OBJECTIVES

To quantify the impact of self-reported tension headache on work productivity loss and activity impairment of adults aged 18 to 64 in five European countries.

METHODS

Data were obtained from the 2007 European National Health and Wellness Survey (NHWS), an annual, cross-sectional study of adults (age 18 and older) in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the U.K. NHWS data were collected via self-administered, Internet-based questionnaires. The analysis sample consisted of respondents aged 18 to 64, who reported three or more tension headaches in the past month. The control group included respondents who did not experience any types of headache in the past year. Work productivity loss and activity impairment were assessed using the general health version of the Work Productivity and Activity Impairment (WPAI) questionnaire. Linear regression models were developed to adjust for gender, age, country of residence, number of physical comorbid conditions, and presence of a psychiatric condition.

RESULTS

Across the five countries, there were a total of 5,144 (20.1%) adults aged 18 to 64 with tension headaches and 20,453 (79.9%) controls. An additional 18,814 respondents with other types of headaches were excluded from the analysis.

Comparisons between adults with tension headaches and controls included only respondents aged 18 to 64 who were employed full-time. Tension headaches were also associated with significant impairment in daily activities. Across the five countries, there were a total of 5,144 (20.1%) adults aged 18 to 64 with tension headaches and 20,453 (79.9%) controls. A total of 18,814 respondents with other types of headaches were excluded from the analysis.

OBJECTIVE

To quantify the impact of self-reported tension headache on work productivity loss and activity impairment of adults aged 18 to 64 in five European countries.

INTRODUCTION

Tension/cluster headache is the most common form of headache, and has been estimated to affect 3.8-7.8% of the general population. Based on disability calculations, tension-type headache is among the ten most disabling conditions among the general population globally and among the five most disabling conditions among women.

It is widely acknowledged that the large cost of headache to society is mostly through the indirect costs associated with lost productivity. However, limited research has focused specifically on tension-type headache and its associated costs.

METHODS

Study Sampling Design and Data Collection

Data were obtained from the 2007 European National Health and Wellness Survey (NHWS): NHWS is an annual cross-sectional study of healthcare attitudes, behaviors, disease status, and outcomes of adults (age 18+). Data were collected through self-administered, Internet-based questionnaires from adults in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the U.K.

RESULTS

Respondents aged 18 to 64 were included in the analysis. Analysis of work productivity measures included only respondents aged 18 to 64 who were employed full-time.

Conclusions

The study results showed significant reduction in productivity in patients with tension headaches. Because patients often self-medicate, patient reported outcomes may help employers and payers to better understand and manage the disease.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

The study results showed significant reduction in work productivity in adults with tension headaches. Tension headaches were also associated with significant impairment in daily activities. These results add to current evidence that tension headaches are a public health problem increasing burden on order, age, employers, and society.

Because adults with tension headache often self-medicate with over-the-counter products, patient reported outcomes may help employers and payers to better understand and manage the disease.

REFERENCES


ADDITIONAL REFERENCES