A Health Account for the Elderly

By David Cutler (and others)

My colleagues are I are engaged in constructing a National Health Account for the elderly population. The Account will have three parts. First, we are measuring the health of the elderly population over time. The bulk of this work has been completed and is published/will be published soon. Second, we are developing new techniques to impute medical spending to diseases. These techniques are designed to be more robust than current methods. Third, we are using disease models to understand how the spending relates to the cost outcomes. Disease models are under construction for a variety of different conditions, including some cancers and heart disease.

In this paper, we will take stock of progress in these areas. We will present as comprehensive a picture of health and medical spending for the elderly as we are able to do. The focus for our analysis will be the time period from 1999-2009, though we will extend backwards as we are able to do so.