

Charging for "bed and board" in the NHS is better descr...

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The [Guardian has reported](#) that hospital patients could be asked to pay for their "bed and board" if funding does not match increasing demand. Apparently:

Rob Webster, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, which represents NHS commissioners and providers, said the health service would have to make "tough choices".

It is suggested that fees of £75 a night are being considered.

But these are not fees, and nor are they a market based supply. Let's be quite clear what this is: it is a tax on the sick.

Of all the tax bases for raising funds the one I think most unsuitable to fund the NHS is a tax on the sick.

They have least, or at the very best reduced, capacity to pay in most cases.

It is hopelessly inefficient in that exemptions and allowances will make it incredibly hard and expensive to collect.

Defining a "stay" will be difficult and lead to severely distorted decision making by clinicians and patients. The tax therefore compromises the care the NHS is meant to fund.

And the amount raised will not go far. I would be surprised is after costs it could realistically raise a billion if all likely exemptions are taken into account, and the NHS costs £140 billion a year.

So, just about everything about this idea is wrong.

So why is anyone discussing it?