



Health Care Utilization and Costs in Patients with Hepatitis B related Disease in Jiangsu, China

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

China was a high endemic area of hepatitis B virus infection, it is estimated that around 100 million people (about 10% of the Chinese population) are chronically infected (1). Health services and policy research is an emerging interdisciplinary field, which examines the interactions between access, quality of care, and resource utilization that occur within a variety of delivery system models providing medical care (2). Between August and December 2012, we conducted the survey of patients with HBV-related diseases in 3 county hospitals from 3 model regions in Jiangsu Province, China. Time phasing continuous sampling method was used, and 430 patients were observed. In the study, we estimated health care services utilized for outpatient care, hospitalization and related payments.

The average annual ambulatory visits were 6.5, and mean annual cost for ambulatory visits was \$1905.21. Annual hospitalization rate was 27.21%. The average length of stay was 33 days. Mean annual inpatient medical cost was \$3640.39. There was significant difference between variable in terms of economic status and antiviral therapy. The average length of stay is longer than the

study of European country (3). Cost comparisons between studies are difficult because of the variation of the methodology of cost assessments, local costs, health systems, and country specific treatment protocols (4).

Our results have important public health implications. Much attention should be paid on health resource allocation, particularly the utilization efficiency of hospital beds, and the reimbursement policy for standardized antiviral treatment could be improved. In conclusion, Hepatitis B virus (HBV) is an important public health problem for developing countries, where the endemicity is generally high or intermediate, as well as in developed countries (5).

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