

UK NHS disaster: death rates 45 percent higher than in the US

by Daniel J. Mitchell

23 September 2013

Back in 2010, I guest-hosted Larry Kudlow's CNBC program for a couple of days. During one of the segments on my last show, I crossed swords with the other host, Simon Hobbs, as we argued whether patients needlessly died because of the government-run healthcare system in the United Kingdom.

Since neither one of us had data at our fingertips, it was basically a he-said/he-said exchange.

A few days after that tussle, however, I posted some evidence supporting my side of the discussion.

And over the past few years, I've posted additional material showing thousands of extra fatalities resulting from the U.K.'s government-run healthcare system. Including the fact that hundreds and hundreds of patients are allowed to starve to death!

Today, I'm going to administer the coup de grâce. I don't think anybody will be able to pretend that bureaucrats and politicians do a good job after watching this powerful news report from the United Kingdom

There is a lot of powerful data in that report, but the number that jumps out at me is that death rates are 45 percent higher in the United Kingdom than they are in the United States.

That's not statistical noise. That's a huge gulf and it shows a massive failure on the part of government on the other side of the Atlantic.

By the way, none of this is to suggest that the American system is perfect. We have huge problems caused by direct government intervention (programs such as Medicare and Medicaid) and indirect government intervention (with the tax-code's healthcare exclusion being at the top of my list).

So while England's big-government approach puts people on waiting lines and causes needless deaths, America's big-government approach causes third-party payer which cripples the free market and leads to high prices and inefficiency.

But if I have to choose between the United States and the United Kingdom, it's not even close. The American system is not as screwed up as the British system, though I realize that's damning with faint praise.

Let's close by reminding ourselves that Paul Krugman infamously wrote that, "In Britain, the government itself runs the hospitals and employs the doctors. We've all heard scare stories about how that works in practice; these stories are false." The news report you just watched suggests that he's putting ideology above evidence. And if you want more data (some of it very distressing and tragic), you can [click here](#).