

Do policymakers have any plans to reduce the economic burden of cerebral palsy in Iran?

Sir,

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a neurodevelopmental condition resulting in activity limitations during the individual's life. Studies note that CP prevalence is 1 in 500 live births and approximately 17 million people live with different types of CP worldwide. Furthermore, findings indicate that the prevalence of CP is about 2.11 per 1000 live births in high-income countries and 2–2.8 in low- and middle-income countries.^[1] Furthermore, intellectual disability, injuries, musculoskeletal deformities, epilepsy, and hearing and visual impairments are often accompanied by severe and moderate CP.

So far, different studies have been done to estimate the costs of CP for families, health systems, and governments. In Denmark, the total lifetime costs for 2367 people with CP were estimated to be €860,000 for men and €800,000 for women which health-care costs formed only about 7% of total lifetime costs.^[2] In Australia, the annual costs of CP were computed to be US\$1.5 billion for direct medical services, informal care, assistive devices, home modifications, and productivity losses. In addition, some studies in Europe estimated the hospital unit costs for individuals with CP. These studies cited that the annual average costs per person were about €12,500 to €40,265 (for severe CP).^[3]

In Iran, we found only two cross-sectional studies about the costs of CP. In the first study, Sharif Azar *et al.* estimated the average cost of care per child with CP in clinic care and home care to be about US\$933.8 and US\$660.3, respectively.^[4] In the second study, Yaghmaie *et al.* computed the average costs of hospitalization per year to be about US\$12,735 that is comparable to the European studies.^[3,5] The results indicate that because of the various health-care needs and lack of health insurance coverage for the needed services, people with CP are more likely to encounter catastrophic costs compared to their counterparts without disabilities. In this study, we have posed some key points to reduce the

economic burden of this neurodevelopmental disorder for families of children with CP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Health policymakers should formulate the policy options to reduce the health expenditure for people with CP
- Conducting economic researches to provide data on health-care costs for individuals with CP in Iran
- Moving toward preventive approaches to reduce the treatment costs for families of children with CP
- To take advantage of existing legal and social capacities to formulate and implement policies
- Identifying innovative and sustainable financial resources such as general, income, and value-added or corporate taxes to fund the needed health services
- The government's commitment to develop policies and provide the needed substructures (such as accessible public transportation systems) and resources
- Directing the supports of charities and donors toward the needed health services for people with CP.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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