PATIENT SATISFACTION WITH NON-SEDATING ANTIHISTAMINES
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OBJECTIVES: The objective of this study is to determine the factors that influence satisfaction with non-sedating antihistamines (NSA) among people who suffer from allergies/hay fever. METHODS: An online survey was conducted in September, 2000 on respondents who had been told by a health care professional that they suffer from allergies/hay fever and were recently (within 12 months) prescribed one of three NSAs to relieve their symptoms. The sample was weighted to ensure the generalizability of the results. Satisfaction was measured according to the medication’s ability to relieve side effects and control symptoms from allergies/hay fever. A total of 4,081 respondents were included in the analysis. RESULTS: (1) The mean satisfaction score for the first time users (defined as never having taken any medication for allergies/hay fever) was higher than those who had used some medication in the past (p < .01). (2) Of the respondents who had a specific choice of medication in mind, those who received their first choice medication had a higher satisfaction score than those who did not (p < .01). (3) The respondents who discussed their medication jointly with their physician had a higher satisfaction score than those whose doctor chose their medication for them (p < .01). (4) Respondents who were not taking any over-the-counter (OTC) medications reported higher satisfaction scores than those who supplemented their NSA with over-the-counter medications (p < .01). (5) Finally, respondents who had never requested a prescription after seeing an advertisement for any medication had a higher satisfaction score than those who did. (p < .01) CONCLUSIONS: The data provides evidence to suggest that past knowledge or experience with NSAs, patient preference, and patient involvement in the treatment decision-making process all play a role in determining satisfaction with NSAs. Furthermore, both over-the-counter medication usage and direct-to-consumer advertising are likely to influence how satisfied people are with their NSA.

COSTS OF TREATING COPD IN ITALY: A BURDEN OF ILLNESS STUDY
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INTRODUCTION: Despite the high prevalence, morbidity and mortality of COPD, remarkably little is known about its impact on health care costs and utilization of services. Information about health care utilization and costs among patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is needed to improve care and for appropriate allocation of resources. OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this study was to quantify the burden of illness in Italy, in terms of both medical consumption and lost productivity associated with COPD. METHODS: In 1998 an epidemiological study was conducted in Italy. Retrospectively, from a community perspective, we quantified COPD’s costs related both with health care consumption and lost of productivity and/or school days. Main Outcomes Measures: The main goal of the present study was to evaluate economic outcomes in a cohort of 355,000 patients with current diagnosis of COPD. RESULTS: As reported in previous studies, prevalence rate for COPD in Italy is about 4,6% (2,637,000 subjects). Among all COPD patients, 42,5% suffers from mild disease while 56,7% is affected by moderate-severe COPD, on the basis of Flow Expiratory Value (FEV1) % of predicted criteria. The total cost of COPD we have quoted is the sum of direct and indirect costs: it is worth US$18 billion, equal to US$6,843 average/patient/year. We have not included intangible costs because they cannot be quantified correctly as yet. CONCLUSIONS: COPD is associated with significant both direct and indirect costs. Previous studies reported that prevalence figures for COPD based on recorded diagnoses are underestimated. Notwithstanding, data from our study suggest that when patients seek medical advice they were correctly diagnosed and treated. Education of patients will allow them to take control of their disease and of costs related to COPD.

IMPACT OF THE ADDITION OF SALMETEROL TO THE TREATMENT OF ASTHMA PATIENTS IN A MEDICAID FEE-FOR-SERVICE POPULATION
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OBJECTIVE: Salmeterol, a long acting beta-2 agonist, improves lung function and symptom control with twice daily dosing in moderate-to-severe asthmatics. This in-