

DATA AT A GLANCE

# Countries With the Largest Increases in Out-of-Pocket Health Expenditures in the World, 2000-2016

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Health affects the lives of people in innumerable ways, but unfortunately, it is not always accessible to and achievable by all. Although countries generally provide cost-free health services in the public sector, their resources often fall short of the requirements stemming from the public's ever-increasing demand. Therefore, many citizens turn to private providers for their health needs using their own, or out-of-pocket (OOP), funds. Based on the 2000–2016 data sets of the World Bank (2019), we analyzed the trends of country-level OOP health expenditures and identified the five countries with the largest increases in OOP health expenditures.

Data indicate (not in the table) that 89.3% of the 224 countries or groups of countries included in the analysis were found to have increased OOP health expenditures from 2000 to 2016. The increase in the said expenditures had ranged from less than 1% to as high as 1,043% (mean: 160%), implying that the growth trajectories of the OOP health expenditures worldwide varied considerably.

Table 1 shows that the five countries with the largest increases in the OOP health expenditures in 2000–2016 are Myanmar, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Tuvalu, and Armenia. At the top of the list is Myanmar, where its OOP health expenditure of US\$18.8 in 2000 had grown to US\$215.4 after 16 years—or at a rate of 1,043%. (In the context of Myanmar's gross domestic product per capita of US\$1,500, US\$215.4 is a major financial burden to its citizens). Among the remaining countries shown in the table, their OOP health expenditures had grown by at least 531%.

The preceding discussion illustrates that, globally, the citizens have been spending more on health services. The growth in their health expenditures could mean, among others, that more of them are getting sick, more of them are experiencing major illnesses, or more of them are utilizing health services of the private sector. OOP health expenditures have implications for countries that are aiming to provide universal health care to their citizens.

**Table 1**

*Five Countries With the Largest Increases in Out-of-Pocket Health Expenditures, 2000-2016*

Countries	Out-of-pocket expenditure (in US dollars)		Absolute increase	Percentage increase
	2000	2016		
1. Myanmar	18.8	215.4	196.5	1,043
2. Azerbaijan	103.5	941.5	838.1	810
3. Belarus	52.7	412.2	359.4	681
4. Tuvalu	0.61	4.0	3.38	546
5. Armenia	112.1	707.2	595.0	531

## Reference

The World Bank. (2019). *Out-of-pocket expenditure per capita*. Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.OOPC.PP.CD>.