

Consultant 250

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In your working paper on "Assessment of hospitals of potential concern (excluding central London) ", you fail to consider the effect of customer choice in the location of residence. Obviously, if a customer decides to reside in a rural area, they are going to have less choice of a range of facilities and as a result, are often prepared to travel widely to access more choice, if necessary. In addition, providers of services have less customers in rural areas and therefore may be more expensive. Rural customers can choose to pay more for local access, travel to get cheaper access, or move to a more urban area. It is therefore inappropriate to consider that customers in rural areas should have similar access to a range of private hospital facilities as do urban residents and in this respect, many of the concepts surrounding "Solus" hospitals in rural areas are suspect.

If choice of private hospitals is important to a potential customer, they would be unwise to decide to retire to the Scottish Highlands!