Profile of Medical Care Costs in Patients with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis in the Medicare Program and Under Commercial Insurance

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BACKGROUND

The primary objective of this analysis was to characterize the medical care costs incurred for ALS patients covered by Medicare and by commercial insurance.

Methods

- Medical claims databases containing:
  - Information on claims paid
  - Demographic information and identifiers to allow longitudinal tracking
  - Diagnosis, procedure, and drug details using standard coding systems
  - Demographic information and identifiers to allow longitudinal tracking

Case Selection:

- ALS patients were identified as:
  - Patients who had 1 inpatient claim or 1 ER visit or ≥ 2 physician claims with ICD9 dx 335.20, and
  - No claims with diagnosis-related group codes of 58, 59, or 60
  - Only ALS patients diagnosed in 2008 through 2010 were included

ALS patients were identified from Truven MarketScan, containing approximately 40 million commercially-insured lives.

RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- ALS patients were identified as:
  - Patients who had 1 inpatient claim or 1 ER visit or ≥ 2 physician claims with ICD9 dx 335.20, and
  - No claims with diagnosis-related group codes of 58, 59, or 60
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DISCUSSION

- Conclusions

CONCLUSIONS

- Medical costs in the diagnostic month were significantly higher than other months
- Costs started to increase exponentially within about 8 months before the index month for both Medicare and commercial cases
- Costs in the month following the index month were significantly higher than the costs in the index month, but monthly costs increased after that
- Each insurance program reduced its costs after patients became eligible for Medicare but the combination of the costs increased by 50%
- No trend in costs was observed during the coverage transition to Medicare
- Approximately 30% of ALS patients are already receiving supportive services for disabilities at the time of diagnosis
- Medical costs increased rapidly and substantially with each disability milestone