Burden of Viral Hepatitis C in Japan: A Propensity Analysis of Patient Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Background: Viral hepatitis C (HCV) affects 175 million people worldwide and 2 million people in Japan. The burden of HCV in Japan is substantial, yet the prevalence and clinical impact is under-researched. The objective of the current study is to examine the burden of HCV in Japan from a patient perspective.

Methods: Using data from the 2008 and 2009 Japan National Health and Welfare Surveys, patients who reported a HCV diagnosis (N=306) were compared to a propensity-matched non-HCV control group (p=0.01) on measures of quality of life (using the SF-12v2), work productivity (WPAI questionnaire), and healthcare resource use in the past six months. All analyses applied sampling weights to project to the whole population in Japan.

Results: The propensity-matching process allowed differences between the two groups to converge for several domains, though some key differences remain. HCV patients reported worse health-related quality of life (both physical and mental health scales), worse work productivity, and higher healthcare resource use in the past six months. The most significant differences were in HCV patients reporting higher levels of bodily pain, general and mental health, and higher levels of absenteeism and presenteeism or activity impairment.

Conclusions: These results suggest that HCV can be a substantial burden on patients in terms of quality of life both physical and mental health outcomes. Furthermore, the results of this study can be a significant economic cost driver in terms of healthcare and work productivity.