

Cost benefits analysis of Rheumatoid Arthritis Education programme

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Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is the most common cause of disability among adults in many countries. It was estimated that RA affects from 0.5 to 1% of the United State's population and between 1 to 2% in the United Kingdom's population. The direct and indirect costs of treating patients with RA incur substantial amount of money from the service providers, medical professionals' and the patients themselves.

The objective of the study is to evaluate the economic value of the Arthritis Education Programme (AEP). The principle of Cost benefit Analysis was used throughout the study and the contingency valuation method was used to measure the intangible benefits of the programme

The questionnaire for service users and service providers of the AEP was constructed. Ninety patients who had attended the programme from 2006 - 2007 were selected through simple random sampling in a centre that conducted the AEP. Three types of data analysis was conducted i.e. quantitative data analysis, cost and benefits measurement and the sensitivity analysis.

The results indicated that the AEP was providing positive effects in the patient's life and reduction in utilisation of health resources ($p < 0.005$). The willingness-to-pay (WTP) of the participants was low but correlated with few personal variables. The amount paid by the participants for receiving complementary medications and the amount of body area affected by RA were chosen as the main predictors for the WTP in this study ($F = 12.851, p < 0.005$). The Net Present Value (NPV) of the program indicated a negative value and the benefit cost ratio after being discounted at 5% - 10% indicated that the benefits outweighed the cost even after various types of sensitivity analysis were conducted. This indicated that the cost of running the AEP was more then the benefits gained thus questions the economic value of the AEP.