THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SCHIZOPHRENIA IN ROMANIAN PSYCHIATRIC PATIENTS

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BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Mental health care usually demands an association between hospitalization, outpatient treatment and medication.

Schizophrenia is a serious psychiatric condition and it is oftenly seen as an important clinical, social and economic **burden** on individuals suffering from it, their families and the whole society.

The **aim of our study** was to evaluate the **costs** associated to psychiatric care in patients admitted to the Psychiatry Department of the Emergency County Hospital Cluj-Napoca and diagnosed with schizophrenia.

METHODS

We performed a retrospective analysis of the patients admitted in 2017 and diagnosed with schizophrenia, applying several inclusion and exclusion criteria (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – Inclusion and exclusion criteria for our study

RESULTS

Out of a total of 3483 admitted patients, 19.3% were diagnosed with schizophrenia (n=675, 345 male patients). The group had a mean age of 41.41 years old (95% CI ± 0.03), more than half of patients being younger than 40 years old (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 – Age distribution of schizophrenic patients among our group

Selective references:

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* - 1 EUR = 4.5681 RON – mean value for 2017, National Bank of Romania

The most frequent diagnoses were paranoid schizophrenia (388 patients) and undifferentiated schizophrenia (255 patients). All other ICD-10 diagnostic codes were used on 32 patients (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 – Percentual distribution of schizophrenia subtypes Incidence according to ICD-10 diagnostic code among our group

Patients were admitted for an average number of **17.44** days/patient (95% CI ± 0.03), generating an average cost of **7582 RON/patient** (95% CI ± 428), (**1660 EUR*** (95% CI ± 93)). Data analysis by gender (Table 1) showed us that men had a significantly higher number of hospitalization days than women (p=0.01), which lead to a significantly higher cost of hospitalization for male patients (p=0.01). Our group generated a total health care cost of **5.1M RON** (1.1 M EUR*).

	Male	Female	p
Average number of hospitalization days (95% CI)	18.6 ± 1.59	16.22 ± 1.13	0.01
Average costs (RON, 95% CI)	8096.23 ± 688	7044.57 ± 492	0.01

Table 1 – Length of hospitalization and costs by gender in schizophrenic patients from our study

CONCLUSIONS

Schizophrenia has a **major economic impact**, especially in male patients. Adequate treatments in out-patient clinics and better therapeutic adherence could lead to a decrease of economical burden, to an **increased cost-efficiency rate** and, finally, to a **better patient care**.

KEYWORDS

*schizophrenia | psychiatric costs | economic impact
cost-efficiency rate | mental health economics*

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