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The Cost of Managing Multiple Sclerosis Patients at Mafraq Hospital

Naila Salem Almazrouei¹, Omar Abdulla¹, Palat Chirakkara Kumar¹, Ahmed Osman Shatila¹
¹Mafra Hospital, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Background: Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disabling life-long disease that manifests in different ways. Its associated costs and its economic impacts on young individuals have not been fully evaluated in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Various studies have been conducted globally to determine the causes, incidence, associated risk factors, and costs and its effect on people afflicted with MS.

Methods: A total of 109 patients with MS attending Mafraq Neurology clinic were involved in the study after approval from the Mafraq Research Ethics Committee. Data were collected retrospectively from the CERNER patient data base. Data included outpatient clinic visits, medications, hospital admissions, emergency department visits, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain and spine, laboratory tests including (complete blood count (CBC), liver function tests (LFTs), vitamin D) from 2010 to 2017, and sick leaves for the year 2016.

Results: Patient's age ranged from 16 to 64 years with a mean of 34 years. A total of 26 nationalities were represented. Data were collected between 2010 and 2017 reporting on eight services. The mean cost for outpatient services was 683 AED. The mean cost for hospital admission was 131,265 AED. The mean cost for emergency visits was 704 AED. Brain MRIs had a mean of 1235 AED while spine MRIs had a mean cost of 1163 AED. The mean cost of medications was 93,980 AED. In 2016, the sick leaves had a mean cost of 7958 AED.

Conclusion: Our research shows that the management of patients with MS is highly costly, and this cost can even increase with time leading to a real economic burden. Further studies are needed to identify a solid plan to decrease the burden of this disease.