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Abstrak

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this study addresses the relationship between poverty, health needs, and health care in South Korea. According to Hart's inverse care law, the availability of good medical care tends to vary inversely with need. The results of this study indicate significant increases in the mortality rate when poverty is high and the number of hospitals is low in the metropolitan area of Seoul, the capital of South Korea. These results support the validity of the inverse care law. Hart was primarily concerned with the effect of market forces on the accessibility of health care. The paradox of the South Korean health care system in a geographical context is that while the authoritative governmental structure supports the development of a private provider market and social policy, the same administrative structure must correct the inequitable distributions of hospitals and assistance for the poor. These findings indicate that the tenets of the inverse care law may apply in some regions but not in others due to differences in the historical formation of the health care system of each region and specific locale.