

Martin Freeman, *Untitled*

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Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) Economic burden of HCV Backgrounder

Fast facts:

- Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a serious global health issue, dubbed a 'viral time bomb'¹ by the World Health Organization (WHO) due to its high prevalence, long term unpredictable disease progression, aging population, low diagnosis and treatment rates.
- HCV is entirely preventable and can be successfully treated using antiviral therapy,² but the economic burden of the disease remains high as healthcare costs continue to rise.
- Approximately 150 million people are estimated to be living with HCV, leaving them at risk of developing liver cirrhosis and/or liver cancer.²
- The disease has a pro-longed time-course, as individuals develop cirrhosis within 20 years and so the disease burden of HCV is increasing now.³
- The economic burden of HCV is high due to the management of its long-term consequences, including cirrhosis, liver cancer and liver transplantation.³

Economic Burden in Patients Who Go Untreated or Fail Treatment

- Due to significant limitations (including complex regimens and the cost of treatment) many diagnosed patients around the world are left untreated or undertreated.⁴
- The previous standard of care for HCV, pegylated interferon and ribavirin, is successful in only approximately 40 to 50% of patients with genotype 1 HCV.⁵
- Those who go untreated or fail treatment are at risk of developing severe liver problems or primary liver cancer, which can require a liver transplant, or other treatments and procedures.⁶

Cost of Receiving Treatment

- Cost analysis, including the cost of complications, shows that the median lifetime cost for treating one patient with dual therapy (pegylated interferon and ribavirin) is between €7,517 and €21,229 depending on the virus genotype.³
- Cost effectiveness analyses for treating chronic HCV with triple therapy costs an additional USD 70,100 per quality-adjusted life year (QALY) (mild fibrosis) and USD 36,300 QALY (advanced fibrosis) compared with dual therapy.³

Indirect Costs of HCV

- HCV begins to exact a cost before end-stage conditions kick in.⁴
 - A 2010 study drawing on US employment records found that the cost of sick days and lower productivity per HCV infected employee was US\$8,352 per year.⁴

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- A US survey by the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) indicated that the cost for outpatient physician services connected to the more than 300,000 outpatient visits for HCV in 1998 amounted to \$24 million.⁷

'End-Stage Conditions' Costs

- HCV is the leading cause of liver transplant operations worldwide.⁴
 - Average cost of transplant in US is \$139,000 and topped at \$400,000.⁴
 - In Europe, there are 30,000 people on the transplant waiting list, but only 12,000 procedures per year.⁴

Clinical and Economic Impact of HCV Continues to Grow

- Despite the fact that HCV infection rates are decreasing, the clinical and economic impact of chronic HCV infection is expected to grow considerably in the next decade as a large population of individuals who acquired the virus in the 1960s through to the 1980s begin to develop health issues associated with the disease.⁸

As these numbers continue to grow, effective HCV treatment and care become more crucial in addressing the financial implications currently associated with the disease.

For more information on HCV, please go to <http://www.stop-hepatitis-c.info>.

References

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