

## I.Q. -- Interesting Quote

Editorial Staff

### HMOs Dangerous to Elderly?

A recent study<sup>1</sup> compared the health of chronically ill patients treated in health maintenance organizations (HMOs) and fee for service systems (FFS). Although they observed adults ranging from 18 to 97 years of age, after four years of observations in three geographic areas, the investigators discovered a disturbing difference:

"For elderly patients (those aged 65 years and older) treated under Medicare, declines in physical health were more common in HMOs than in FFS plans (54% vs 28%;  $P < .001$ )"

### *Reference*

1. Ware JE, Bayliss MS, Rogers WH, Kosinski M, Tarlow AR. Differences in 4-year health outcomes for the elderly and poor, chronically ill patients treated in HMO and fee-for-service systems. JAMA 1996;276: 1039-1047.

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