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Economic Burden Of Hospitalized Diarrheal Disease In Bangladesh

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Objectives: Diarrheal diseases are a major threat to human health and still represent a leading cause of mortality and morbidity worldwide. Although the burden of the diarrheal diseases is much lower in developed countries, it is a significant public health problem in low and middle-income countries like Bangladesh. The aim of the study is to capture the inpatient and outpatient treatment cost of diarrheal disease and to measure the cost burden and coping mechanisms associated with diarrheal illness.

Methods: This study was conducted in selected district hospitals in Bangladesh. The study was performed from the societal perspective which means all types of costs were identified, measured and valued no matter who incurred them. The study adopted quantitative techniques to collect the household and hospital level data including structured and semi-structured questionnaires, observation checklists, analysis of hospital database, telephone interviews and compilation of service statistics.

Results: The average total societal cost of illness per episode was BDT 5,274.02 (US \$ 67.18) whereas average inpatient and outpatient costs were BDT 8,675.09 (US \$ 110.51) and BDT 1,853.96 (US \$ 23.62) respectively. The overall out of pocket expenditure was 11.75 % of monthly household income, however, in poorest quintile, it was exceed 17% of the total household income. The richest (5th) quintile only expend 4.21% of their household income. Considering 10% threshold level, approximately 32% households suffered from catastrophic expenditure while the poorest quintile suffered mostly (49%), even the highest threshold level (at 25%) the poorest 27% of households suffered from catastrophic expenditure due to diarrheal diseases.

Conclusions: Diarrheal diseases continue to be an overwhelming problem in Bangladesh. The economic impact of any public health interventions (either preventive or promotive) that can reduce the prevalence of diarrheal diseases can be estimated from the knowledge generated from this current study.

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