

Predicting the Demand for Healthcare.

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People do not seek health care solely because they are sick. Factors such as perceptions, attitudes and level of social support also influence care-seeking decisions. Health risk appraisals (HRAs) help predict which individuals are most likely to develop serious and expensive illnesses in the long term future. On the other hand, cost-risk assessments identify individuals at greatest risk of using health care services in the near future. The University of Michigan Fitness Research Center uses its Integrated Wellness Management System (IWMS) database to predict who will use high-cost health care services in the next two to three years. Data from self-report questionnaires and clinically measured health risks, behaviors, perceptions, medical history, cost information and other data from employers and health plans are used. The IWMS has shown a high correlation between predicted cost status and actual future cost status. In addition to self-reported data, medical claims data may also be used to predict the individuals who are likely to have the highest percentage of the medical costs of a group. At Health Decisions International, LLC, utilization rates of a high-risk group were two to three times greater than that of a low-risk group.