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**THE IMPACT OF A RISE IN CO-PAYMENTS
ON THE DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES**

by

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MASTER THESIS IN HEALTH CARE ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

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BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The candidate graduated in Basic Health Sciences (1st cycle of the Integrated Master of Medicine) in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto in June 2010.

In September 2011, the candidate entered the Master of Health Care Economics and Management in the School of Economics and Management of the University of Porto.

In July 2013, he graduated in Medicine (Integrated Master of Medicine) in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Porto, with the thesis entitled “Dedicated Emergency Room Surgical Team”.

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“The most decisive actions of our life - I mean those that are most likely to decide the whole course of our future - are, more often than not, unconsidered.”

André Gide, Les faux-monnayeurs

RESUMO

A criação e o aumento dos co-pagamentos em visitas ao Serviço de Urgência são mecanismos frequentemente utilizados para reduzir o *overcrowding* dos serviços com episódios (desnecessários) de baixa gravidade.

Com esse objetivo, em Novembro de 2011, o Governo de Portugal decretou um aumento dos co-pagamentos em inúmeros serviços disponibilizados pelo Serviço Nacional de Saúde, nomeadamente os Serviços de Urgência, e alterou os critérios de elegibilidade para ser concedida isenção de co-pagamentos, com ambas as alterações a terem início a 1 de Janeiro de 2012.

O objetivo desta tese é avaliar o impacto do aumento dos co-pagamentos na procura de Serviços de Urgência em Portugal, no contexto da alteração dos critérios de isenção de co-pagamentos.

Palavras-Chave:

Serviço Nacional de Saúde; Co-pagamentos;

Classificação JEL:

I110, I130, I1180

ABSTRACT

Creating and increasing the amount of co-payments in Emergency Services are mechanisms often used to reduce overcrowding due to (unnecessary) low-severity visits.

With that aim, in November 2011, the Portuguese Government ordered an increase in co-payments for several health services provided by the National Health Service, including Emergency Services, and changed the eligibility criteria for co-payment exemption, both changes taking effect on January 1st 2012.

The objective of this thesis is to evaluate the impact of the increase in co-payments on the demand for Emergency Services in Portugal, in the context of a change in the eligibility criteria for co-payment exemption.

Keywords:

National Health Service; Co-payments

JEL Classification:

I110, I130, I1180