



**An-Najah National University**  
**Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**THE MEDICAL REFERRALS IN THE  
PALESTINIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
2022: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY**

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**This Thesis is Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for The Degree  
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**2024**

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## **Dedication**

To the light of my eyes, the light of my path, and the joy of my life, to the source of kindness and tenderness, to the most beautiful smile that relieves my mind

My mother, then my mother, then my mother

Those whose prayers and words had an impact on my support for continuity and excellence. My blood is close to my heart and my life is enlightening.

To the one who taught me that the world is a struggle and its features are knowledge, and he did not stingy with his constant prayers

My dear father

The owner of the great credit, may God prolong his life.

To the supporter, and eternal lover, the firm rib that I rely on in all my affairs is my companion

My dear wife

To whom God strengthened my arm, they were the best helper

My brothers and sister

To the comrades of the years and to everyone who helped and supported me on this path, I am grateful to all of you.

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After completing the work, there is nothing more beautiful or sweeter than praise. Praise be to God and thanks be to Him as it should be for the majesty of His countenance and the greatness of His authority, and as it should be for His great bounty and great benevolence for what He bestowed upon me from completing this humble research.

Then, I cannot help but pay tribute to everyone who contributed to the completion of this research, and especially to mention...

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For the guidance and correction they gave me... and for the overflow of their humanity, their high morals, and their high level.

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I also thank everyone who extended a helping hand to me from near or far, even by supplication in the back of the unseen. May they all be blessed, and may God reward them for me with the fullest reward, and God is responsible to benefit from this work according to the amount of effort in it and to make it purely for His honorable face, he is capable of that.


## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

# THE MEDICAL REFERRALS IN THE PALESTINIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH 2022: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

Unless otherwise referenced, I declare that the work provided in this thesis is the researcher's work and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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Date: 16.03.2024

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## **Abstract**

The percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health during 2022 reached about 37.5% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, at a total cost of 974,782,080 NIS.

This study aimed to identify and find out the reality and truth of medical referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

**Methodology:** A descriptive study was conducted that included all the medical referrals carried out, conducted, and made by the Palestinian Ministry of Health during the year 2021 was conducted utilizing simple random technique to recruit 554 referrals from 99,064 referrals.

**Results:** Oncology management ranked the first with the highest number of referrals, (27.6%) of all referrals in 2021. The age group 50 years and older constituted the most medical referrals, with a rate of 48.9%.

The unavailability of treatment or the lack of it in the hospitals was the biggest reason for medical referrals, with a rate of 94.9% of the total referrals.

46.2% of the total medical referrals were covered by the Palestinian Ministry of Health within rates ranging from 91-100%.

The governorates of the northern West Bank accounted for 28.5% of the total referrals, followed directly by the southern governorates with a percentage of 27.8%. According to the patient's residency, the Hebron governorate had the highest referral rate with 21.3%, followed by the Jerusalem governorate with 17.7%.

54.7% of the medical referrals were directed and sent to hospitals and health facilities located in Jerusalem Governorate.

Based on the findings it has become imperative to work to reduce the costs and burden resulting from medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, by working to localize the medical services in the related hospitals.

**Keywords:** Medical referrals; Palestinian Ministry of Health; Purchase service.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The Palestinian Ministry of Health provides various medical services to the Palestinian citizen by virtue of the functional tasks assigned to it and considering these services as part of the basic rights stipulated in the Basic Law [1].

In view of the lack of all medical services, specialties, and necessary medical equipment in government health institutions, or because of their low absorptive capacity The Ministry resorts to purchasing some services or to refer citizens for treatment in medical institutions that are not affiliated with it (service providers), whether inside or outside the country [2].

The cost of medical referrals outside government medical institutions has formed a heavy financial burden on the budget of the Palestinian Ministry of Health over the past five years, as it was as follows:

In the year 2015, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 34.2% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 87,620 referrals, at a total cost of 560,873,668 shekels [3].

In the year 2016, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 27% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 91,927 referrals, at a total cost of 566,720,980 shekels [4].

In the year 2017, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 25% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 94,939 referrals, at a total cost of 431,074,755 shekels [5].

In the year 2018, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 25% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 109,818 referrals, at a total cost of 724,622,913 shekels [6].

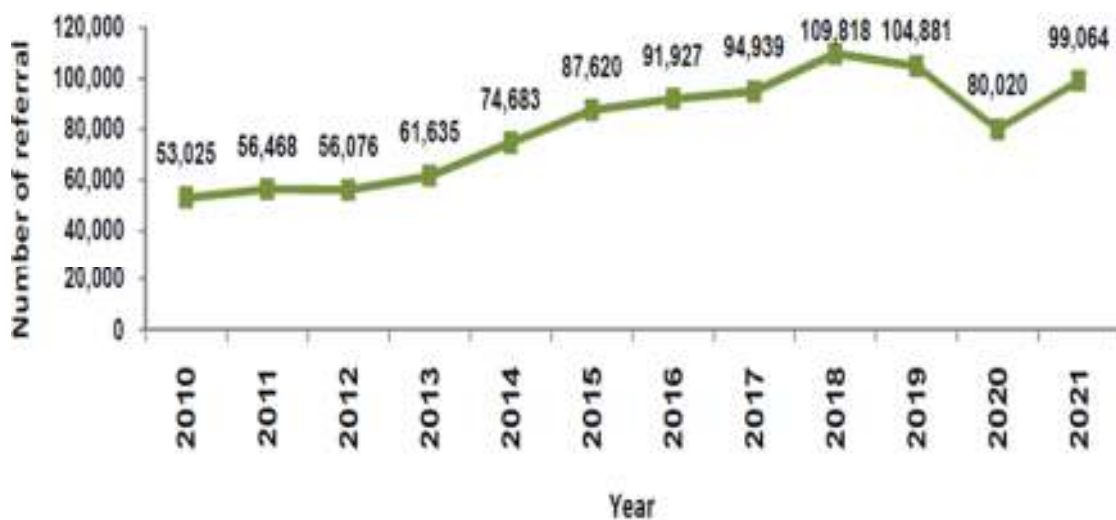
In the year 2019, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 42% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 104,881 referrals, at a total cost of 967,559,108 shekels [7].

In the year 2020, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 39.4% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 80,020 referrals, at a total cost of 825,722,254 shekels [8].

In the year 2021, the percentage of purchasing service from outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health was about 37.5% of the total health spending in the Ministry of Health, by 99,064 referrals, at a total cost of 974,782,080 shekels [9]. See Figure 1.1:

**Figure 1.1**

*Number of service purchase referrals for treatment outside of MOH facilities, Palestine 2010 – 2021 [9]*



The Palestinian Ministry of Health established a system of medical referrals to compensate for the shortage in government health institutions, whether a lack of specialties, medical expertise, equipment, supplies, or medical facilities.

The Ministry of Health contracts with 25 to 30 private and private hospitals inside Palestine to receive the cases referred to it. Four hospitals, including the lion's share of the total of these referrals, are in no order: An-Najah National University Hospital in Nablus, Augusta Victoria Hospital (Al-Matala) in occupied Jerusalem, Istishari Arab Hospital in Ramallah, Al-Ahli Hospital in Hebron [10].

Any patient who requires referral services must first be seen by a medical professional working within a Palestinian Ministry of Health facility, the patient may then be referred to the medical and financial committees of the Service Purchasing Unit (SPU) if the service he needs is not available and not accessible in the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities and hospitals due to a lack of qualified staff, medicines, equipment or medical devices and it meets the requirements in accordance with the legal framework for health insurance and external medical referral. Stipulated in Cabinet Resolution No. 11 of 2006 [11].

There are two types of medical referrals, according to what the Service Purchasing Department reported, the emergency referral which is uploaded directly to the program and reaches the relevant doctor, and the referral is immediately issued, and the non-emergency referral which goes to the regional and specialized committees, which hold a weekly meeting after collecting the files on the specialized electronic program. The committee, after approval, sends the referral files to the service purchasing department, and the department audits them again, conducts a medical review, and then goes to the another department either confirms or rejects the referral, and in case of rejection, returns it with comments [10].

Criteria for determining cases that can be referred to other institutions outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities [12]:

- Lack of availability of the required service in government health institutions [12].
- Lack of availability of medical equipment and equipment necessary for treatment [12].
- There are no beds due to the full occupancy rate [12].
- There is a long waiting list of more than 6 months [12].
- Commitment to pay the patient's contribution percentage of the total cost of treatment as stipulated in the Health Insurance Law [12].
- Obtaining the approval of medical referral committees on the recommendation submitted by government hospitals [12].
- The patient must have valid health insurance before making the transfer decision [12].

Oncology constituted the highest percentage of medical procedures referred to, as it amounted to about 27% of the medical procedures referred to during the year 2021, followed by cardiovascular diseases at 15%, then Urology and Nephrology at 8%, then Ophthalmology at 5% [9].

The percentage of male patients who were referred for treatment outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities was 55.1% of all referrals, while the percentage of females was 44.9% [9].

### **Regional comparison**

When compared with neighboring countries, we find that the percentage of females receiving medical referrals in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan amounted to about 55% of the total referrals, while the percentage of males reached 45% [13].

The diseases most requested for medical referrals in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan were diseases of the genitourinary system at a rate of 17.4%, followed by pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium at a rate of 14.6% [13].

In the Arab Republic of Egypt, the percentage of females receiving a medical referral reached 52% of the total cases, while the percentage of males reached 48% [14].

Also, the diseases that received the most medical referrals in the Arab Republic of Egypt were ophthalmology, at a rate of 17.8%, followed by ear, nose and throat, at a rate of 11.9% [14].

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

The problem of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities lies in the fact that their costs are not only burdensome to the Ministry of Health, but also on the general budget as a whole. At a time when the number of patients referred for treatment outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, and the exorbitant sums incurred by the Ministry of Health is increasing, this increases the financial burden on the Palestinian Authority and its increasing dependence on external support [15].

This study deals with the issue of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities in terms of the reasons for these referrals, their diagnoses, from whom

they were requested, to which body the referral was made, the cost of these referrals, in addition to the patient's demographic factors such as age, gender, and other factors.

This study is considered one of the first studies dealing with the issue of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, especially in the academic field and graduation theses. Therefore, it is hoped that it will form the basis and cornerstone for other studies in this field in the future.

The results of this study will help and / or will improve something in understanding the reasons behind medical referrals, their costs, policies and procedures followed in them in order to work to find appropriate and possible solutions to reduce these referrals and thus reduce their burden and burdensome cost to the budget of the Ministry of Health and the government in general.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

Therefore, many researches and studies have addressed the issue of medical referrals, their circumstances and causes. For example, In a study carried out by the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN) in 2016 under the title of Integrity and Transparency in Medical Referrals Outside the Ministry of Health Institutions, it showed a significant increase and expansion in the issuance of medical referrals for treatment outside the institutions of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, whether in terms of the number of beneficiaries of this service or the financial cost Which is borne by the treasury of the Palestinian state in recent years, for several reasons, the most important of which are the absence of transparency standards for service recipients, the lack of a clear definition of the service package rendered by the Ministry of Health, the large number of accredited external service providers, the lack of transparency of contractual arrangements with it, the lack of transparency in transfer procedures, and the poor quality of documentation. Information and registration management, lack of automation in transactions, weakness of the complaints system, and lack of confidence in the health services provided by the MOH [2].

The 2017 USAID/IntraHealth study, which was to assess bottlenecks in Palestinian Ministry of Health hospitals and facilities that cause referrals outside Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities and hospitals (June 2017), identified weaknesses and shortcomings in seven different main areas: Lack of medical staff and personnel, lack of

sufficient equipment and medicines, insufficient or non-existent diagnostic and treatment devices, long waiting periods especially for specialized treatments, gaps and weaknesses in coordination, communication and feedback between relevant government agencies, and lack of efficiency in the workforce and in the division of labor [16].

To obtain in-depth information, the study relied on conducting personal interviews and filling out a special form to identify the details of the shortcomings, weaknesses, and deficiencies mentioned in the paragraph above [16].

Regarding human resource bottlenecks, the study showed that the Palestinian Ministry of Health lacks qualifications and staff in the following specialties: neurosurgery, ophthalmology, hematology, pediatric cardiology, pediatric nephrology, pediatric surgery, pathological anatomy, and most subspecialties [16].

The study also showed that lack of specialization is the main reason for medical referrals to oncology, neurosurgery, hematology, and nephrology doctors [16].

According to the same study, the percentage of medical referrals from hospitals and government facilities was 96.7% for neurosurgery, 92.7% for blood diseases, 90.2% for kidney diseases, and 65.2% for oncology [16].

One of the most important reasons for transferring patients to hospitals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health or outside the State of Palestine, according to a study prepared and implemented by the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) in 2018, entitled "The shortage and gap in skills in the health sector in the occupied Palestinian territories", is due to the gap or lack of skills of specialists and members of the available medical staff, the absence of donors in cases of organ transplantation, the absence and non-availability of vacant beds in Palestinian hospitals for the purposes of emergency treatment, and for reasons called "social reasons" in reference to cases in which patients insist on receiving treatment outside Facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health or outside Palestine due to their lack of confidence in the capabilities and local medical personnel [17].

Another study carried out by the "Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)" entitled "Assessing the Palestinian Health Sector An Analytical Study at the Macro Level 2020", examined the financial challenges facing the Palestinian

government in providing health services on top of which is the coverage of medical referrals, and showed that the budget allocated to the Palestinian Ministry of Health has maintained relative stability during previous years, it did not match the population growth or the need to develop the health sector and improve its quality without prejudice to the health services provided by the Ministry, especially primary health care. The study also indicated that the decrease in government health insurance revenues is a key factor in the sustainability and expansion of the financial burden of medical transfers [18].

In the context of the study's endeavor to explore the expected burdens related to medical referrals during the next ten years, the analysis of forecasts shows that the number of medical referrals will increase, assuming that there is no government intervention to reduce them in the future, from about 125 thousand to 403 thousand referrals at a cost ranging between 1 075 million NIS and 3,468 million NIS. On the other hand, the number of referrals will increase within the presence of effective government intervention from about 121 thousand to 279 thousand referrals, at a cost ranging between 1054 million NIS and 2,651 million NIS for the same period [18].

The study also indicated that the most important factors that led to the expansion of the number of referrals are insufficient absorptive capacity in government hospitals, lack of expertise, infrastructure and medical specialties, lack of basic and specialized medicines and medical supplies, poor coordination and communication in managing medical referrals, and the impact of workloads on efficiency Manpower, and weakness in the application of instructions for medical referrals [18].

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

The problem of the study lies in the cost, consequences, and high number of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which consumes about 30% of the public expenditure of the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

#### **1.5 Aim**

This study aimed to find out the reasons behind medical referrals, Where they were issued and where they were referred, and to find out solutions to minimize and reduce the number and cost of these referrals.

## **1.6 Objectives**

- To identify the reasons for the referral.
- To determine where the referral was given or issued, and to where was the referral done?

## **1.7 Research questions**

- What are the reasons behind the referral?
- Which diagnosis is the high rate of referral?

## **Chapter Two**

### **Methodology**

#### **2.1 Study setting**

A descriptive study was conducted using a secondary data analysis method that included all the medical referrals carried out, conducted, and made by the Palestinian Ministry of Health during the year 2021 was conducted utilizing simple random technique to recruit 554 referrals from 99,064 referrals.

#### **2.2 Data sources**

The required information and data were obtained from the files and database of the Service Purchasing Department and the Palestinian Health Information Center (PHIC) in the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

#### **2.3 Study population**

All medical referrals to and cases of service purchases from outside the facilities and hospitals of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in the year 2021, which amounted to 99,064 referrals[9].

#### **2.4 Sample Size**

The recommended sample size according to the sample size calculator (Raosoft) when the margin of error is 5% and the confidence level of 98 % is 554 sample.

#### **2.5 Sampling Technique**

- A simple random sample of referrals from patients who were referred for treatment outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which consists of 554 referrals, was selected and worked on, in cooperation with the Service Purchase Department in the Palestinian Ministry of Health.
- This is done by selecting one referral out of every 178 referrals on the medical referral system of the Service Purchasing Department, starting with referral No. 5 on the system, then referral No. 183, then referral No. 361, then referral No. 539, and so on until the study sample was completed.

- A medical referral was selected from every 178 referrals after calculating the sampling interval by dividing the total number of referrals (99,064) by the sample size (554).

## **2.6 Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

### **Inclusion criteria**

All medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

### **Exclusion criteria**

Medical referrals that took place outside the State of Palestine, such as those that were sent to the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948, or to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, or to Egypt, or other countries, as these referrals are not included, according to what was stated by the Service Purchasing Department, within the department's budget and data, but it is included within the Palestinian Ministry of Health's budget as a whole.

## **2.7 Data Collection Tool**

The data collection tool for this study was designed by, in partnership and cooperation with professors and doctors specialized in the medical field and experts in statistics. As this performance was designed, obtaining their opinion and adding their suggestions to it.

This data collection tool (Appendix H) was divided into three sections, the first section is the objective of the tool, the second section is the patient's personal data and information, and the third section relates to the conditions and status of the medical referral in terms of diagnosis, place of diagnosis, place of sending the referral, reason and cost, where the total Data collection tool questions is twenty-five questions.

## **2.8 Validity and reliability**

The validity of the data collection tool in the research was confirmed through the arbitration of specialized persons. After designing the data collection tool, the researcher presented it to a group of (6) experienced and studied arbitrators, in order to obtain and benefit from their opinions about the appropriateness and validity of the questions and inquiries of the data collection tool.

Their opinions had a positive impact on improving the tool's ability and accuracy, as some questions, inquiries and phrases were deleted and others were modified, as well as adding new questions and inquiries that did not exist to some parts of the tool until it reached its final form, a copy of which is attached in the appendix.

## **2.9 Ethical consideration**

The approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at An-Najah National University was initially obtained. The approval of the competent authorities in the Palestinian Ministry of Health was obtained after sending a letter to them by the graduate studies.

This facilitating task letter was obtained from An-Najah National University addressed to the Service Purchasing Department in the Palestinian Ministry of Health, in which a full explanation about the research was explained, including the purpose and nature of the study in addition to ensuring the protection of the privacy of the data that is accessed in the research, and guaranteeing Adequate level of confidentiality of research data and confidentiality of information, ensuring the anonymity of individuals and patients whose data are presented, avoiding any deception or exaggeration of research goals and objectives, ensuring honesty and transparency in the message, avoiding misleading information and bias in results. (Appendix B)

## **2.10 Data / Result Analysis**

- Data was processed, coded, entered, cleaned, interpreted, and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V25.0).
- Numbers and percentages

## Chapter Three

### Results

This chapter presenting the findings of study:

#### 3.1 Gender and age groups

**Table 3.1**

*Distribution the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities according to the patient's gender and age*

Variables	Category	N0.	%	
	Female	273	49.3	
	Male	281	50.7	
	Total	554	100	
Gender	Childhood (0 – 14)	0 - 4	67	12.1
		5 - 9	23	4.2
		10 - 14	33	6.0
	Adolescence	15 - 19	27	4.9
	Young adulthood (20 – 29)	20 - 24	17	3.1
		25 - 29	18	3.2
	Adulthood or old age (30 – 49)	30 - 34	11	2.0
		35 - 39	19	3.4
		40 - 44	36	6.5
		45 - 49	32	5.8
		50 - 54	44	7.9
	Aging stage (50 or older)	55 - 59	57	10.3
		60 - 64	58	10.5
		65 - 69	46	8.3
		70 - 74	38	6.9
75 - 79		23	4.2	
	Over 80	5	0.9	
	Total	554	100.0	

Table 3.1 showed that the percentage of male patients was (50.7%). It also showed that the percentage of medical referrals was 48.9%, 22.2% and 17.7% for Aging stage, childhood stage, and adulthood or old age stage respectively.

The highest percent was for the age group from 0-4 years with a rate of 12.1%, followed by the age group 60-64 with a rate of 10.5%, then the category 55-59 with a rate of 10.3%, and the category 65-69 by 8.3%.

### 3.2 Facility that requested for the medical referral

The results table A.1 in Appendix A show that the most facility that made and requested medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities was the Primary Health Care Directorate in Jerusalem with a percentage of 16.1%, followed by the Higher Medical Committee in Gaza with a percentage of 15.5%, then Beit Jala Hospital with a percentage of 12.1%, and the Alwatani Hospital in Nablus by 10.5%.

### 3.3 Facility to which the medical referral was sent

We note from Table A.2 in Appendix A that 34.7% of medical referrals were made to Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, then 14.3% were made to Al-Makassed Hospital in Jerusalem, 8.7% were to An-Najah National University Hospital in Nablus, and 8.3% were to Al-Ahly Hospital in Hebron.

### 3.4 Referral Type

**Table 3.2**

*Distributing the medical referral according to the referral type*

Referral Type	NO. of Referrals	%
Emergency	94	17.0
Extend	157	28.3
Follow-up	9	1.6
Non-Emergency	219	39.5
Specialized referral	75	13.5
Total	554	100.0

Table 3.2 showed that the 39.5% of referrals were for were for non-emergency (for example Simple tonsillitis or sinusitis) cases while emergency (for example Cardiac Catheterization) and specialized referrals consisted of 17% and 13.5%, of referrals respectively.

### 3.5 Service Delivery Type

**Table 3.3**

*Distribution of medical referrals according to the Service Delivery Type*

Service Delivery Type	NO. of Referrals	%
Clinic Visit	230	41.5
Day Care	19	3.4
In Patient	298	53.8
Radiology	7	1.3
Total	554	100.0

It is evident from Table 3.3 that most of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities were either for inpatients (53.8%) or for patients who visited medical clinics (41.5%).

### 3.6 Referral Reason

**Table 3.4**

*Distribution of medical referrals according to the referral reason*

Referral Reason	NO. of Referrals	%
Device/Equipment Shortage	5	0.9
Emergency Case	6	1.1
Follow up	4	0.7
Long Waiting Time	1	0.2
No available beds	4	0.7
Second specialized opinion for final diagnosis	8	1.4
Treatment not found In PMOH hospital	526	94.9
Total	554	100.0

The table 3.4 showed that the main reason for referral was the unavailability of treatment in the hospitals and facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, with a rate of 94.9%.

### 3.7 Medical Category / Medical Procedure

**Table 3.5**

*Distribution of medical referrals based on Medical Category / Medical Procedure*

Medical Category / medical procedure	Category	NO	%
Oncology		153	27.6
	Cardiac Catheterization	67	12.1
Cardiovascular disease	Cardiology	12	2.2
	Cardiac Surgery	9	1.6
	Vascular Surgery	7	1.3
	Total	95	17.1
Urology and Nephrology		55	9.9
Ophthalmology		42	7.6
	Pediatrics	16	2.9
Pediatric and Neonatal Problems	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (N.I.C.U)	14	2.5
	Pediatric Cardiac Surgery	2	0.4
	Total	32	5.8
Medical Imaging		31	5.6
Orthopedics		19	3.4
Endoscopy		18	3.2
Gynecology and Obstetrics		14	2.5
Neurology and Neurosurgery		13	2.3
Hematology and Lymphatic System		12	2.2
Nuclear Medicine		12	2.2
Radiation Therapy		12	2.2
Laboratory Examination		11	2
Intensive Care Unit (I.C.U)		11	2
Rehabilitation and Technical aids		9	1.6
Ear, Nose and Throat (E.N.T)		7	1.3
Endocrinology		4	0.7
Drugs and Medications		2	0.4
Dermatology And Skin tissue operations		1	0.2
Pathology		1	0.2
Total		554	100.0

Table 3.5 showed that the most frequently referred procedure and medical categories outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health are Oncology at a rate of 27.6%, followed by Cardiovascular disease in general at a rate of 17.1% more

specifically Cardiac Catheterization at a rate of 12.1%, then Urology and Nephrology at a rate of 9.9%, and Ophthalmology at 7.6%.

### **3.8 Medical Department**

Table A.3 in Appendix A showed that most of the medical referrals were to the Department of Oncology with a rate of 28.7%, followed by the Department of Pediatrics by 10.3%, then the Department of Internal Medicine by 7.9%, and the Department of Ophthalmology by 7.4%.

### **3.9 Duration of treatment and/or stay in the hospital**

Table A.4 in Appendix A indicated that the duration of treatment and/or the duration of stay in the hospital was, 80% for the period of (1 – 7) Days.

### **3.10 Invoice Amount**

Table 3.5 in Appendix A showed that the treatment invoice for 55.4% of referral reached 1,000-10,000 shekels, and 20.2% costed 1,000 shekels or less and only 0.2% costed more than 15000 NIS.

### **3.11 Coverage rate of the Palestinian Ministry of Health**

**Table 3.6**

*Percentage of Palestinian Ministry of Health coverage of medical referrals*

Coverage rate of the Palestinian Ministry of Health	NO. of Referrals	%
0 % - 10 %	94	17
11 % - 20 %	35	6.3
21 % - 30 %	35	6.3
31 % - 40 %	19	3.4
41 % - 50 %	19	3.4
51 % - 60 %	17	3.1
61 % - 70 %	21	3.8
71 % - 80 %	16	2.9
81 % - 90 %	42	7.6
91 % - 100 %	256	46.2
Total	554	100.0

Table 3.6 showed that 46.2% of referral cases were covered by 91-100%, and 17% of cases covered by 0-10%.

### 3.12 Patient Governorate and Medical Category or Medical Procedure

**Table 3.7**

*Distribution of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities according to the geographical division of the patient's governorate and medical category or medical procedure*

Medical Category / medical procedure	Geographical Division							
	Palestine		West Bank		Jerusalem		Gaza strip	
	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%
Oncology	153	27.6	94	17	43	7.8	16	2.9
Cardiovascular	95	17.1	55	9.9	3	0.5	37	6.7
Urology and Nephrology	55	9.9	51	9.2	4	0.7	0	0.0
Ophthalmology	42	7.6	18	3.2	14	2.5	10	1.8
Pediatric and Neonatal Problems	32	5.8	25	4.5	6	1.1	1	0.2
Medical Imaging	31	5.6	23	4.2	6	1.1	2	0.4
Orthopedics	19	3.4	12	2.2	3	0.5	4	0.7
Endoscopy	18	3.2	15	2.7	1	0.2	2	0.4
Gynecology and Obstetrics	14	2.5	5	0.9	7	1.3	2	0.4
Neurology and Neurosurgery	13	2.3	7	1.3	0	0.0	6	1.1
Hematology and Lymphatic System	12	2.2	11	2	0	0.0	1	0.2
Nuclear Medicine	12	2.2	11	2	1	0.2	0	0.0
Radiation Therapy	12	2.2	12	2.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Laboratory Examination	11	2	10	1.8	1	0.2	0	0.0
I.C.U	11	2	11	2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Rehabilitation and Technical aids	9	1.6	1	0.2	0	0.0	8	1.4
E.N.T	7	1.3	1	0.2	6	1.1	0	0.0
Endocrinology	4	0.7	1	0.2	2	0.4	1	0.2
Drugs and Medications	2	0.4	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2
Dermatology And Skin tissue operations	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pathology	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>16.4</b>

We note from Table 3.7 that 65.9% of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, according to the geographical division of the patient's governorate and medical category or medical procedure, were for West Bank patients, while the percentage of Jerusalem patients reached 17.7%, and 16.4% for Gaza Strip patients.

We also note that the largest percentage of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities are for the medical procedure or the medical category of oncology in all governorates of Palestine except for the governorates of the Gaza Strip, in which the largest percentage of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities were for the medical procedure or the medical category of cardiovascular diseases and problems.

**Table 3.8**

*Distribution of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities according to the Geographical division of the West Bank governorates and medical category or medical procedure*

Medical Category / medical procedure	West Bank Governorates							
	West Bank		North West Bank		middle of the West Bank		Southern West Bank	
	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%
Oncology	94	17	25	4.5	24	4.3	45	8.1
Cardiovascular	55	9.9	40	7.2	5	0.9	10	1.8
Urology and Nephrology	51	9.2	10	1.8	7	1.3	34	6.2
Ophthalmology	18	3.2	6	1.1	2	0.4	10	1.8
Pediatric and Neonatal Problems	25	4.5	11	2	2	0.4	12	2.2
Medical Imaging	23	4.2	11	2	2	0.4	10	1.8
Orthopedics	12	2.2	6	1.1	0	0.0	6	1.1
Endoscopy	15	2.7	12	2.2	1	0.2	2	0.4
Gynecology and Obstetrics	5	0.9	3	0.5	0	0.0	2	0.4
Neurology and Neurosurgery	7	1.3	2	0.4	2	0.4	3	0.5
Hematology and Lymphatic System	11	2	10	1.8	1	0.2	0	0.0
Nuclear Medicine	11	2	4	0.7	3	0.5	4	0.7
Radiation Therapy	12	2.2	10	1.8	1	0.2	1	0.2
Laboratory Examination	10	1.8	5	0.9	1	0.2	4	0.7
I.C.U	11	2	1	0.2	1	0.2	9	1.6
Rehabilitation and Technical aids	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0
E.N.T	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Endocrinology	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Drugs and Medications	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Dermatology And Skin tissue operations	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Pathology	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	365	65.9	158	28.5	53	9.6	154	27.8

It is clear from the previous table 3.8 that the most areas in which medical referrals were made outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities are the north and south of the West Bank, with rates of 28.5% and 27.8%, respectively, followed by the regions of Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, with rates of 17.8% and 16.6%, then the middle of the West Bank region with 9.6%.

We also note that the largest percentage of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health are for the medical procedure or the medical category of oncology in all governorates of West Bank.

We note from Table A.6 in Appendix A that the governorate with the highest referral rate for patients outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health is Hebron governorate with a rate of 21.3%, followed by Jerusalem governorate with a rate of 17.8%, and Nablus governorate with a rate of 13.4%.

### **3.13 Geographical Location of the health facility that made and /or received the referral**

**Table 3.9**

*Distribution of medical referrals based on the Geographical location of the health facility that made the referral*

Geographical location	health facility that made the referral		health facility receiving medical referral	
	No.	%	NO.	%
Gaza	90	16.2	52	9.4
Jerusalem	89	16.1	303	54.7
West Bank	375	67.7	199	35.9
Total	554	100.0	554	100.0

Table 3.9 showed that WB health care facilities were responsible/made 67.7% of referral cases while the facilities in the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem made 16.2%, and the 16.1% of referral cases respectively. It also showed that 54.7% of medical referrals were made to hospitals and health facilities located in the Jerusalem area.

### 3.14 Governorate of the health facility that made and /or received the referral

Table 3.10 indicated that Jerusalem governorate was responsible about 16.4% of referred cases, followed by Gaza governorate with a rate of 15.5%; regard the receiving referred cases Jerusalem Governorate, received 54.7%, followed by Nablus Governorate which received 17% of cases.

**Table 3.10**

*Distribution of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities based on the Governorate of the health facility that made the referral*

Governorate	Responsibility about requesting the referral		Responsibility about receiving the referral	
	No.	%	No.	%
Tubas and Northern Valleys	2	0.4	-	-
Jericho and Al-Aghwar	4	0.7	-	-
Hebron	72	13	53	9.6
Jerusalem	91	16.4	303	54.7
Jenin	31	5.6	20	3.6
Bethlehem	67	12.1	9	1.6
Ramallah and Al-Bireh	82	14.8	23	4.2
Rafah	4	0.7	-	-
Salfit	6	1.1	-	-
Tulkarm	21	3.8	-	-
Gaza	86	15.5	52	9.4
Qalqiliya	5	0.9	-	-
Nablus	83	15.0	94	17.0
Total	554	100.0	554	100.0

### 3.15 Referral Facility Type and Nature

Table A.7 in Appendix A showed that 80.5% of the medical referrals were made to hospitals and health facilities affiliated with non-governmental organizations (NGO), and 19.5% were to private hospitals and health facilities.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Discussion**

#### **4.1 Discussion**

This study gave an opportunity for the researcher to know the reality and the truth of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities in terms of the reason for the referrals, their cost, their diagnosis, the governorates in which the referred patients belong or live, and what are the most governorates from which medical referrals are made, in addition to the most demanding medical facilities for medical referrals and the most receptive.

#### **4.2 Gender**

The percentage of males out of the total medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, as shown in Table No. 3.1, was 50.7%, while the percentage of females was 49.3%.

These results were consistent with the annual health report for the year 2021 issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as the percentage of male patients who were referred outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health reached 55.1% of all referred patients, while the percentage of females who were referred reached 44.9% [9].

These results were also consistent with the annual health report for the year 2020 and the annual health report for the year 2019, issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, as the percentage of male patients who were referred outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in the year 2020 reached 53.7% of all referred patients, while it reached the percentage of females who were referred was 46.3% [8], and the percentage of male patients who were referred outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in 2019 was 54.2% of all referred patients, while the percentage of females who were referred was 46.3% [7].

These results are also consistent with the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed entitled "Types of medical referrals and referred diseases and their relationship to the cost of treatment abroad: an applied study on patients referred for treatment abroad in the southern governorates," in which the percentage of males was 53.3% and the percentage of females was 46.7% [19].

These results also came in agreement with the report of the National Team to Support Transparency of the Public Budget, entitled “Integrity and Transparency in Medical Referrals outside the Institutions of the Ministry of Health”, where the percentage of males referred outside the institutions of the Ministry of Health reached 53.5%, while the percentage of females reached 46.5% [2].

### **4.3 Age Group and Age Stages**

Table 3.1 indicated that the aging stage (50 years or older) was the age stage that obtained the most medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health with a rate of 48.9% of the total medical referrals, followed by the Childhood stage from (0 - 14) years with a rate of 22.2% of the total medical referrals.

In terms of age groups, the age group from 0-4 years was the age group that obtained the most medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health with a rate of 12.1% of the total medical referrals, followed by the age group from 60-64 years at a rate of 10.5%, and the category from 55-59 years at approximately the same rate of 10.3% of the total referrals.

These results were consistent with the results of the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed entitled "Types of medical referrals and referred diseases and their relationship to the cost of treatment abroad: an applied study on patients referred for treatment abroad in the southern governorates," which indicated that the highest percentage of respondents who received medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health were over 45 years old, and they constituted 49.2%, while 20% were their ages range between 30-44 years, and 17.5% are less than 15 years old, which is the category of children, while the percentage of 13.3% was for the age group 15-29 years, meaning that the older age group is the highest in obtaining medical referrals abroad facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health[19].

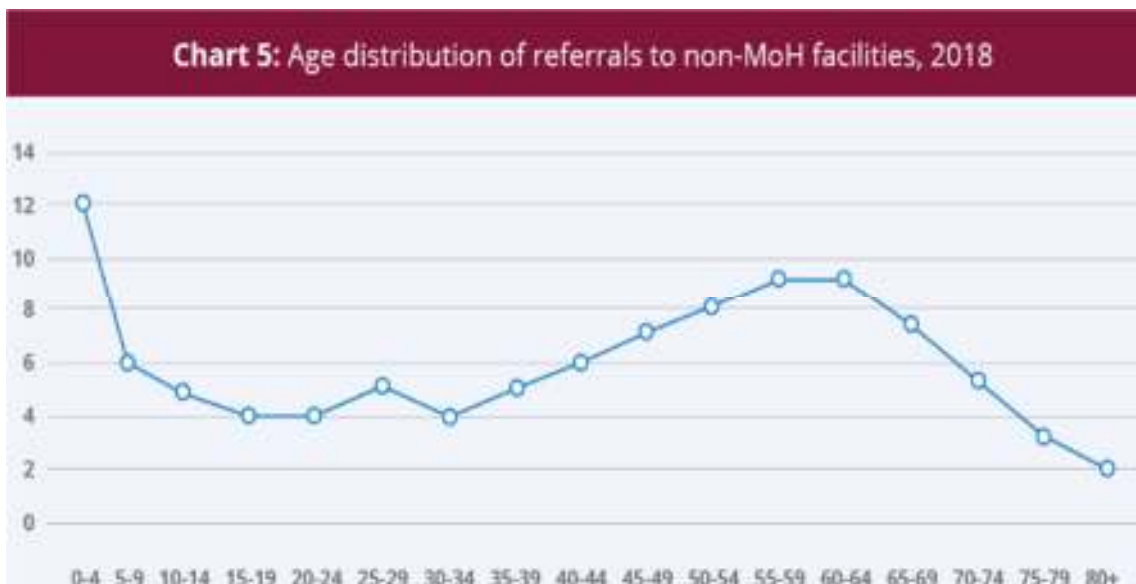
The results of this study also agreed with the World Health Organization report in the occupied Palestinian territories issued in 2019 entitled "The Right to Health 2018", as the report indicated, specifically on page No. 30-31 of it and through graph No. 5, that the distribution of medical referrals from facilities affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Health to facilities not affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Health by age groups in 2018 was as follows:

- Children under the age of 5 years represent 12% of medical referrals, and 27% of medical referrals were for people under the age of 20 years [20].
- Adults 55-64 years old make up about 18% of referrals [20].
- The category from 20-54 years old constitutes about 38% of referrals [20].
- The age group of 65 and over accounted for 17% of the referrals [20].

Attached is Chart No. 5 in the World Health Organization report, entitled “The Right to Health 2018,” which shows the distribution of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health by age group or age distribution for the year 2018.

**Figure 4.1**

*Age distribution of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 2018*



#### **4.4 Facility to which the medical referral was sent**

Table A.2 in appendix A indicated that about 50% of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities were to Augusta Victoria Hospital (34.7%) and Al-Makassed Hospital (14.3%) in Jerusalem Governorate.

The results of this study differed slightly with the results of the World Health Organization report in the occupied Palestinian territories, which came under the title "The Right to Health 2018", in which the results and under the subheading the Destination of applications for permits were as follows:

More than 78% of patients' requests to obtain permits to exit the Gaza Strip via the Beit Hanoun/Erez crossing were for appointments in Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem, at a rate of 59%, or to the rest of the West Bank, at a rate of 18%, while 22% of these requests were for appointments in Israeli hospitals [20].

The top six hospital destinations for patient requests for permits accounted for 75% of the total patient permit requests, where the top two destinations were Al-Maqasid Hospital, with 28%, and Augusta Victoria Hospital, with 24%, in East Jerusalem, as Augusta Victoria Hospital is considered the main center for medical referrals for cancer patients in the Palestinian territories, other destinations for patient permits to hospitals were as follows: Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Israel by 7%, An-Najah University Hospital in the West Bank by 6%, Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel by 6%, and St. John's Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem by 4% [20].

The results of this study also differed with the results of the monthly reports issued by the World Health Organization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the period from January 2022 to January 2023, which came under the title "Access to Health, Barriers for Patients in the occupied Palestinian Territories", in which there was a rate and a percentage Medical referrals to Augusta Victoria Hospital reached 24.4%, and the percentage of medical referrals to Makassed Hospital reached 20.3% [21].

Also, the results of this study differed with the study of Mohammad Marie and Maher Battat from An-Najah National University, which was entitled "Access Limitation to Health Services in Palestine and Its Consequences on Palestinian Mental Health and Wellbeing: Literature Review" where the study stated that about (27%) of medical referrals are made to Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), which is considered the most important destination and main referral center for cancer patients in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and (25%) to Al-Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem, which is considered and operates as a major center for specialized care for children and cardiology, and then the most common and most important hospital destinations after Al-Maqasid Hospital are Hadassah Ein Karim Hospital in Israel (7%); An-Najah National University Hospital in the West Bank (7%); Tel Hashomer in Israel (6%); and St. John's Hospital in East Jerusalem (4%) [17].

The researcher believes that the reason for the difference in the data and results of his study and the results of the World Health Organization reports in the occupied Palestinian territories and the study of Mohammad Marie and Maher Battat is that:

- The reports of the World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territories talk about medical referrals for the Gaza Strip only and do not include all Palestinian territories (Gaza Strip and West Bank).
- The study and researcher's thesis do not deal with medical referrals that are sent to medical facilities outside the State of Palestine (such as those sent to Jordan, Egypt, and the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948), because the bill for these referrals, according to what was reported by the Service Purchasing Department in the Palestinian Ministry of Health, is not included in the budget the service purchase department, but it is included in the expenses of the Palestinian Ministry of Health as a whole.

#### **4.5 Service Delivery Type**

It is evident from Table 3.3 that most of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities based on service delivery type, were either for inpatients and with a percentage 53.8%, or for patients who visited medical clinics and with a percentage 41.5%, while day care cases came at a rate of 3.4%, and radiology cases at a rate of 1.3%.

The results of this study agreed to some extent with the report of the World Health Organization in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which came under the title "Right to Health 2018" under the sub-heading In-patient versus out-patient referrals, in which it was stated that in general, 74,608 referrals, or 68% of the total medical referrals, were for inpatient visits, while 32,621, or 30%, of the total referrals were for outpatient visits. The rest of the referrals were for day care, laboratory tests, or x-rays, or were not classified [20].

The results of this study also differed with the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed, which was titled "Types of Treatment Referrals and Referred Diseases and Their Relation with the Cost of Treatment Abroad Applied Study on Patients Referred for Treatment Abroad In the South Governorates" under the subtitle Distribution of cases according to the service received, which reached in it the number of cases that were

referred outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities was about (61,635) referrals for the year 2013, of which (13,532) were medical consultation referrals, representing (22%) of the total referrals, while the number of consulting referrals in 2012 was (25%), That is, there is a decrease in advisory cases, while inpatients cases in 2013 amounted to (43,103) referrals, representing (78%) of the total referrals, while the percentage of inpatients referrals in 2012 was (75%), meaning that there is an increase in inpatients referrals[19].

The results of this study also differed from Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad's study, which was entitled "The Impact of External treatment on Financing on Palestinian Ministry of Health Budget" in which the total number of referrals for which the service was purchased from Palestinian health institutions outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities in 2010 was (53,025) referrals, of which there were (8,088) medical consultations, which is a rate of (15.3%), and the number of inpatients referrals was (44,937), with a rate of (84.7%) and a cost of (346,920,683) shekels[15].

The researcher believes that the reason for the difference between the data of his study and the study of each of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed and Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad is:

- The study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed and Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad classified medical referrals into medical consultations and inpatients, while the researcher classified referrals into inpatients, clinic visits, day care, and radiology.
- Studies of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed (2016) and Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad (2012) for previous years are somewhat outdated.
- The Palestinian Ministry of Health's continuous, permanent, and ongoing endeavor to localize medical services.

#### **4.6 Referral Reason**

It is clear from the table 3.4 that most of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities were due to the unavailability of treatment in the hospitals and facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, with a rate of 94.9%, While the reason to obtain the second specialized opinion for the final diagnosis came in the second rank with a rate of 1.4%, emergency cases in the third rank with 1.1%, the shortage of devices or equipment in the fourth rank with 0.9%, and follow-up cases and

lack of beds in the fifth rank with 0.7% for each of them, and the long waiting period ranked sixth and last, with a rate of 0.2%.

This study agreed with Maisa Athamneh study, which was entitled "Barriers affecting pediatric oncology referrals from hospitals in the occupied Palestinian territories to hospitals in Israel" in which she stated that under the Health Care System Law in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, all Palestinian citizens have the right to obtain certain services and treatments related to health care, and these services and treatments may or may not be available in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, since if these services and treatments are not provided Within the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, they may be referred outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health to receive treatment. The reasons for medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health include the unavailability of services in the hospitals and facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the lack of resources, or the inability of the Palestinian Ministry of Health to accept patients due to high occupancy rates, or the service may not be covered by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, or the waiting period for the service is very long [18].

This study also agreed with the study of Mohannad Mahmoud Abu Mwais, which was entitled "Assessing the Reality of Medical Education and Its Future Prospects in Palestine" in which the researcher attributed the reasons for transferring patients to hospitals outside Palestine to the following:

- Deficiency or gap in the skills of specialists and available medical staff members.
- Lack of diagnostic and therapeutic medical equipment in Palestinian hospitals.
- Absence of donors in cases of organ transplantation.
- The lack of a sufficient number of vacant beds in the hospitals and facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health for the purpose of providing treatment in emergency cases.
- For social reasons, referring to cases in which patients insist on receiving treatment outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health or outside Palestine due to their lack of confidence in the capabilities and local medical teams [22].

Also, this study agreed with the report of the World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territories, which was entitled "The Right to Health 2018", which stated that

the Palestinian Ministry of Health refers patients to facilities and hospitals not affiliated with it to obtain specialized health care that is not available in its public system. This is due to the lack of services and equipment present within the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, such as radiotherapy or nuclear medicine scanning, as well as the long-term depletion of essential medicines in the Gaza Strip[20]. And with the report of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Intra-Health, which was titled “Assessment of System Impediments in Palestinian Ministry of Health Hospitals That Result in Referrals to Non-PMOH Hospitals - Technical Brief” which attributed the reason for medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health to seven reasons:

1. Shortage of Qualified Personnel in Some Medical Specialties.
2. High PMOH Hospital Bed Occupancy.
3. Shortage of Essential and Specialized Medicines and Supplies.
4. Inadequate or Lack of Diagnostic and Therapeutic Equipment and Devices.
5. Long Patient Waiting Times to Receive Specialized Services.
6. Coordination, Communication, and Feedback Gaps within the Government Sector (Related to Referrals).
7. Workforce and Workload Inefficiencies [23].

It also agreed with the study of Aed Atef Al-Wahidi, which was titled "The Factors affecting the cost of Treatment Abroad Referrals for the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ways to reduce it" in which the researcher indicated that the reason for medical referrals is first the unavailability of health service, secondly the failure in the quality of health services, thirdly the length of the period to receive the service health, and fourthly, the lack of confidence in the medical staff[24].

#### **4.7 Medical Category / Medical Procedure**

Table 3.5 indicates that about 45% of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities were for the medical category or medical procedure related to oncology (27.6%) and cardiovascular disease (17.1%).

This study agreed with the annual health reports of the Palestinian Ministry of Health for the years 2019, 2020 and 2021, in which the most diseases in terms of the number of times the service was purchased were Oncology, Cardiovascular Disease, Urology and

Nephrology, Ophthalmology, Pediatric and Neonatal Problems, Medical Imaging, Hematology and Lymphatic System, Radiation Therapy, Orthopedics, Endoscopy, Laboratory Examination, Gynecology and Obstetrics, Neurology and Neurosurgery, Nuclear Medicine, and the Intensive Care Unit (I.C.U) [7-9].

Also, this study agreed with the study of Mohammad Marie and Maher Battat, which was entitled " Access Limitation to Health Services in Palestine and Its Consequences on Palestinian Mental Health and Wellbeing: Literature Review" and in which it was stated that treating and diagnosing tumors or cancer was the largest medical specialty for patients needing permits to leave Gaza in 2017, representing about a third (31%) of patient requests in Gaza, other major specialties include pediatrics (9%), cardiology (9%), hematology (9%), orthopedics (7%), and ophthalmology (7%) [17].

This study also agreed with the study of Mohannad Mahmoud Abu Mwais entitled "Assessing the Reality of Medical Education and Its Future Prospects in Palestine" in which the researcher mentioned that the ten diseases that most require referrals in Palestine are Oncology with a rate of (53.5%), Urology and Nephrology with a rate of (8.9%), heart diseases (8.6%), blood diseases (6.7%), general surgery (6.4%), pediatric diseases (6.2%), Ophthalmology (5.8%), heart catheterization (4.4%), and Surgery Orthopedics with a rate of (3.8%), and Neurology and Neurosurgery with a rate of (3.1%) [22].

The study also agreed with the report of the World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territories, which came under the title " Right to Health 2018", in which it was mentioned that Cancer care still constitutes the largest reason for purchasing services by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in 2018, as it constituted approximately 23% of total medical referrals, other major medical specialties for requesting medical referrals included the following: urology and nephrology 8%, cardiology 8%, hematology 8%, gastroenterology and general surgery 7%, pediatrics 6%, ophthalmology 6%, cardiac catheterization 8%, and orthopedics 8%[20].

#### **4.8 Duration of treatment and/or stay in the hospital**

It is noted in Table A.4 in Appendix A that the duration of treatment and/or the duration of stay in the hospital was for 80% of the referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health from 1-7 days, followed by the period from 8-14 days at a rate of 8.1%, then the period from 15-21 days at a rate 5.6%, period from 1-3 months at 3.8%, period from 22-29 days at 1.8%, period from 4-6 months at 0.5%, and period more than a year at 0.2%.

When comparing this study with a study by Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed entitled "Types of Treatment Referrals and Referred Diseases and Their Relation with the Cost of Treatment Abroad Applied Study on Patients Referred for Treatment Abroad in the South Governorates"[19], and Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad's study entitled "The Impact of External treatment on Financing on Palestinian Ministry of Health Budget"[25], and Marwa Abd Al-Raziq Saleh Kharouf study entitled "Assessment of the Actual Treatment Abroad Department at Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH)"[26], and the annual health report of the Palestinian Ministry of Health for the year 2021[9], we note that the study agreed with all previous studies and with the annual health report 2021 issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, in that the largest percentage of patients referred outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health is for a period of 1-7 days, and other patients' stay periods were less than the period from 1 - 7 days, noting also that there is a difference in the value of these percentages between the researcher's study and the rest of the studies, for the following reasons, according to the researcher's point of view:

- The sample of the study was formed in the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed and the study of Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad from a random sample that was selected from patients referred from some hospitals in the Gaza Strip and the Department of Treatment Abroad in the Gaza Strip as well, meaning that it did not include all patients referred in the State of Palestine.
- The sample of the study in the study of Marwa Abdel-Razek Saleh Kharouf was formed from a random sample that was selected from patients referred to two hospitals in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and three governmental hospitals in the West Bank, specifically in the cities of Ramallah, Nablus and Beit Jala, and three

private hospitals, all located in the city of Nablus, i.e. This study also did not include all referred patients in the State of Palestine.

- In all previous studies, the source of data and information for the researcher was the patients referred outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, while the source of data and information in the researcher's study was the service purchasing department in the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

#### **4.9 Invoice Amount**

It is noted from Table A.5 in Appendix A that the largest percentage of the treatment amount bill for patients referred outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health was for the category from 1,000-10,000 shekels, reaching 55.4%, followed by the category less than 1,000 shekels, with a rate of 20.2%, and the category from 10,001 – 20,000 shekels, with a rate 12.8%.

This study agreed with Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad's study entitled "The Impact of External treatment on Financing on Palestinian Ministry of Health Budget" in which the results of the analysis of the study sample according to the cost of treatment abroad showed that more than half of the sample, amounting to 51.8%, ranged between the cost of treatment abroad between 5000 - 10,000 dollars, while the cost of 23.2% of them is less than 1,000 dollars, while the cost of treatment is 20,000 dollars for 19.6% of the respondents, and 5.4% of them have more than 30,000 dollars[25].

#### **4.10 Coverage rate of the Palestinian Ministry of Health**

The coverage of the Palestinian Ministry of Health or health insurance for medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities and as shown in Table 3.6 within the category 91-100% amounted to approximately 46.2% of the total medical referrals, followed by the category from 0-10% with a rate of 17%, the category from 81-90% with a rate 7.6%, and the category from 11-20% with a rate 6.3%, the category from 21-30% with a rate 6.3%.

This study agreed with the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed entitled "Types of Treatment Referrals and Referred Diseases and Their Relation with the Cost of Treatment Abroad Applied Study on Patients Referred for Treatment Abroad In the South Governorates" and with the study of Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad entitled

"The Impact of External treatment on Financing on Palestinian Ministry of Health Budget" and with the study of Anees Abu Hashem entitled "Identifying the Expenses and the Level of Satisfaction of Referred Patients Abroad by Palestinian Ministry of Health" that the largest percentage of coverage by the Palestinian Ministry of Health for patients referred outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities is for the category of 90-100%, but it differed With these studies on the percentage of this category out of the total medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, and thus the percentage of other categories, as the percentages for other studies were as follows:

- In the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed, the results showed that (90.8%) of the study sample reached the percentage of financial coverage that they obtained (100%), and (4.2%) of the study sample reached the percentage of financial coverage that they obtained from (80% - 99%), and (5.0%) of the study sample reached the percentage of financial coverage that they obtained was less than (50%) [19].
- In the study of Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad, the results showed that the vast majority of respondents, amounting to 77.3%, have a financial coverage rate of 100% for the cost of treatment abroad, while 13.6% have a financial coverage rate of less than 75%, while 9.1% of them have a range of financial coverage between 80 - 90%[25].
- In the study of Anees Abu Hashem, the results showed that the approximately two thirds of patients (60.8%) had referral letter with 100% coverage, and that 81.4% of the study population received more than 75% treatment coverage, and 60.8% received 100% full coverage, and only 2% received less than 25% coverage [27].

The researcher believes that the reason for this difference in the percentage of coverage of treatment costs for cases referred outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities is due to the following reasons:

1. The sample of the study was formed in the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed and the study of Munira Muhammad Ali Hamad from a random sample that was selected from patients referred from some hospitals in the Gaza Strip and the Department of Treatment Abroad in the Gaza Strip as well, meaning that it did not include all patients referred in the State of Palestine.

2. In Anis Abu Hashem's study, the researcher used a non probability sample (convenient sample) to select our subjects, and Convenient sample consider a weak form sample.
3. In Anis Abu Hashem's study, the number of sample is 102 distributed as follows, 56.9% were treated in Egypt, 17.6% in Jordan, and 25.5% in Israel.
4. "Pursuant to Article (2) of the Presidential Decree issued on 6/26/2007, which stipulates that all citizens in the southern governorates are fully exempted from all service fees provided by the ministries, agencies and institutions of the Palestinian National Authority as of its date, including services that are provided for the first time, Thus, all residents of the Gaza Strip enjoy free health insurance services provided by the Ministry of Health, meaning that the coverage percentage of the residents of the Gaza Strip by the health insurance of the Ministry of Health is (100%)" [28].

#### **4.11 Patient Governorate and Medical Category or Medical Procedure**

As per Table 3.7 that 65.5% of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, according to the patient's governorate and medical category or medical procedure, were for West Bank patients, while the percentage of Jerusalem patients reached 17.8%, and 16.6% for Gaza Strip patients.

And if we enter into more divisions Table 3.8, It is clear from the previous table that the most areas in which medical referrals were made outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health are the north and south of the West Bank, with rates of 28.5% and 27.8%, respectively, followed by the regions of Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, with rates of 17.8% and 16.6%, then the middle of the West Bank region with 9.6%.

We note from Table A.6 in Appendix A that the governorate with the highest referral rate for patients outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health is Hebron governorate with a rate of 21.3%, followed by Jerusalem governorate with a rate of 17.8%, and Nablus governorate with a rate of 13.4%.

We also note in the same table that 27.6% of the total referrals in the West Bank were for oncology, 17.1% for cardiovascular diseases, 9.9% for Urology and Nephrology, and 7.6% for ophthalmology.

Also, 7.8% of the total referrals in Jerusalem were for oncology, 2.5% were for ophthalmology, 6.7% of the total referrals in the Gaza Strip were for cardiovascular diseases, and 2.9% were for oncology.

If we entered to the geographical divisions of the West Bank governorates, we would find that 7.2% of the total referrals in the northern West Bank governorates were for cardiovascular diseases, and 4.5% were for oncology, while 4.3% of the total referrals in the central West Bank governorates were for oncology, and 1.3% were for urology and nephrology, and in the governorates of the southern West Bank, the percentage of medical referrals related to oncology was 8.1%, and referrals for urology and nephrology constituted 6.2% of the total referrals.

The results of this study differed in the distribution of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health according to the geographical location (West Bank and Gaza Strip) with the annual health report 2019, which stated that the distribution of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health reached 70.2% from the West Bank and 29.8% from Gaza Strip[7], and with the annual health report 2018, which stated that the distribution of medical referrals reached 71.9% from the West Bank and 28.1% from the Gaza Strip[6].

The results of this study also differed in the distribution of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health according to geographical location (West Bank and Gaza Strip), with Maisa Athamneh study entitled "Barriers affecting pediatric oncology referrals from hospitals in the occupied Palestinian territories to hospitals in Israel" which the researcher mentioned that in 2019, the total number of patient referrals outside the hospitals and facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health reached 104,188, and of those referrals, most were sent to hospitals, clinics, or facilities located within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Of these, 93,672 cases included 67,507 cases from the West Bank transferred to hospitals and facilities in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, and 26,165 cases transferred from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. The total number of referrals outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip reached 11,209 cases in 2019. From the West Bank, 6,149 cases were referred to Egypt, Jordan and Israel, and most of them were treated in Israel. As for cases from the Gaza Strip referred outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, they were

also referred to Egypt, Jordan and Israel. However, most of the Gaza Strip cases were referred to Egypt [29].

The results of this study also differed with the two reports of the World Health Organization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip entitled "Right to Health 2018", in which it was stated that "the percentage of medical referrals from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, amounted to 72% of the total referrals, while the percentage of medical referrals from the Gaza Strip reached 28%"[20], and the report of the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) entitled "Skills Shortage and Gaps in the Health Sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", in which the percentage of medical referrals from the West Bank reached 73.2% and from the Gaza Strip 26.8% [17].

On the other hand, with regard to private medical referrals in the Gaza Strip, the results of this study agreed with the results of the annual report 2021 issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in the Gaza Strip, which was entitled "Specialized Treatment in the Gaza Strip" in terms of the distribution of medical referrals to the governorates of the Gaza Strip. Gaza governorate as the most governorates in terms of the number of medical referrals, followed by Khan Yunis governorate, then the northern Gaza Strip governorate, then the central Gaza Strip governorate, and finally came the Rafah governorate [30].

The researcher believes that the reason for the difference between the data of his study and the studies, research and other reports lies in the medical referrals outside the State of Palestine, such as referrals to Egypt, Jordan and the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948, where the researcher's study did not include these referrals because, according to what was reported and stated by the Service Purchasing Department in the Palestinian Ministry of Health the data of these referrals are not included in the department's data, but they are included in the data and budget of the Ministry of Health as a whole. Therefore, these referrals lead to a change and a difference in the referral percentages for each geographical area, as the percentage of medical referrals to the Arab Republic of Egypt, for example, ranges between 4-8% of total referrals, most of which are for patients of the Gaza Strip. The same is the case for those referrals sent to the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948, whether from the West Bank or Gaza Strip alike, and

what these referrals make of differences in the different percentages of medical referrals.

#### **4.12 Geographical Location of the health facility receiving medical referral**

As per Table 3.9 that 54.7% of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health are to hospitals and health facilities located in the Jerusalem area, while the percentage of West Bank hospitals and facilities reached 35.9%, and hospitals and facilities in the Gaza Strip 9.4%.

This study agreed with the Annual Health Report 2018, in which the distribution of medical referrals according to the place of treatment referred to inside Palestine was 48.5% for East Jerusalem hospitals, 43.7% for West Bank hospitals, and 7.8% for Gaza Strip hospitals [6].

And it agreed with the annual health report 2019, in which the distribution of medical referrals according to the place of treatment referred to within Palestine was 49.1% for East Jerusalem hospitals, 44.7% for West Bank hospitals, and 6.2% for Gaza Strip hospitals [7].

This study also agreed with Maisa Athamneh study entitled "Barriers affecting pediatric oncology referrals from hospitals in the occupied Palestinian territories to hospitals in Israel", where the distribution of medical referrals according to the place of treatment referred to was inside Palestine in the study 49.1% for East Jerusalem hospitals, 44.7% for West Bank hospitals, and 6.2% for Gaza Strip hospitals [29].

This study also agreed with Aed Atef Al-Wahidi's study entitled "The Factors affecting the cost of Treatment Abroad Referrals for the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ways to reduce it", in which the distribution of medical referrals inside Palestine, according to the place to which treatment was referred, was 48.7% for East Jerusalem hospitals, 47.3% for West Bank hospitals, and 4% for Gaza Strip hospitals [24].

Likewise, the study agreed with the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed, entitled "Types of Treatment Referrals and Referred Diseases and Their Relation with the Cost of Treatment Abroad - Applied Study on Patients Referred for Treatment Abroad In the South Governorates", in which the distribution of medical referrals inside Palestine

according to the place of treatment to which they were referred was 52.6% for East Jerusalem hospitals, 42.2% for West Bank hospitals, and 5.1% for Gaza Strip hospitals[19].

On the other hand, the study agreed with the report of the World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territories, which was entitled "Right to Health 2018", where the report stated that the Palestinian Ministry of Health refers Palestinian patients to facilities and hospitals not affiliated with the Ministry of Health to obtain specialized health care that is not available or present in its private system. The main destinations for these referrals were, in general, East Jerusalem (39%), the West Bank excluding East Jerusalem (34%), Israel (17%), and the Gaza Strip (11%) [20].

It also agreed with the report of the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) entitled "Lack and Skills Gap in the Health Sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territories" it stated that the total number of medical referrals to East Jerusalem hospitals in 2016 amounted to about 40,000 referrals, equivalent to 41.9% of the total medical referrals in that year[17].

This study also agreed with the report of the World Health Organization, which was entitled "Right to health - Crossing barriers to access health in the occupied Palestinian territory, 2014 - 2015", in which the distribution of medical referrals inside Palestine according to the treatment authority to which the case is transferred is 48.7% to East Jerusalem hospitals 47.3% for West Bank hospitals, and 4% for Gaza Strip hospitals [31].

On the other hand, the results of this study differed with the Annual Health Report 2020 and the Annual Health Report 2021, where the distribution of service purchase cases from outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health according to the place referred to for treatment inside Palestine in the 2020 report was 51.8% for West Bank facilities, and 40.2% for facilities East Jerusalem, and 7.9% for Gaza Strip utilities [8].

As for the annual health report 2021, the distribution of service purchase cases from outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, according to the place to which they are referred for treatment inside Palestine, was 53.1% for West Bank facilities, 41.9% for East Jerusalem facilities, and 5% for Gaza Strip facilities [9].

The researcher believes that the reason for this difference between the data of the study and the annual health reports for the years 2020 and 2021 is that there are a number of treatment bills for some medical referrals that have not been completed and were carried over to after the year 2021, and therefore were not included in the data for the years 2020 and 2021, especially those bills and medical referrals referred for treatment in East Jerusalem hospitals, in addition to the Palestinian Ministry of Health's constant endeavor to localize medical services in its affiliated government hospitals and reduce, as much as possible, cases of purchasing the service.

#### **4.13 Governorate of the health facility receiving the medical referral**

We note from the table 3.10 that the majority of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health are to health facilities located in Jerusalem Governorate, at a rate of 54.7%, followed by health facilities located in Nablus Governorate, at a rate of 17%, then the health facilities located in Hebron Governorate, at a rate of 9.6%, and the health facilities located in Central region Governorate in Gaza Strip, at a rate of 9.4%.

This study agreed with the study of Mohammad Marie and Maher Battat, entitled "Access Limitation to Health Services in Palestine and Its Consequences on Palestinian Mental Health and Wellbeing: Literature Review" in which It was stated that about (27%) of medical referrals outside the facilities and hospitals of the Palestinian Ministry of Health were to Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), which is considered the most important destination and the main referral center for cancer patients in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and (25%) For Al-Makassed Hospital in East Jerusalem, which is considered and operates as a major center for specialized care for children and heart diseases, and then the most common and important hospital destinations after Al-Makassed Hospital are for Hadassah Ein Karim Hospital in Israel with a percentage of (7%); An-Najah National University Hospital in the West Bank (7%) as well; Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel (6%); and St. John's Hospital in East Jerusalem (4%) [32].

Also, this study agreed with the report of the World Health Organization in the occupied Palestinian territories, which was entitled "Right to Health 2018", as the report stated that the first six destinations for hospitals for which treatment permits were obtained constituted a percentage of (75%) of the total patients obtaining treatment permits, where the first two destinations were Al-Makassed Hospital (28%) and Augusta

Victoria Hospital (24%) in East Jerusalem, as Augusta Victoria Hospital is considered the main referral center for cancer patients in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and other destinations for hospitals were as follows: Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Israel with a percentage of (7%); An-Najah University Hospital in the West Bank by (6%); Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel (6%) as well; and St. John's Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem (4%) [20].

This study also agreed with Aed Atef Al-Wahidi's study entitled "The Factors affecting the cost of Treatment Abroad Referrals for the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ways to reduce it", in which the researcher saw, according to his point of view, that the reason for the differences in the number of referrals in favor of Jerusalem hospitals, and in the fourth reason specifically, is due to the Palestinian Ministry of Health's policy of supporting Palestinian private hospitals in the city Jerusalem (Al-Mutalaa - St. John - Al-Makassed - Mar Youssef); To enhance its steadfastness), and given that the absorptive capacity of the hospitals in the city of Jerusalem does not accommodate the number of referrals transferred to them, the Palestinian Ministry of Health, through the Department of Treatment Abroad, concluded new contracts with private hospitals in the northern governorates such as (An-Najah University Hospital - Nablus). As for the rest of the treatment procedures those whose treatment is not available, such as treatment of tumors and blood diseases, in addition to cases of delicate neurosurgery and complex heart surgeries, in the southern and northern governorates, and Jerusalem are transferred to hospitals within the Green Line [24].

Likewise, in the same study - the study of Aed Atef Al-Wahidi - and in the interview that the researcher conducted with Dr. Bassam Al-Badri, director of the service purchasing department in the southern governorates at that time, and in the third question in which the researcher asked about the trends of medical referrals in the southern governorates during the period from 2013 - 2015 and its causes? Dr. Bassam Al-Badri's answer was as follows:

1. According to the policy of supporting Jerusalem hospitals, transfers were directed to Jerusalem hospitals (Al-Mutalaa - Saint Joseph - St. John), but there is a negative side, as the capacity cannot bear the volume of transfers, and therefore a waiting list appeared for appointments.

2. Contracting with Al-Najah Hospital - Nablus, where it had a larger share of referrals and reached the largest number in 2015 [24].

#### **4.14 Referral Facility Type and Nature**

We note from Table A.7 in Appendix A that 80.5% of the medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities were to hospitals and health facilities affiliated with non-governmental organizations (NGO), and 19.5% were to private hospitals and health facilities.

This study agreed with the study of Mohammad Marie and Maher Battat entitled "Access Limitation to Health Services in Palestine and Its Consequences on Palestinian Mental Health and Wellbeing: Literature Review" in which the two researchers mentioned that the most referrals are made to private, non-profit health facilities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while one in five cases is referred to neighboring countries such as Egypt, Israel or Jordan [32].

Also, this study agreed with the report of the Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), which was entitled "Skills Shortage and Gap in the Health Sector in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", where the report stated that 83.7% of the total referrals were referrals to private and non-governmental hospitals in the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, at a cost of 440.4 million shekels, which is equivalent to 77.7% of the service purchase cost [17].

This study also agreed with Aed Atef Al-Wahidi's study entitled "The Factors affecting the cost of Treatment Abroad Referrals for the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ways to reduce it", in which the researcher mentioned that the process of purchasing the service from outside the facilities and hospitals of the Palestinian Ministry of Health is carried out from local hospitals and medical facilities (inside Palestine), which include private and non-governmental hospitals and medical facilities in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, to which about (75,489) cases were referred, which constitutes about (86.2%) of the total medical referrals at the Palestinian Ministry of Health for the year (2015) [24].

The study agreed with the report of the Civil Society Team for Enhancing Public Budget Transparency, which was titled "Integrity and Transparency in Medical

Referrals Outside the Ministry of Health Institutions", where the report mentioned in the challenges and conclusion paragraph that the Palestinian Ministry of Health succeeded in localizing treatment in Palestinian civil society institutions and private institutions, where 86% of the total referrals were transferred to these institutions in 2015. While referrals to Israeli hospitals decreased from 19% in 2007 to about 12% in 2015. Similarly, the percentage of referrals to Jordanian and Egyptian hospitals from 14% in 2007 to 2% in 2015 [33].

This study also agreed with what was mentioned in the report of the World Health Organization entitled "Right to health - Crossing barriers to access health in the occupied Palestinian territory, 2014 - 2015", specifically in the paragraph of Preferred locations for referrals, that it most patients who require tertiary care that does not exist and are not available in the facilities and hospitals of the Palestinian Ministry of Health are referred to specialized non-governmental medical facilities and hospitals, especially in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, or the Gaza Strip. The trend towards localization and nationalization of medical referrals is considered a declared political priority, in order to overcome the restrictions imposed by the occupation on travel in recent years, in addition to working on a policy of reducing and mitigating the cost of treatment, seeking the comfort of patients and giving priority to Palestinian economic interests. The possibility of obtaining reliable, specialized treatment available in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has increased recently as a result of the development of private and non-profit specialized health centres, especially in the West Bank [34].

This study agreed with the study of Ali Odeh Abdullah bin Saeed entitled "Types of Treatment Referrals and Referred Diseases and Their Relation with the Cost of Treatment Abroad - Applied Study on Patients Referred for Treatment Abroad In the South Governorates", where the researcher stated that the purchase of the service outside the facilities and hospitals of the Palestinian Ministry of Health is generally done from local hospitals and medical facilities (inside Palestine), which include private and non-governmental hospitals and medical facilities in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where the cases of purchasing the service from these facilities and hospitals amounted to About 64,345 cases, which represents 86.2% of the total number of medical referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health in 2014 [19].

#### **4.15 Geographical and Governorate Location of the health facility that made the referral / Medical Department / Referral Type / and Facility that made or requested the medical referral**

This study is considered one of the first studies that dealt with the issue of medical referrals and their geographical distribution based on the health facility that requested and made the medical referral, medical department, referral type, and facility that made or requested the medical referral, as the researcher did not have and did not find research, studies and reports dealing with the same subject to compare them with the results of his study.

The reason for the unavailability of references, research, studies and reports for some addresses related to the subject of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, according to the researcher's point of view, is due to the difficulty of accessing and obtaining medical referral data from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, and to be satisfied with what is found in the annual health reports issued by it, which deal with the number of medical referrals in total, their distributions between males and females, and the most referral diseases and diagnoses, even in the last two annual reports, they did not address the distribution of referrals between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and instead published the distribution of medical referrals by place referred to for treatment.

The reason is also due to the nature and type of existing research, studies and reports, the targeted sample and the method used, where the study sample is mostly from the referred patients themselves and by using the questionnaire method, and targeting specific governorates, hospitals and health facilities that do not include all parts and regions of the country, in addition to relying on what It is published by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in its various statements and reports, which do not address all topics related to medical referrals. In addition, the vast majority of these studies and researches are private and carried out in the Gaza Strip and did not include the West Bank.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusion

The Ministry of Health expenditure on purchasing services, according to the financial department in Ministry of Health, was about 974,782,080 NIS in 2021, which accounted for the largest percentage (37.5%) of all health expenditure in the same year.

Oncology management ranked first with the highest number of referrals, which was 27.6% of all referrals in 2021. Moreover, it constituted the highest percentage of spending on purchasing services from outside the Ministry of Health, followed directly by cardiovascular diseases, with a rate of 17.1% of all referrals in 2021.

The aging stage, which includes the age group 50 years or older, constituted the most medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, with a rate of 48.9%, followed by the childhood stage, which includes the age group from 0-14 years, with a rate of 22.2% of the total referrals.

The lack of treatment or treatment that is not available in the hospitals and facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health was the biggest reason for medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, with a rate of 94.9% of the total referrals.

The value of the treatment bill for the category of 1,000-10,000 shekels constituted the largest value of the cost of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, at a rate of 55.5% of the total referrals, followed by the category of less than 1,000 shekels, at a rate of 20.2% of the total medical referrals.

46.2% of the total medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health were covered by the Palestinian Ministry of Health within rates ranging from 91-100%, and 17% of them were covered by the Palestinian Ministry of Health within rates ranging from 0-10%.

The governorates of the northern West Bank accounted for 28.5% of the total referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, followed directly by the governorates of the southern West Bank with a percentage of 27.8%, Jerusalem

governorate with a percentage of 17.7%, the Gaza Strip with a percentage of 16.4%, then the governorates in the middle of the West Bank with a percentage of 9.6%.

As for the distribution of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health according to the patient's governorate, the Hebron governorate had the highest referral rate with 21.3%, followed by the Jerusalem governorate with 17.7%, then the Nablus governorate with 13.4%.

54.7% of the medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health were directed and sent to hospitals and health facilities located in Jerusalem Governorate, followed by hospitals and health facilities located in Nablus Governorate at a rate of 17%, then hospitals and health facilities located in Hebron Governorate at a rate of 9.6%, and hospitals and health facilities located in Central Gaza Strip governorate, with a rate of 9.4%.

Based on the foregoing, and given the cost and burden posed by medical referrals on the budget of the Ministry of Health in particular, and the budget of the government and the Palestinian Authority in general, it has become imperative to work to mitigate and reduce the bill, cost and burden resulting from medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities on the shoulders of the Ministry of Health and the government And the Palestinian Authority, by working to localize the medical services in the Palestinian Ministry of Health and find appropriate solutions and plans to reduce the cost and burden of the medical referrals bill.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

1. Building specialized hospitals and health facilities, or developing and rehabilitating the existing medical facilities and facilities affiliated with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, especially for the diseases that most demand medical referrals, according to available capabilities to the Ministry.
2. Paying attention to the Palestinian medical staff by working on developing it, training it, and sending it abroad to benefit from medical developments.
3. Work to reform the civil service system for doctors, nurses, and workers in the governmental health sector. The system, in its current state, is described as devoid of attractive incentives for distinguished specialists who prefer to stay abroad, and at the same time it is unable to retain those who started their working lives in

Palestinian government hospitals as well. This is due to the temptations and incentives that are offered to them from abroad, especially by the Gulf states, and by Israeli hospitals.

4. Recruiting skilled and specialized medical staff from abroad, and benefiting from the experiences of medical staff that visit the Palestinian territories.
5. The need to take the administrative and financial decisions that govern the referral process for treatment outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in a sound, correct and high transparency manner.
6. Laying down clear and sound foundations that identify patients who need treatment outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health or the institutions where patients are treated outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health.
7. Developing strategic plans, whether long or short-term, that work to reduce the cost of treatment outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities.
8. Developing the current health centers and working to provide the necessary treatments for the referred patients.
9. Since there is knowledge of the most referred diseases, for example, tumors are the largest percentage of referral requests, it is assumed that centers for diagnosis and treatment will be provided, and this saves a great deal of cost.
10. Localization of the treatment purchase service, so that Palestinian funds are not stolen, especially from the Israeli side, through the clearing house.
11. Work to reduce nepotism, and exceptions in medical referrals as much as possible.
12. Encouraging studies and research that work to reduce the cost of treatment outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health.
13. Reconsidering the policies and mechanisms used in medical referrals, and working to find other alternatives.
14. Intensifying work to attract Palestinian competencies who live outside Palestine, and Arab and friendly competencies in the fields of diseases that are the most expensive in medical referrals.
15. Sending a group of doctors and medical staff to advanced countries in the medical field to acquire medical expertise that is not available in the Palestinian government sector.
16. Find methods to minimize\reduce the number of referral cases and their cost.

17. conduct more studies and research that address the issue of medical referrals in Palestine by interviewing directors, and decision-makers in the Palestinian Ministry of Health and identifying from them the main reasons for medical referrals and their high cost.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

1. The unavailability of data, information and statistics on medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health in general, in addition to the difficulty of obtaining them from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which requires the researcher time, effort and frequent visits between the Ministry of Health, the Service Purchasing Department in Ramallah, and the General Directorate of Education in Health and Scientific Research in the Ministry of Health in Nablus, until the data on 04/10/2022 was obtained.
2. The study did not include medical referrals that took place outside the State of Palestine, such as referrals to Jordan, Egypt and the occupied Palestinian territories in 1948, because - and according to what was stated by the Service Purchase Department in the Palestinian Ministry of Health - that these referrals do not fall within the department's data and budget.
3. Lack and scarcity of studies, research and reports dealing with the issue of medical referrals outside the facilities of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, especially in the West Bank, and relying mainly on periodic and annual reports issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Health.
4. A descriptive study was conducted using a secondary data analysis method.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Tables

**Table A.1**

*Distribution of medical referrals outside the Palestinian Ministry of Health facilities, according to the name of the facility that made or requested the medical referral*

Facility that made or requested for the medical referral	NO.	%
Al Makassed Hospital	3	0.5
Al Mezan Hospital - Hebron	4	0.7
Al-Razi Hospital	2	0.4
Alia Hospital – Hebron	49	8.8
Almohtaseb Hospital	3	0.5
Alwatani hospital – Nablus	58	10.5
Beit Jala Hospital	67	12.1
H. Medical Committee Gaza	86	15.5
Jenin Hospital	29	5.2
Jericho hospital	4	0.7
Palestine Medical Complex-PMC Rammallah	40	7.2
PNA / M.H.D	8	1.4
Primary Health Care Directorate - Jerusalem (Referring hospital)	89	16.1
Qalquilia Hospital	5	0.9
Rafidia Hospital – Nablus	25	4.5
Salfit Hospital	6	1.1
Service Purchase Unit West Bank	32	5.8
Service Purchasing Unit / GAZA	4	0.7
Tubas Hospital	2	0.4
Tulkarem Hospital	21	3.8
Venezuelan Eye Hospital - Hugo Chavez	2	0.4
Yatta Hospital	15	2.7
Total	554	100.0

**Table A.2**

*Distribution of medical referrals according to the name of the receiving facility to which the medical referral was transferred*

Facility to which the medical referral was sent	NO. of Referrals	%
Al Etihad hospital	1	0.2
Al Hayat Cathertization Center	22	4.0
Al Makassed Hospital	79	14.3
Al Mezan Hospital – Hebron	6	1.1
Al-Ahli Hospital –Hebron	46	8.3
Al-Rahma Policlinic	16	2.9
Al-Razi Hospital	17	3.1
An-Najah National University Hospital	48	8.7
Augusta Victoria Hospital	192	34.7
Bethlehem Arab Society For Rehabilitation Hospital	2	0.4
Caritas Baby Hospital	6	1.1
Elina Center –Ramallah	7	1.3
Hclinic	2	0.4
Holy Family Hospital- Bethlehem	1	0.2
IBN SINA SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL	3	0.5
Istishari Arab Hospital	9	1.6
Julis Speciality Center For Cardiac Cathetherization	2	0.4
Medicare Labs	5	0.9
Nablus Speciality Hospital	7	1.3
Palestinian Red Crescent Society - Al Quds Hospital / Gaza	18	3.2
Red Crescent Hospital for Kids - Hebron	1	0.2
Specialized Arab Hospital	22	4.0
St. John Ophthalmic Hospital -Jerusalem	29	5.2
St. Joseph Hospital	2	0.4
St.John Ophthalmic Hospital- Gaza	10	1.8
The Jerusalem Princess Basma Center	1	0.2
Total	554	100.0

**Table A.3***Distribution of medical referrals based on the medical department*

Medical Department	NO. of Referrals	%
Pediatric bone marrow transplantation	1	0.2
Cardiac Care Unit (C.C.U)	5	0.9
Cardiac Catheterization	24	4.3
Cardiac Surgery	5	0.9
Cardio-thoracic surgery	1	0.2
Cardiology	31	5.6
Drugs & Medication	1	0.2
Ear nose & throat - ENT	6	1.1
Emergency	8	1.4
Endocrinology	2	0.4
Gastrointestinal Endoscopies	3	0.5
Genetics	1	0.2
Gynecology	1	0.2
Hematology	34	6.1
Intensive Care Unit (I.C.U)	5	0.9
Internal Medicine	44	7.9
Medical Imaging	8	1.4
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (N.I.C.U)	12	2.2
Nephrology	21	3.8
Neurology	9	1.6
Neurosurgery	10	1.8
Obstetrics	10	1.8
Oncology	159	28.7
Ophthalmology	41	7.4
Ortho Oncology	1	0.2
Orthopedic	15	2.7
Pediatric Cardiac Surgery	1	0.2
Pediatric intensive care unit (PICU)	1	0.2
Pediatric Surgery	3	0.5
Pediatrics	57	10.3
Pneumology	1	0.2
Radiology	1	0.2
Surgery	14	2.5
Thoracic & Thoracic Surgery	1	0.2
Urology	13	2.3
Vascular Surgery	4	0.7
Total	554	100.0

**Table A.4**

*Distribution of medical referrals according to the duration of treatment and/or stay in the hospital*

Duration of treatment and/or stay in the hospital	NO. of Referrals	%
From 1 – 7 Day	443	80
8 – 14 Day	45	8.1
15 – 21 Day	31	5.6
22 – 29 Day	10	1.8
From 1 - 3 Months	21	3.8
4 - 6 Months	3	0.5
7 - 9 Months	0	0.0
10 - 12 Months	0	0.0
More than a year	1	0.2
Total	554	100.0

**Table A.5**

*Distribution of medical according to the Invoice Amount of the treatment*

Invoice Amount / NIS)	NO. of Referrals	%
less than 1,000	112	20.2
From 1,000 - 10,000	307	55.4
10,001 – 20,000	71	12.8
20,001 – 30,000	27	4.9
30,001 – 40,000	10	1.8
40,001 – 50,000	8	1.4
50,001 – 60,000	5	0.9
60,001 – 70,000	1	0.2
70,001 – 80,000	6	1.1
80,001 – 90,000	1	0.2
90,001 – 100,000	0	0.0
100,001 – 150,000	5	0.9
More than 150,000	1	0.2
Total	554	100.0

**Table A.6***Distribution of medical referrals according to the patient's governorate and medical category or medical procedure*

Medical Category / medical procedure	Patient Governorate															
	Hebron		Bethlehem		Jerusalem		Jenin		Tubas and Northern Valleys		Tulkarm		Qalqiliya		Nablus	
	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%
Oncology	34	6.1	11	2	43	7.8	5	0.9	2	0.4	5	0.9	1	0.2	12	2.2
Cardiovascular	9	1.6	1	0.2	3	0.5	10	1.8	1	0.2	4	0.7	1	0.0	24	4.3
Urology and Nephrology	29	5.2	5	0.9	4	0.7	2	0.4	0	0.0	3	0.5	0	0.0	5	0.9
Ophthalmology	7	1.3	3	0.5	14	2.5	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.5
Pediatric and Neonatal Problems	10	1.8	2	0.4	6	1.1	5	0.9	0	0.0	3	0.5	1	0.2	2	0.4
Medical Imaging	7	1.3	3	0.5	6	1.1	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	3	0.5	6	1.1
Orthopedics	3	0.5	3	0.5	3	0.5	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	3	0.5
Endoscopy	1	0.2	1	0.2	1	0.2	4	0.7	0	0.0	4	0.7	0	0.0	4	0.7
Gynecology and Obstetrics	1	0.2	1	0.2	7	1.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	2	0.4
Neurology and Neurosurgery	2	0.4	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Hematology and Lymphatic System	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	5	0.9	2	0.4	2	0.4
Nuclear Medicine	4	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0	0	0.0	2	0.4	0	0.0	2	0.4
Radiation Therapy	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2	3	0.5	1	0.2	4	0.7
Laboratory Examination	3	0.5	1	0.2	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	3	0.5
I.C.U	6	1.1	3	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Rehabilitation and Technical aids	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
E.N.T	1	0.2	0	0.0	6	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Endocrinology	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Drugs and Medications	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Dermatology And Skin tissue operations	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pathology	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	118	21.3	36	6.5	98	17.8	35	6.3	6	1.1	31	5.6	12	2.2	74	13.4

Medical Category / medical procedure	Patient Governorate															
	Ramallah and Al-Bireh		Jericho and Al- Aghwar		Salfit		Central region - Gaza		Khan Yunis		Rafah		North Gaza		Gaza	
	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%	NO. of Referrals	%
Oncology	16	2.9	3	0.5	5	0.9	1	0.2	5	0.9	1	0.2	4	0.7	5	0.9
Cardiovascular disease	1	0.2	2	0.4	2	0.4	7	1.3	7	1.3	3	0.5	3	0.5	17	3.1
Urology and Nephrology	5	0.9	0	0.0	2	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Ophthalmology	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2	5	0.9	1	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.4
Pediatric and Neonatal Problems	2	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Medical Imaging	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.4	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Orthopedics	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2
Endoscopy	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Gynecology and Obstetrics	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Neurology and Neurosurgery	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	2	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	0.7
Hematology and Lymphatic System	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Nuclear Medicine	2	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Radiation Therapy	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Laboratory Examination	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
I.C.U	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Rehabilitation and Technical aids	1	0.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	0.9	1	0.2	0	0.0	2	0.4
E.N.T	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Endocrinology	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Drugs and Medications	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2
Dermatology And Skin tissue operations	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Pathology	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	32	5.8	6	1.1	15	2.7	10	1.8	30	5.4	7	1.3	9	1.6	35	6.3

**Table A.7***Distribution of medical referrals based on its type*

Referral Facility Type and nature	NO. of Referrals	%
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	446	80.5
Private	108	19.5
Total	554	100.0

## Appendix B

### Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval Letter at An- Najah National University

An-Najah National University  
Faculty of Medicine Sciences & Health  
Institutional Review Board

جامعة النجاح الوطنية  
كلية الطب وعلوم الصحة  
لجنة الممارسات البحثية  
العلمية

Ref: Mas. Dec. 2020/9

IRB Approval Letter

Study Title:  
"The status of medical referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health 2020"

Submitted by:  
Mohammed Mazen Turkman

Supervisor:  
Abdulsalam Khyatt, Mariam Al-Tell

Date Approved:  
9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Your Study Title "The status of medical referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health 2020"  
viewed by An-Najah National University IRB committee and was approved on 9<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2020

Hasan Fitian, MD  
IRB Committee Chairman  
An-Najah National University

IRB

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## Appendix C

A letter facilitating an assignment addressed from the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at An-Najah National University, Dr. Khalil Issa, to the Director of the Service Purchasing Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Health, Dr. Haitham Al-Hadari, on April 21, 2021

An-Najah National University  
Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences  
Dean's office



جامعة النجاح الوطنية  
كلية الطب وعلم الصحة  
مكتب العميد

تاريخ: 21 أبريل 2021

تاريخ: 21/04/2021

مديرية الكوادر  
مدير المشتريات الطبية  
وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية

تحية مبنية وبعد:

### الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة

تهدىكم جامعة النجاح الوطنية أطيب التحيات، وبخو مراقبتكم على سير عمل مهمة الطلاب: "مدرسة تكس" و هو طالب الدراسات العليا برنامج الصحة العامة، و لقد تمت إشرافه بدعم السلام لقياس و د. مريم الطل. حيث يسعى الطالب (بطريقة البحث) لتجربة استقلالية من خلال ترجمته مغلقت امراضه كامن ثم تحويلهم الى مشفى داخل الوطن أو خارجه لعام 2019، وذلك بالاعتماد على طريقتة تنويعية.

عالمياً بأن:

1- تطور البحث:

"The status of medical referrals in the Palestine Ministry of Health Objective"

2- تطويره: استخدام لأطباء البحث الطبي فقط وبمستوى المحافظة على الجودة العالية للمعلومات.

3- مواكبة نهج العلاجات البحثية ومختصر البحث بوقفة تضمنتكم.

فيكون لكم حسن تعاونكم ومساندةكم للمعايير العالمية.

مع وافر الاحترام،



د. خليل عيسى  
عميد كلية الطب وعلم الصحة

- نسخة: للطالب

- نسخة: 2021/4/21



## Appendix D

A letter facilitating an assignment addressed from the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at An-Najah National University, Dr. Khalil Issa, to the Director of the Service Purchasing Department at the Palestinian Ministry of Health, Dr. Haitham Al-Hadari, on April 25, 2021

An-Najah National University  
Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences  
Dean's office



جامعة النجاح الوطنية  
كلية الطب وعلم الصحة  
مكتب العميد

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تاريخ: 2021/04/25  
مسترة الدكتور هيثم الهادي المحترم  
مدير المشتريات الطبية  
وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية  
تحية خيرة وبعد،

الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة

أهلاً بكم جامعة النجاح الوطنية أكملت الخدمات، ونرجو موافقتكم على تعيين مهمة لتفادي مركز لوكمان" و هو طالب الدراسات العليا ببرنامج إدارة الصحة العامة، وذلك تحت إشراف د. عبد السلام الخياط و د. مريم الخنجر. حيث يسعى الطالب بطريقة البحث لتعبئة استمارة من خلال مراجعة ملفات المرضى الذين تم تحويلهم إلى مشافي داخل الوطن أو خارجه لعام 2019، وذلك باختلاف قطاعات بطريقه عشوائية.

شكراً بآز:  
1. عنوان البحث:  
"The status of medical referrals in the Palestine Ministry of Health Objective"  
2. المعلومات مستخدم لأغراض البحث العلمي هذا وعدم المحافظة على السرية لتامة المعلومات.  
3. موافقة اجراء الأبحاث البحث ومختصر البحث مرافقة لعميرتكم.

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم ومساعدتكم كالمعتاد العلمية.

مع وافر الاحترام،،  
د.خالد عيسى  
عميد كلية الطب وعلم الصحة

نسخة: طالب  
نسخة: مشرف



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تلفون: 972 7 733 4444 / 733 4444 (7 خط) فاكس: 972 7 733 4444 / 733 4444 (7 خط) بريد إلكتروني: info@najah.edu.ps  
Najah - P.O.Box (7 or 733) Tel: (972) 733 4444 / 733 4444 Fax: (972) 733 4444



## Appendix F

A letter facilitating a research assignment addressed by the General Directorate of Education in Health and Scientific Research in the Ministry of Health to Her Excellency the Minister of Health, Dr. Mai Al-Kaila, on June 23, 2021, with the Minister of Health's approval of the letter

State of Palestine Ministry of Health General Directorate of Education in Health and Scientific Research		دولة فلسطين وزارة الصحة إدارة عامة للتعليم الصحي والبحث العلمي
To: .....		رقم: 23.6.2021
Date: .....		تاريخ: 23.6.2021
معالي وزيرة الصحة الأخت الدكتورة منى الشلهبة حفظها الله ... هبة واحترام..		
<u>الموضوع: تمهيد مهمة بحث</u> تقديم الإدارة العامة للتعليم الصحي أطباء لمرضىها.		
مرفق تلك لتعريف مهمة الطبيب محمد سائز تركمان - برنامج ماجستير إدارة الصحة العامة - جامعة النجاح، وبتكليف د. عبد السلام الخياط ود. حريم الشلح، في عمل بحث بعنوان:		
<b>The Status of Medical Referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health 2020</b>		
حيث يُطلب السماح له بوضع معلومات من ملفات المرضى المحفوظون التي يمكن أنال لاطمن نو خارجة، حيث أنه يتكلم بأن المعلومات لا عرض البحث العلمي وسيرام المحافظة على السرية التامة.		
ترجيبتكم لتكمية.		
مهاجدة..		
 د. عبد الله القواسمي مدير التعليم الصحي والبحث العلمي	23.6.2021 مع الموافقة 	
P.O. Box. 14 Tel/fax: 09-2733901	admin@vcr.moh.gov.ps	ص.ب. 14 الهاتف: 09-2733901

## Appendix G

### A letter facilitating a research assignment addressed from the General Directorate of Education in Health and Scientific Research in the Ministry of Health to the Director General of the Service Purchase Unit in the Ministry of Health on June 28, 2021

State of Palestine  
Ministry of Health  
General Directorate of Education in  
Health and Scientific Research



دولة فلسطين  
وزارة الصحة  
إدارة خدمة للتعليم الصحي  
والبحث العلمي

Ref: .....  
Date:.....

الرجوع: 2021/06/28  
التاريخ: 2021/06/28

الأخ مدير عام وحدة شراء الخدمة المحترم،،،،  
بسمه وانظروا-

**الموضوع: تسهيل مهمة بحث**

لاحقاً لمرافقة معالي وزيرة الصحة، يرجى تسهيل مهمة الطاقم: محمد مازن تركمان- برنامج  
مأجستير إدارة الصحة العامة- جامعة النجاح، وبالتعاون د. عبد السلام الخليل ود. مريم الطل، في  
عمل بحث بعنوان:

**'The Status of Medical Referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health 2020'**

وذلك بالنسبة له بجميع معلومات من ملفات المرضى المعرفين في مستشفى داخل الوطن أو خارجه.  
على أن لا يتم التعرض للمعلومات التعريفية للمرضى، وأن يتم استخدام المعلومات لأغراض البحث  
العلمي فقط والحفاظ على سرية المعلومات.

على أن يتم الالتزام بجميع تعليمات وإجراءات لوقاية والسلامة أصدرتها عن وزارة الصحة بخصوص  
جائحة كورونا، وتحت حضانة المسؤولية

على أن يتم تزويد الوزارة بالنسخة PDF من نتائج البحث، للتعبئة بعدم النشر.

البحث يستلزم تقديم طلب بعد انتهاء بحث. تمنحنا على جائزة فلسطين للبحث العلمي  
وإمكان الباحث. التحم طلب للمشاركة ببحثه في المؤتمر الفلسطيني لتدريسيات البحث العلمي

مع الاطراء-

د. عبد الله القواسمي

مدير التعليم الصحي والبحث العلمي



اسم: عمدة ليا طب وعلم الصحة المعظم، جامعة النجاح

## Appendix H

### Data Collection Tools



## The medical referrals in the Palestinian Ministry of Health 2022: a descriptive study

Mohammed Mazen Turkman

11851131

### Data Collection Tools

#### 1.1.Objectives:

- To identify the reasons for the referral.
- To determine where the referral was given or issued, And to where was the referral done?
- To find out methods to minimize\reduce the number of referral cases and their cost.

#### 2. Data Collection Tools

- Referral number in the study:
- Department:
- Medical Procedure:
- Referral number for a medical procedure:

- Referral date:
- Governorate:
- The patient's age:
- The patient's gender:
  - female.
  - male.
- Type of referred case:
  - emergency.
  - routine.
- The referral for:
  - Admission
  - Outpatient.
- Is the patient insured?
  - Yes.
  - No.
- Insurance type:
  - Mandatory.
  - Voluntary.
  - Workers inside the green line.
  - Collective contracts.
  - Ministry of Social Development.
  - Prisoners and freedmen.
  - Complimentary.
  - Syndicates.
  - Families of Martyrs.
- When did he get the insurance (the period of insurance before the medical referral):
  - Less than a month.
  - From 1 to 6 months.
  - From 7 months to 12 months.
  - More than a year.
- The diagnosis:

- Cancers.
- Nephrology & Urology.
- Bone disease.
- Brain and nerve problems.
- Hematology.
- Others \_\_\_\_\_.
- Cardiovascular disease.
- Eye diseases.
- Pediatric and Neonatal Problems.
- Gynecology & Obstetrics.
- Ear, nose and throat diseases.

- Where did you request the referral:

- Northern Committee.
- Southern Committee.
- Jerusalem.
- Center Committee.
- Gaza strip.

- The committee that approved the referral:

- Northern Committee.
- Southern Committee.
- Jerusalem.
- Center Committee.
- Gaza strip.

- Reason of referral:

- Unavailability of the service.
- Lack of medication.
- Lack of medical services.
- Shortage of beds as a result of the hospital's full occupancy rate.
- Length of the waiting period the patient to obtain the required service.
- Others \_\_\_\_\_.
- Shortage of qualified specialists.
- Shortage of medical devices.

● Where was the referral made:

Palestine.                       Israel.                       Jordan.                       Egypt.

other countries: \_\_\_\_\_.

● Duration of treatment and stay in the hospital to which he is referred:

Less than 1 month.                       1 – 3 Months.                       4 – 6 Months.  
 7 – 9 Months.                       10 – 12 Months.                       More than a year.

● Referral cost (NIS):

Less than 1000.                       1000 - 10000.                       10001 - 20000.  
 20001 - 30000.                       30001 - 40000.                       40001 - 50000.  
 50001 - 60000.                       60001 - 70000.                       70001 - 80000.  
 80001 - 90000.                       90001 - 100000.                       100000 – 150000.  
 + 150000.

● Does this cost include utility expenses?

Yes.                       No.

● Coverage ratio of the Ministry of Health:

91 % - 100 %.                       81 % - 90 %.                       71 % - 80 %.  
 61 % - 70 %.                       51 % - 60 %.                       41 % - 50 %.  
 31 % - 40 %.                       21 % - 30 %.                       11 % - 20 %.  
 0 % - 10 %.

● Does the coverage rate include utility expenses?

Yes.                       No.

- Are the services available in the country?

Yes.

No.

- How much does it cost the service in Palestine (ILS)?

Less than 1000.

1000 - 10000.

10001 - 20000.

20001 - 30000.

30001 - 40000.

40001 - 50000.

50001 - 60000.

60001 - 70000.

70001 - 80000.

80001 - 90000.

90001 - 100000.

100000 - 150000.

+ 150000.



جامعة النجاح الوطنية  
كلية الدراسات العليا

## التحويلات الطبية في وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية 2022: دراسة وصفية

إعداد

محمد مازن مسعد تركمان

إشراف

د. عبد السلام الخياط

د. مريم الطل

قدمت هذه الرسالة استكمالاً لمتطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في إدارة الصحة العامة،  
من كلية الدراسات العليا، في جامعة النجاح الوطنية، نابلس - فلسطين.

2024

## التحويلات الطبية في وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية 2022: دراسة وصفية

إعداد

محمد مازن مسعد تركمان

إشراف

د. عبد السلام الخياط

د. مريم الطل

### الملخص

بلغت نسبة شراء الخدمة من خارج مرافق وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية عام 2021 حوالي 37.5% من إجمالي

الإنفاق الصحي في وزارة الصحة، بواقع 99,064 تحويلة، وبتكلفة إجمالية بلغت 974,782,080 شيقلاً.

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على واقع التحويلات الطبية خارج مرافق وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية.

قمنا في هذه الدراسة بإجراء دراسة وصفية لجميع التحويلات الطبية التي قامت بها وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية

خلال العام 2021.

تم الحصول على المعلومات المطلوبة من بيانات دائرة شراء الخدمات في وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية.

وبلغ حجم عينة الدراسة الموصى بها حسب حاسبة حجم العينة (Raosoft) 554 تحويلة، حيث تم أخذ عينة

عشوائية بسيطة من التحويلات من خارج مرافق وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية.

احتلت إدارة الأورام المرتبة الأولى بأعلى عدد من الإحالات بنسبة 27.6% من إجمالي الإحالات في عام

2021.

وشكلت مرحلة الشيخوخة، والتي تشمل الفئة العمرية 50 سنة فما فوق، معظم الإحالات الطبية بنسبة 48.9%.

وكان نقص العلاج أو العلاج غير المتوفر في مستشفيات ومرافق وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية السبب الأكبر

للتحويلات الطبية، بنسبة 94.9% من إجمالي التحويلات.

46.2% من إجمالي التحويلات الطبية تمت تغطيتها من قبل وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية بنسب تتراوح بين 91-100%.

واستحوذت محافظات شمال الضفة الغربية على 28.5% من إجمالي التحويلات، تليها مباشرة محافظات جنوب الضفة الغربية بنسبة 27.8%.

أما بالنسبة لتوزيع التحويلات الطبية حسب محافظة المريض، فقد سجلت محافظة الخليل أعلى نسبة تحويلات بنسبة 21.3%، تليها محافظة القدس بنسبة 17.7%.

تم توجيه وإرسال 54.7% من التحويلات الطبية إلى المستشفيات والمرافق الصحية في محافظة القدس.

وبناء على ما سبق، أصبح لزاماً العمل على تخفيف وتقليل الفاتورة والتكلفة والأعباء الناتجة عن التحويلات الطبية خارج مرافق وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية، وذلك من خلال العمل على توطين الخدمات الطبية في وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية وإيجاد الحلول المناسبة. وخطط لتقليل تكلفة وعبء فاتورة الإحالات الطبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التحويلات الطبية؛ شراء الخدمة؛ وزارة الصحة الفلسطينية.