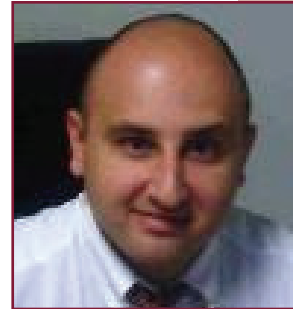


Economic Comparison of Russian and American Healthcare Systems

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Background

The Russian healthcare system is undergoing humongous change with the reforms applied to it after the fall of the Soviet Union in early nineties. Considering the reputation of the American healthcare system it would be useful to perform an economic comparison of the two healthcare systems more closely in order to highlight the features where major differences exist and aspects of funding deficiency and inflated costs.

Methods

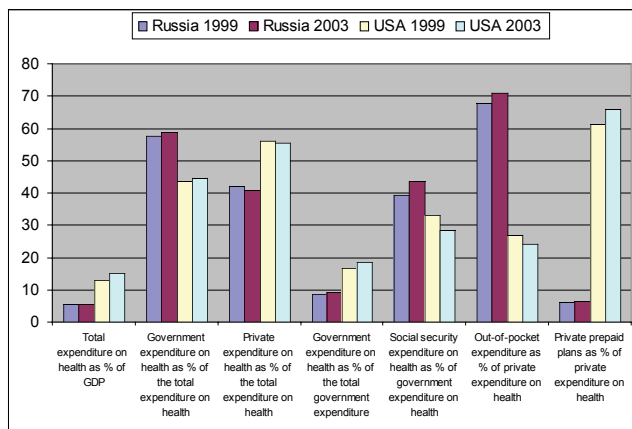
We compared the Russian and American healthcare expenditures in terms of percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) and the role of government funding and per capita healthcare expenditure. We took the information from the World Health Organization (WHO) World Health Report 2006 which presented data for 1999 and 2003 and graphed it for easier comparison.

Results

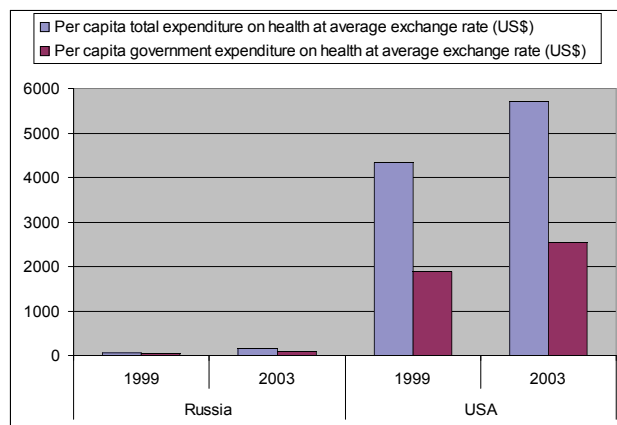
Private expenditure on health is higher in USA; but, the percentage of out-of-pocket expenditure of private expenditure on health in Russia is more than double that in USA. Private prepaid plans prevail in USA (Graph 1). Americans spend much more in US\$ than Russians on healthcare. Total and government per capita expenditure on health is 34 and 26 times that in Russia (Graph 2).

Conclusions

The Russian healthcare system remains largely government-funded. More involvement of private insurance is essential to relieve the burden off the government's budget and improve quality of care. The US healthcare on the contrary is mainly privately funded and suffers from high costs.



Graph 1 shows comparison on healthcare expenditure as percentage of GDP, and percentage of government and private expenditure on health for 1999 and 2003.



Graph 2 shows comparison of per capita total and government expenditure on health for 1999 and 2003.