

CHRONIC HAEMODIALYSIS TREATMENT – THE HIDDEN COSTS

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Haemodialysis treatment is a life saving treatment for patients with end stage renal disease. The calculated costs for delivering haemodialysis treatment is around £28,000 per year. The 'other costs' i.e. inpatient stays, transport etc, have not been evaluated before. Over a four month period, we evaluated the costs incurred by the host hospital in the support of chronic haemodialysis patients.

Methods: Using the CPD (Core Patient Database) and Proton (Renal database), we collected the following data.

1. In-patient stays
2. Pathology
3. Radiology
4. Drugs
5. Transport

The in-patient costs were calculated based on the HRG national tariff for 2004/05 and similarly, drug costs were based on current national tariffs.

Results: In our haemodialysis population of 103 patients, 16% were classified as elderly (age > 80years) and 16% were diabetic. Costs per month are as follows

In-patient costs - £44707/-

Erythropoietin costs - £29806/-

Other medications - £11799/-

Transport - £20481/-

Pathology and Radiology - £6603/-

Creation of vascular access (25%), access related complications (12%) and withdrawal of dialysis (19%) accounted for majority of the costs related to inpatient stay.

Conclusion: Hospitalisation of chronic haemodialysis patients stay accounted for a large proportion of the costs with vascular access creation and complications being responsible for the majority of admissions (costing approx £198499/year).

Relevance: There is a significant utilization of hospital resources in the care of chronic haemodialysis patients. This should be taken into account when haemodialysis costs are reviewed.