Indirect costs of back pain internationally

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Back pain is a major health problem affecting performance at work and general well-being worldwide. It generates work absenteeism and disablement and leads to a high economic burden to society. The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2010 showed that out of 291 conditions evaluated, low back pain ranked highest in terms of years lived with disability and sixth in disability-adjusted life years (DALYS). The most common method to estimate the burden of a specific disease on a society is a cost-of-illness (COI) study. Cost-of-illness studies aim to identify and measure all the costs of a disease: direct, indirect and intangible costs. Many studies focus only on direct costs of an illness and payers perspective, like e.g. costs of hospital services, physician services, medical devices, rehabilitation, drugs, and diagnostic tests. Indirect costs represent the other portion of estimated costs as a result of broader perspective – social perspective. These include mortality costs, morbidity costs due to absenteeism and presenteeism, informal care costs. For many diseases, indirect costs are substantial and can be significantly greater than the direct costs. International literature on studies which included indirect costs of back pain has been reviewed to determine the amount of indirect costs among total costs. The data in reviewed studies referred to USA, Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Germany, UK and Switzerland. Results showed that indirect costs compose a significant part of the total costs of back pain (from 27.4% to 95%) and should be taken into consideration in cost-of-illness analysis. Differences in obtained results are caused by various methodology used to assess the indirect costs which means there is a need to elaborate uniform and generally accepted methodology for indirect costs assessment. With expanding and aging populations in many countries, the enormous burden from back pain will grow significantly over coming decades. To prioritize prevention efforts appropriately world-wide, information on the burden caused by back pain would be useful.

Biography
Agnieszka Tymecka-Woszczerowicz obtained Master of Pharmacy Degree at the Medical University of Gdansk, Poland. Her researches were carried in collaboration with Universita Degli Studi di Perugia, Italy. She has finished PhD studies at Pharmacoeconomics Department, Faculty of Pharmacy, Medical University of Warsaw, Poland. She works as Clinical Research Coordinator in Clinical Research Trials in Neurology.

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