

Access Economics Report on IBD in Australia

Basic facts about IBD in Australia

- Over 61,000 people have IBD (Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis) in Australia
- 28,000 people are living with Crohn's disease, 33,000 with ulcerative colitis
- Around 776 new cases of Crohn's and 846 new cases of colitis are diagnosed every year
- Crohn's disease is more common in females, ulcerative colitis is more common in males
- IBD can be diagnosed at any age, with peak onset between 15 to 40
- Prevalence will increase by 20% for Crohn's disease & 25% for ulcerative colitis by 2020
- IBD accounts for just 0.1% of the total allocated recurrent health expenditure in Australia

Comparisons

- In any year IBD is more prevalent than epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema and schizophrenia
- The burden of disability for people living with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis is comparable to living with rheumatoid arthritis, severe asthma, or the amputation of an arm
- Disability due to IBD is more severe than living with Type 1 diabetes or epilepsy

Total economic costs of IBD

- The economic cost of IBD in Australia is **\$2.7 billion**, which includes a total financial cost of **\$500 million** and a net cost of lost wellbeing of **\$2.2 billion**
- Loss of productivity accounts for \$266.7 million (55% of total financial cost)
- Health system costs are \$79.0 million (16%) and carer costs \$23.5 million (5%)
- The loss of taxation revenue and government payments total \$91.3 million (18%) and out-of-pocket and funeral expenses are \$36.2 million (7%)

Areas of greatest financial cost:

- Lost productivity accounts for more than half the \$500 million financial cost of IBD.
- The productivity costs of \$266.7 million include absenteeism, workplace separation and early retirement and premature death
- The estimated annual costs of absenteeism for people with IBD are \$52.3 million (\$8.2 million incurred by employees and \$44.1 million by employers)
- The annual cost of lost earnings due to workplace separation and early retirement from IBD is \$204.2 million
- Premature death accounts for \$10.2 million annually

Areas of greatest challenge

- Community awareness levels are not high, IBD is often confused with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Stigma is often associated with IBD, due to the symptoms
- Late diagnosis and inappropriate investigation and management are substantial problems
- The cost of pharmaceuticals can be prohibitive, forcing some patients into surgeries that might otherwise be avoided
- Long-term impacts on employment prospects can lead to inadequate leave entitlements and superannuation
- There is little employment protection against redundancy and demotions and poor information and support for employers and employees
- Currently there is no public funding of community based delivery of support services for people with IBD – ACCA relies on donations, sponsorship and membership fees to provide services
- There is a need for more research into the 'cause, care and cure' of IBD. Currently research accounts for just 1.1% of 0.1% of the health budget

Report Recommendations: A National Strategy

- Increase community awareness to help understanding of IBD and reduce stigma
- Improve education programs to assist earlier diagnosis and management
- Provide better access to latest pharmaceuticals including biological therapies
- Improve health services, especially access to IBD specialists and public sector treatment
- Workplace education programs to help keep people at work and counter discrimination
- Greater support services for people with IBD, their family and carers
- More funding for research and development to further investigate the epidemiological observation that the incidence of IBD is increasing

About ACCA

- The Australian Crohn's and Colitis Association is the peak body representing people with inflammatory bowel disease in Australia
- ACCA's mission is to support the Crohn's and Colitis community with a focus on confidential support programs including education, advocacy, counselling, increasing awareness and generating and utilising funds for research and support
- ACCA's Information Line receives more than 1000 calls a year
- Around 2000 people attend ACCA IBD Forums around Australia ever year
- ACCA is a registered not for profit national organisation funded entirely through membership fees, donations and fundraising activities.
- ACCA does not currently receive financial support from either the state or federal governments
- Donations are tax deductible
- For more information about ACCA visit www.acca.net.au or call 1800 138 029

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