

ORIGINAL PAPER

Moderate and Severe Plaque Psoriasis: a Quality of Life and Cost-of-Illness Study from Greece

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Abstract

Background: Psoriasis worldwide prevalence is estimated between 1% and 3%. In Greece, prevalence is around 2% and affects approximately 200.000 patients. The most common form of the disease is chronic plaque psoriasis that affects about 80% of psoriasis patients of which more than 10% present a moderate or severe form of the disease. Data and information concerning the quality of life of the patients with a moderate and severe condition, and the economic impact of the disease is limited worldwide and particularly in European countries. The primary objective of this study was to evaluate the quality of life of patients with moderate and severe psoriasis, an intangible cost of the illness, as well as to evaluate the economic impact of the illness in Greece from patient and third-party payer (insurance funds) perspectives.

Methods/Design: Two different questionnaires, SF36 and DLQI were used to evaluate patients' quality of life (QoL). Evaluation of the economic impact of the disease was done by identifying the direct health care cost, through a microeconomic evaluation of all the health care costs, and the loss of productivity, using the human capital approach. Our study included consecutive patients from the Venereal and Skin Diseases Hospital "Andreas Syggros" in Athens, during the period January-December 2005. The inclusion criteria were: age > 18 yrs, PASI (Psoriasis Area Severity Index) >12 and BSA (Body Surface Area) >10%. Patients enrolled in the study were re-assessed after a 3-month period, which was set as the observation period.

Results: The sample for the quality of life assessment study included 177 patients. Ninety-seven patients were re-assessed after the three-month period and their data were used to evaluate the economic impact of the illness. The majority of patients in the study were men with a mean age of around 50. According to the results, both moderate and severe psoriasis affect negatively the patients' quality of life in every aspect examined. In particular, it mostly affects their mental and emotional situation. During their first visit, the patients mean score of PASI was 20.17 and BSA was 29.81%. During the patients' 2nd visit, 3-months later, the mean PASI and BSA scores were 8.44 and 14.89% respectively. Specifically, 67 out of the 97 patients (69.1%) achieved a PASI 50, whereas 37 of them (38.1%) achieved a PASI 75. The economic consequences of the illness are extremely high, since the average total cost per patient was estimated to be €12,455.91 per year. In part this is due to the chronic state of the disease, but is mainly due of the induction of biological medicines in the disease management

Conclusion: Moderate and severe plaque psoriasis has a profound impact on the affected Greek patient's QoL and is associated with extremely high costs. Although biological medicines can contribute to improvements of patient's QoL strictest compliance with disease management guidelines as well as introduction of generic biological medicines will significantly mitigate the increasing cost of this chronic disease.

Keywords: psoriasis, quality of life, cost of illness