COST OF ILLNESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE (GERD) PATIENTS IN ITALY

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BACKGROUND:
Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is one of the most common chronic disorders of the gastrointestinal tract. The aim of this study was to evaluate the cost of illness in patients affected by GERD visited by general practitioners (GPs).

METHODS:
A cross-sectional observational study was conducted in the urban area of Milan. Information was obtained through a battery of four questionnaires filled out by 317 GERD patients consecutively enrolled by 47 GPs. Patients were asked about clinical aspects (visits, drugs and clinical examinations), economic impact, symptoms (frequency, intensity and daily number of events) and quality of life (EQ-5D and QOLRAD). We evaluated the costs of the medical resources and the loss of productivity in the perspective of the society. We report on costs and EQ-5D.

RESULTS:
317 patients were enrolled, the mean age was 59 years old and the 58% of the patients were female. The average cost per patient per month was € 60,46 and drugs accounted for the 65% of total cost. Indirect costs, expressed in terms of lost time or productivity, were about 0,5 days lost per patient. Patients who reported chest pain and epigastric pain were more costly compared to those who did not (P ≤ 0,01).

A strong impairment in the Quality of Life was also documented: patients reported an average value of the 0-100 Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) of 64,4, significantly lower compared to the general population. The Euroqol profile indicated that ‘pain/discomfort’ and ‘anxiety/depression’ were the most impaired domains.

CONCLUSIONS:
This is the first Italian study about costs and HRQol of GERD in which patients are enrolled by GPs. The study highlights the relevant economic, social and quality of life burden of GERD.