

## THE COST OF STORAGE SYMPTOMS FOR THE NHS AND INDIVIDUALS

### Aims of Study

Previous studies have indicated that urinary symptoms can impose large costs on health-services, e.g. Wagner and Hu (1). The purpose of this study was to estimate the costs of urinary symptoms to *both* the NHS and individuals and to illustrate which are the most important cost types.

### Methods

Individuals were identified as storage symptom cases and non-cases by means of a random postal survey. Face-to-face interviews were carried out in the respondent's own home. These were conducted with 613 cases and 523 non-cases during which data on individuals continence status and resource use were collected. NHS cost information collected were: use of catheters, NHS pads and padding, investigations, visits to respondents home by health care professionals, GP consultations, outpatient consultations, inpatient stays, aids and appliances supplied by the NHS, and prescription medicines. Respondent borne costs collected were: pads paid for by respondents, travel costs of visits to GP surgery, travel costs of visits to outpatients, replacing expensive items, laundry costs, aids paid for by respondent, and over the counter medicines. These were used to estimate the annual cost associated with storage symptoms for this sample. Unit cost data was collected locally where possible and supplemented with relevant national cost data. Prevalence of storage symptoms by age was determined from a postal survey of Leicestershire adults, with 23,182 responders. Estimates of the cost of storage symptoms were combined with its prevalence to estimate the total cost of storage symptoms for the U.K.

### Results

Estimates of the annual costs of storage symptoms were 785 million € for NHS costs and 303.7 million € for respondent borne costs. NHS costs of storage symptoms represent approximately 1% of total NHS spend. The average NHS costs per storage symptom case were 68.5 € for women and 135.9 € for men. For costs borne by respondents the average costs per storage symptom case were 52.4 € and 13.1 € for women and men respectively. All costs are in UK pounds for the year 2000 converted to Euros (exchange rate of 1.47 euros to the pound used). The breakdown of costs were different between men and women with the majority of costs for men being composed of health service costs while respondent borne costs were a far more important cost component for female borne costs.

### Conclusions

Storage symptoms impose considerable resource burdens on individuals as well as the NHS.

### Reference

1. Wagner, T. H. and Hu, T-W. Economic costs of urinary incontinence in 1995. *Urology* 51, 355-361. 98