Impact of irritative bowel syndrome (IBS) on work productivity and daily activities

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BACKGROUND

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common, chronic and episodic gastrointestinal (GI) motility disorder characterized by recurrent abdominal pain/distress associated with altered bowel habit (constipation/diarrhea) and/or alteration in bowel frequency.

IBS occurs in 10–15% of the western population. 1 The impact of IBS on employers is considerable. The indirect costs of IBS, including lost productivity, are estimated at $20 billion each year in the United States alone. 1

OBJECTIVE

The study investigated productivity loss and daily activity impairment in patients with IBS seeking medical treatment from gastroenterologists in the USA.

METHODS

- Employed patients meeting the Rome II criteria were enrolled from five gastroenterology practices in the USA.
- Patients completed a questionnaire regarding sub-type of IBS, symptom severity and work productivity (WPAI:IBS). The validated WPAI:IBS consists of six questions eliciting information regarding:
  - employment status
  - work time missed due to IBS
  - hours actually worked
  - productivity while working
  - time spent on GI symptoms
  - absenteeism

RESULTS

- A total of 135 patients meeting the entry criteria were enrolled. Summary demographic data are shown in Table 1.
- Work productivity loss: absenteeism + presenteeism
- Employed patients meeting the Rome II criteria were enrolled from five gastroenterology practices in the USA.
- Overall work productivity loss due to IBS was estimated to be the sum of work time missed (absenteeism) and impairment at work (presenteeism) and is a useful tool for determining the relative difference between treatment groups in clinical trials.
- Only 4% of patients indicated that they had no symptoms during the past 7 days. Most symptoms were reported by patients with non-IBS, moderate and severe symptoms, respectively (Figure 2), in decreasing severity (Table 2).
- Work productivity loss due to IBS was estimated to be the equivalent of 14 hours per week (assuming a 40-hour work week).
- Daily activity impairment significantly increased with increasing symptom severity. Patients with non-mild, moderate and severe symptoms reported activity impairment levels of 25.0%, 45.3% and 59.0%, respectively (Figure 3).
- Overall work productivity loss due to IBS type on work and daily activities

REFERENCES