TREATING DEMENTIA IN HUNGARY

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Introduction: The disease burden of dementia is an important health policy issue in the developed world. In Hungary, the lack of data on the epidemiology and disease burden of dementia makes it difficult to create a sustainable long-term health strategy.

Objective: To estimate the burden of dementia on the in-patient system and to define the number of patients taking specific anti-dementia drugs.

Methods: We used data from the National Health Insurance Fund Administration (the only health insurance provider in Hungary) covering 2008.

Results: 19504 patients were hospitalized because of dementia for 127453 acute and 191258 chronic care days.; among them 2733 died in hospital (14%). In addition, 48439 patients with dementia as an accompanying disease were hospitalized for 283492 acute and 273666 chronic care days; among them 8815 patients died in hospital (17.5%). 47.2% of the patients were treated in psychiatric, 21.4% in general medical and 14.1% in neurological wards. Specific anti-dementia drugs (cholinesterase inhibitors and memantine, in the recommended minimal therapeutic dose, in patients years) were prescribed for 1448 and 1174 patients with Alzheimer’s disease (AD), respectively, covering only about 1.5% of the AD patients (estimation based on EuroCoDe data).

Conclusion: Our data show that dementia in Hungary is a major health issue with several unmet needs and the proportion of the treated AD patients is the lowest in the European Union.