

I.Q. -- Interesting Quote

Editorial Staff

Surgical Zip Code Risk

Who says that medical care is based on what the patient needs? According to a front page article in *The Wall Street Journal*:¹

"People with weak hearts, sore backs and breast cancer may think their symptoms alone decide their care. Not so. A patient's odds of getting a major, invasive procedure can be swayed by something else: his or her zip code."

The author cites a study by Dartmouth Medical School and the American Hospital Association which revealed enormous differences in the application of invasive surgical procedures. The article suggests that this may have a lot to do with the number and aggressiveness of the surgeons in a patient's area.

1. "Maximum Medicine," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 16, 1996.

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