   12.1     Dental operations   20 184   73   21 186   753   153 30   154 133   11.9     Deparations on coronary arteries   4 369   445   4 843   1 113   21 205   22 318   20.2     All other heart operations   10 540   583   11 162   2 805   80 673   63 478   14.1     Ligation or stripping of varicose veins   12 72   188 85   15 058   505   43 840   848 55   2.0.8     Gastrointestinal trat   C2 2336   6 330   441   30 316   30 757   17.4     Other major intra-abdominal operations   6 661   33   6 684   1359   53 389   54 748   13.0     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62 655   3 079   65 995   6 693   52 441   53 686   1.4.3     Dentations and or perianal operations   8 946   634   9 449   11 048   654   52 414   53	Drainage of middle ear	10 413	425	10 872	390	52 649	53 039	16.9
Dental operations   20 184   733   21 186   753   153 380   154 133   11.9     Hear or blood vessels   U <thu< th="">   U&lt;</thu<>	Other ear, nose, and throat	23 540	1 964	25 700	2 500	186 857	189 357	12.1
Heat or blood vessels   Uperations on coronary arteries   4 369   445   4 843   1 113   21 205   22 318   20.2     All other heat operations   10 540   583   11 162   2005   80 673   83 478   14.1     Ligation or stripping of varicese veins   12 782   1 888   15 058   505   48 340   48 845   20.8     Collecystetory   6 022   306   6 390   441   30 316   30 757   17.4     Obler major intra-abdominal operations   6 651   33   6 684   1 339   54 748   13.0     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   6255   3 079   65 995   6 693   524 993   53 1686   11.6     Abdominal hermi repair   20 424   1 338   1104   80 633   31 703   6.2     Operations for men	Dental operations	20 184	733	21 186	753	153 380	154 133	11.9
Operations on coronary arteries   4 369   445   4 843   1 113   21 205   22 318   20.2     All other heart operations   10 540   583   11 162   2 805   80 673   85 478   14.1     Ligation or stripping of varicose veins   12 782   18 88   15 058   505   48 340   48 845   20.8     Conseptence   0   6 022   336   6 390   441   30 757   17.4     Other major intra-adominal operations   6 651   33   6 684   1359   53 389   54 748   13.0     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62 655   3 079   65 995   6 683   524 993   531 686   11.6     Abdominal hernia repair   20 424   13 88   21 973   1 104   80 633   81 737   20.8     Heamorrhoidecomy and other anal or perianal operations   8 946   654   52 414   53 068   15.3     Operations for mo   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -   -	Heart or blood vessels							
All other heart operations 10 540 583 11 162 2 805 80 673 83 478 14.1   Ligation or stripping of varicese veins 12 782 1 888 15 058 505 48 340 48 445 20.8   Cholecystectomy 6 022 336 6 390 441 30 316 30 757 17.4   Other major intra-abdominal operations 6 651 33 6 684 1 359 53 389 54 748 13.0   Diagnostic or threapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract 62 655 30 79 6 989 53 686 11.6   Abdominal hernia repair 20 424 1 388 21 973 1 104 80 633 81 737 20.8   Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations 8 946 654 5 741 39 524 40 095 14.3   Vasectomy 2 384 1 874 4 310 190 3 631 37 103 6.2   Circumcision 3 250 90 3 374 193 854 15.5   Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus 5 198 107 5 305 262 22 198 24 817 14.4	Operations on coronary arteries	4 369	445	4 843	1 113	21 205	22 318	20.2
Ligation or stripping of varicose veins 12 782 1888 15 058 505 48 340 48 845 20.8 Gastraintestinal tract Cholecystectomy 6 6022 336 6390 441 339 316 30 767 17.4 Other major intra-abdominal operations 6 651 33 6 684 1359 53 389 54 748 13.0 Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract 62 655 30 79 65 995 6 663 81 77 20.8 Haemorrholdectomy and other anal or perianal operations 8 946 634 9 648 654 52 414 53 068 15.3 Operations for men Prostatectomy 6 080 430 6 544 571 39 524 40 095 14.3 Vasectomy 6 080 430 6 544 571 39 524 40 095 14.3 Vasectomy 6 080 430 6 544 571 39 524 40 095 14.3 Vasectomy 6 080 430 6 544 571 39 524 40 095 14.3 Vasectomy 6 080 430 6 544 571 39 524 40 095 14.3 Vasectomy 6 080 430 6 544 571 39 524 40 095 14.3 Vasectomy 7 2 384 1874 4310 190 38 613 37 103 6.2 Circumsion 3 250 90 3 374 281 24 372 24 653 12.6 Gynaecological Dilation and curetage 3838 100 3 938 332 44 213 44 545 8.6 All hystrectomy 10 320 562 11 018 631 59 223 99 854 15.5 Repair prolapes of vagina or uterus 5 198 107 5 305 262 22 219 22 481 19.7 Other gynaecological 42 052 917 43 177 243 197 356 199 799 18.3 Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts 469 449 918 195 47 432 47 627 1.4 Breast Total excision of breast 2 051 96 2 114 7 126 13 164 13 290 14.1 Partial excision of breast 7 116 456 7 572 466 34 983 35 449 17.6 Orthogaedic operations 36 362 2 146 38 833 330 197 058 200 388 16.6 Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint 9 0571 1655 11 299 1136 35 239 06 375 22.5 Total replacement of hip joint 9 571 1655 11 299 1136 35239 08 375 22.5 Total replacement of hip joint 9 0571 1655 11 299 138 33 330 197 058 200 388 16.6 Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint 32 026 2 774 35 287 12.2 Total excision of tesast 7 116 456 7 572 466 34 983 35 449 17.6 Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint 32 026 2 774 35 287 12.2 Total replacement of hip joint 9 040 134 21 122 1139 169 764 170 903 10.7 All other operations of skin 19 406 1349 21 122 1139 169 764 170 903 10.7 All other operatio	All other heart operations	10 540	583	11 162	2 805	80 673	83 478	14.1
Destrointestinal tract   Cholesystetomy   6 022   336   6 390   441   30 316   30 757   17.4     Other major intra-abdominal operations   6 651   33   6 684   1359   53 389   54 748   13.0     Digmostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62 655   3 079   65 995   6 683   52 4983   531 686   11.6     Abdominal hernia repair   20 424   1398   21 973   1 104   80 633   81 737   20.8     Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations   8 946   654   52 414   53 068   15.3     Operations for me	Ligation or stripping of varicose veins	12 782	1 888	15 058	505	48 340	48 845	20.8
Cholecystectomy   6 022   336   6 390   441   30 316   30 757   17.4     Other major intra-abdominal operations   6 651   33   6 684   1359   53 389   54 748   13.0     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62 655   3 0.79   65 995   6 693   524 993   531 686   11.6     Abdominal hernia regair   20 424   1 398   21 973   1 104   80 633   81 737   20.8     Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations   8 946   634   9 648   654   52 414   53 068   15.3     Operations for men   -	Gastrointestinal tract							
Other major intra-abdominal operations   6 651   33   6 684   1 359   53 389   54 748   13.0     Diagnositic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62 655   3 079   65 995   6 693   524 993   53 1686   11.6     Abdominal hernia repair   20 424   1 398   21 973   1 104   80 633   81 737   20.8     Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations   8 946   654   52 414   53 068   15.3     Operations for men   -	Cholecystectomy	6 022	336	6 390	441	30 316	30 757	17.4
Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract   62 655   3 079   65 995   6 693   524 993   531 686   11.6     Abdominal hernia repair   20 424   1 398   21 973   1 104   80 633   81 737   20.8     Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations   8 946   634   9 648   654   52 414   53 068   15.3     Operations for men     713   39 524   40 095   14.3     Vasectomy   2 384   1 874   4 310   190   38 913   37 103   6.2     Circumcision   3 250   90   3 374   281   24 372   24 663   12.6     Gynaecological      11.018   631   592.23   598 654   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   22 4481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation,	Other major intra-abdominal operations	6 651	33	6 684	1 359	53 389	54 748	13.0
Abdominal hemia repair   20   20   2424   1398   21   973   1104   80   633   81   737   20.8     Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations   8   946   634   9   648   654   52   114   53   50   50   50   50   52   414   53   668   15.3     Prostatectomy   6   080   430   6   544   571   39   524   40   095   14.3     Vasectomy   2   384   1874   4   310   190   36   913   37   103   6.2     Circumcision   3   250   90   3374   221   24   453   8.6     All hysterectomy   10   320   562   11018   631   59   223   58   854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5   198   107   5   305   262   22   19   24	Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of gastrointestinal tract	62 655	3 079	65 995	6 693	524 993	531 686	11.6
Haemorrholdectomy and other anal or perianal operations   8 946   634   9 648   654   52 414   53 068   15.3     Operations for men   Prostatectomy   6 080   430   6 544   571   39 524   40 095   14.3     Vasectomy   2 384   1 874   4 310   190   36 913   37 103   6.2     Circuncision   3 250   90   3 374   281   24 372   24 663   12.6 <b>Gynaecological</b> 90   3 374   281   24 372   24 663   12.6     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11018   651   59 233   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   24 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, figation, occlusion of oviducts   469   49   91   15   47 627   1.4     Paral	Abdominal hernia repair	20 424	1 398	21 973	1 104	80 633	81 737	20.8
Operations for men     Prostatectomy   6 080   430   6 544   571   39 524   40 095   14.3     Vasectomy   2 384   1 874   4 310   190   36 913   37 103   6.2     Circumcision   3 250   90   3 374   281   24 372   24 653   12.6     Gynaecological     3 303   744   2181   59 854   15.5     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast    7116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Othopagedie	Haemorrhoidectomy and other anal or perianal operations	8 946	634	9 648	654	52 414	53 068	15.3
Prostatectomy   6 080   430   6 544   571   39 524   40 095   14.3     Vasectomy   2 384   1 874   4 310   190   36 913   37 103   6.2     Circumcision   3 250   90   3 374   281   24 372   24 653   12.6 <b>Dilation and curettage</b> 3 838   100   3 938   332   44 213   44 545   8.6     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 050   262   22 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4 <b>Pareasi</b> Costin of breast   2 051   96   2 147   126   13 164   13 290   14.1     Partial exclaicment of hip joint   9 57	Operations for men							
Vasectomy   2 384   1 874   4 310   190   36 913   37 103   6.2     Circumcision   3 250   90   3 374   281   24 372   24 653   12.6     Gynaecological   0   3 938   332   44 213   44 545   8.6     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 1018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast   7   16   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Orthopaedic   7   16   55   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total exclision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466	Prostatectomy	6 080	430	6 544	571	39 524	40 095	14.3
Circumcision   3 250   90   3 374   281   24 372   24 663   12.6     Gynaecological           Dilatation and curettage   3 838   100   3 938   332   44 213   44 545   8.6     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast	Vasectomy	2 384	1 874	4 310	190	36 913	37 103	6.2
Gynaecological     Dilatation and curettage   3 838   100   3 938   332   44 213   44 545   8.6     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   2 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast   7   116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Orthogaedie   7   116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Other orthopaedic operations   3 6 362   2 146   38 833   3 300   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or thrapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056 </td <td>Circumcision</td> <td>3 250</td> <td>90</td> <td>3 374</td> <td>281</td> <td>24 372</td> <td>24 653</td> <td>12.6</td>	Circumcision	3 250	90	3 374	281	24 372	24 653	12.6
Dilatation and curettage   3 838   100   3 938   332   44 213   44 545   8.6     All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast   2   051   96   2 147   126   13 164   13 290   14.1     Partial excision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Othagedic   7   116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     OthageIacement of kine joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5   7041 replacement of kine jointi	Gynaecological							
All hysterectomy   10 320   562   11 018   631   59 223   59 854   15.5     Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5 198   107   5 305   262   22 219   22 481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast	Dilatation and curettage	3 838	100	3 938	332	44 213	44 545	8.6
Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus   5   198   107   5   305   262   22   22   481   19.7     Other gynaecological   42   052   917   43   177   2   443   197   356   199   799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47   432   47   627   1.4     Breast   Total excision of breast   2   051   96   2   147   126   13   164   13   290   14.1     Partial excision of breast   7   116   456   7   572   466   34   983   35   449   17.6     Othopaedic   Total replacement of hip joint   9   571   1<655	All hysterectomy	10 320	562	11 018	631	59 223	59 854	15.5
Other gynaecological   42 052   917   43 177   2 443   197 356   199 799   18.3     Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast   Total excision of breast   2 051   96   2 147   126   13 164   13 290   14.1     Partial excision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Othopaedic   Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683	Repair prolapse of vagina or uterus	5 198	107	5 305	262	22 219	22 481	19.7
Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts   469   449   918   195   47 432   47 627   1.4     Breast   Total excision of breast   2 051   96   2 147   126   13 164   13 290   14.1     Partial excision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Orthopaedic   Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   452<	Other gynaecological	42 052	917	43 177	2 443	197 356	199 799	18.3
Breast     Total excision of breast   2 051   96   2 147   126   13 164   13 290   14.1     Partial excision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Orthopaedic   Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   349   21 122   1 139	Division, ligation, occlusion of oviducts	469	449	918	195	47 432	47 627	1.4
Total excision of breast   2 051   96   2 147   126   13 164   13 290   14.1     Partial excision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Orthopaedic   Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903	Breast							
Partial excision of breast   7 116   456   7 572   466   34 983   35 449   17.6     Orthopaedic   Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1003 960	Total excision of breast	2 051	96	2 147	126	13 164	13 290	14.1
Orthopaedic     Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous     23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724 <t< td=""><td>Partial excision of breast</td><td>7 116</td><td>456</td><td>7 572</td><td>466</td><td>34 983</td><td>35 449</td><td>17.6</td></t<>	Partial excision of breast	7 116	456	7 572	466	34 983	35 449	17.6
Total replacement of hip joint   9 571   1 655   11 299   1 136   35 239   36 375   22.5     Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous     23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267 <t< td=""><td>Orthopaedic</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></t<>	Orthopaedic							
Total replacement of knee joint   5 041   924   5 965   419   25 960   26 379   16.9     Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Total operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Total operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267	Total replacement of hip joint	9 571	1 655	11 299	1 136	35 239	36 375	22.5
Other orthopaedic operations   36 362   2 146   38 833   3 330   197 058   200 388   16.6     Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous	Total replacement of knee joint	5 041	924	5 965	419	25 960	26 379	16.9
Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint   32 026   2 774   35 287   1 229   78 827   80 056   28.8     Miscellaneous   Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267   4.5     Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     Total (surgical and medical)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4	Other orthopaedic operations	36 362	2 146	38 833	3 330	197 058	200 388	16.6
Miscellaneous     Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267   4.5     Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     medically)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	Diagnostic or therapeutic endoscopy of joint	32 026	2 774	35 287	1 229	78 827	80 056	28.8
Cosmetic operations   23 165   219   23 663   683   37 414   38 097   38.6     Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267   4.5     Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     medically)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	Miscellaneous							
Gender reassignment   104   0   104   6   46   52   70.5     Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267   4.5     Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     medically)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	Cosmetic operations	23 165	219	23 663	683	37 414	38 097	38.6
Removal of lesion of skin   19 406   1 349   21 122   1 139   169 764   170 903   10.7     All other operations or procedures   93 003   5 624   99 429   13 285   1 003 960   1 017 245   9.5     Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267   4.5     Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated medically)   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     Total (surgical and medical)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	Gender reassignment	104	0	104	6	46	52	70.5
All other operations or procedures 93 003 5 624 99 429 13 285 1 003 960 1 017 245 9.5   Type of operation not known 1 001 93 1 094 724 36 543 37 267 4.5   Total operations or procedures 537 917 37 304 579 762 53 838 3 781 734 3 835 572 13.4   No operation or procedure (includes patients treated 131 381 4 638 136 350 16 674 526 046 542 720 21.8   medically) Total (surgical and medical) 669 298 41 942 716 112 70 512 4 307 780 4 378 292 14.5	Removal of lesion of skin	19 406	1 349	21 122	1 139	169 764	170 903	10.7
Type of operation not known   1 001   93   1 094   724   36 543   37 267   4.5     Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated medically)   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     Total (surgical and medical)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	All other operations or procedures	93 003	5 624	99 429	13 285	1 003 960	1 017 245	9.5
Total operations or procedures   537 917   37 304   579 762   53 838   3 781 734   3 835 572   13.4     No operation or procedure (includes patients treated medically)   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     Total (surgical and medical)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	Type of operation not known	1 001	93	1 094	724	36 543	37 267	4.5
No operation or procedure (includes patients treated medically)   131 381   4 638   136 350   16 674   526 046   542 720   21.8     Total (surgical and medical)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	Total operations or procedures	537 917	37 304	579 762	53 838	3 781 734	3 835 572	13.4
Total (surgical and medical)   669 298   41 942   716 112   70 512   4 307 780   4 378 292   14.5	No operation or procedure (includes patients treated medically)	131 381	4 638	136 350	16 674	526 046	542 720	21.8
	Total (surgical and medical)	669 298	41 942	716 112	70 512	4 307 780	4 378 292	14.5

\*Includes cases in which method of funding is not known.

which will regulate the private sector under the Care Standards Bill, may eventually need to embrace the task of ensuring the clinical relevance of procedures.

Contributors: BW initiated the study and with LR, PW, and JM performed the analyses and drafted the paper. LR performed the sampling and weighting procedures. All authors discussed the main issues, interpreted the data, and edited the draft. BW is the guarantor for the study.

 $\bar{\mathrm{F}}\mathrm{unding}$ : The Association of British Insurers and the Independent Healthcare Association.

Competing interests: None declared.

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## *Endpiece* Doctors are just people

Doctors make many phone calls, talk to many people. Doctors look out of their front windows, doctors frown, doctors show nervousness, doctors have things on their mind and show the strain. Doctors are just people, born to sorrow, fighting the long grim fight like the rest of us.

> Raymond Chandler, *The Lady in the Lake*. London: Picador, 1983

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