

Costs associated with dementia

Care and treatment of dementia is associated with significant costs. The major part of the costs is related to municipal health and care services.

To calculate the cost of illness, a cost-of-illness (COI) analysis is often used, which attempts to calculate all the costs that can be associated with a person becoming ill. However, the calculation of costs will be associated with some uncertainty.

How do you calculate, for example, the loss in productivity, which occurs due to illness and thereby results in absence from the labor market? And how do you price the human costs occurring because of, for example, concern among the relatives?

The WHO estimates that the total cost of dementia in 2015 was 818 billion US dollars, equivalent to about 1.1 % of the global gross domestic product (GDP). This includes the direct costs of social and health services, but also estimates of costs for care provided by the family (informal care).

Results from Danish cost-of-illness studies

A study from the Capital Region of Denmark shows that the major part of costs for citizens with dementia is found in the municipal system. These are, for example, costs for nursing homes, home care, training, rehabilitation and aids.

In addition, a few costs exist in the form of social benefits and transfer income. Further, there are costs for medicine and health care in the form of hospitalizations, visits to the doctor, physical therapy, podiatry, chiropractic, rehabilitation, psychologist and dentist. If all these costs are included in the calculations, the annual costs per person with dementia may be estimated at approx. 522,800 kr.

Assuming that costs are on average the same in the rest of the country as in selected municipalities in the Capital Region, the total annual costs were DKK 18.6 billion DKK in 2013, where these calculations originate from.

Another recent Danish study from 2020 has calculated the costs of several different brain disorders, including dementia. The direct costs of this study cover the costs of medicines, consumption of health services, including hospitalizations, visits to the doctor, physiotherapy, podiatry, chiropractic, rehabilitation, psychologist and dentist, as well as costs associated with nursing homes and home care in the municipal sector.

The study shows that the additional costs - that is, the extra costs associated with having dementia compared to people of the same age and gender without dementia - amount to approx. DKK 223,000 in 2015 prices per person with dementia in Denmark. In total, this sums up to an additional cost of 8 billion DKK for all citizens registered with a dementia diagnosis.

As shown in the study from the Capital Region, most of the additional costs can be attributed to costs for nursing homes and home care in the municipal sector.

Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017

WHO



Sundhedsprofil for Region Hovedstaden og kommuner 2017 – Kronisk sygdom, Center for Klinisk Forskning og Forebyggelse, Bispebjerg og Frederiksberg Hospital, Region Hovedstaden; 2018

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Omkostninger til kommunale sundheds-og omsorgsydelser blandt borgere med kronisk sygdom i Region Hovedstaden, Forskningscenter for Forebyggelse og Sundhed, Region Hovedstaden; 2016

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Lau CJ, Lykke M, Andreasen AH, Bekker-Jeppesen M, Buhelt LP, Robinson KM, et al. Sundhedsprofil 2013 - Kronisk Sygdom. Glostrup: Forskningscenter for Forebyggelse og Sundhed, Region Hovedstaden; 2015.

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