RESEARCH 5771: THE ECONOMIC AND QUALITY OF LIFE IMPACT OF SEASONAL ALLERGIC CONJUNCTIVITIS IN OXFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND

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OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this study was to examine the economic and quality of life (QoL) impact of seasonal allergic conjunctivitis (SAC) in Oxfordshire, England.

METHODS: The inclusion criteria for cases were that participants: 1) experienced itchy, bloodshot and watering eyes at some time between February and August every year since 1999, and 2) considered it likely that this was in response to seasonal allergens. Controls were drawn from the same sources and were age and sex-matched to cases. Participants completed the EQ-5D Health Questionnaire, the Rhinoconjunctivitis Quality of Life Questionnaire, the National Eye Institute (US) Visual Functioning Questionnaire 25, and a specially developed Health Economic and Demographic Questionnaire.

RESULTS: Most participants in both groups were female (67.5% in SAC and 70% in control group, P = 0.565). Weekly earnings were lower in the SAC group (P < 0.001), as the SAC group also worked fewer hours per week (P < 0.001). Participants with SAC also experienced a greater degree of pain and discomfort as measured by the EQ-5D (P = 0.018) and a lower perception of their health status using the EQ-VAS (P = 0.039). Statistically significant differences between both groups were detected in all domains of the VFQ-25, except general and colour vision, although differences were thought to be clinically significant only for the ocular pain domain. The RQLQ scores were also all found to differ significantly between groups (P < 0.001). The total of both the public health care and private out-of-pocket costs of SAC in our study population ranged on average between £64.61 for a penicillin to £142.29 for a person with SAC in paid employment.

CONCLUSIONS: SAC is a costly, highly prevalent, chronic condition associated with significant reductions in both ocular and general quality of life, as well as ongoing out-of-pocket expenses and health care costs.

ALLERGY—Quality of Life Studies

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE EYE ALLERGY PATIENT IMPACT QUESTIONNAIRE (EAPIQ)
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OBJECTIVES: The EAPIQ was developed based on a pilot study conducted in the US and focus groups with eye allergy sufferers in Europe. The purpose of this study is to present the results of the EAPIQ’s construct validity and reliability testing.

METHODS: A total of 146 patients from 2 allergy clinics completed the EAPIQ twice over a two-week period during the fall and winter allergy seasons, along with concurrent measures of health status, work productivity, and utility. Construct validity, reliability and known groups validity were assessed.

RESULTS: Results from the validation study suggested the deletion of 14 items that required patients to complete the percentage of time they were troubled by something (daily activity limitations/emotional troubles). These questions yielded a significant amount of missing or inconsistent data (50%). The resulting factor analysis suggested four domains: symptoms, daily activity limitations, emotional well-being, and treatment satisfaction. The relative merits of assessing symptom-bother separately from symptom-frequency were also assessed. Results indicated that the two scales were highly correlated (r > 0.9) and known groups validity testing suggested the superior discriminative ability of the symptom frequency measure (F = 44.63 vs 39.63). However, when symptom bother and frequency items were summed, discriminative validity was superior (F = 45.29). As a result, it was decided to sum the symptom bother and frequency items. All items met the tests for item convergent validity (item-scale correlation r > 0.4). The success rate for item discriminant validity testing was 97% (item-scale correlation r > 0.7) were met for all scales (range 0.89–0.93). Ongoing work will assess the test-retest reliability and known groups’ validity of the EAPIQ.

CONCLUSIONS: Asking patients to write in responses can lead to inconsistent responses or missing data. With the deletion of those items, the EAPIQ was found to have satisfactory construct validity and reliability.

EYE DISEASES OR DISORDERS

EYE DISEASES OR DISORDERS—Clinical Outcomes Studies

PREVALENCE OF LOW VISION AND BLINDNESS IN FRANCE
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OBJECTIVES: To estimate the prevalence of low vision (LV) and blindness in France. METHODS: Two national surveys were pooled together: 1) 2075 institutions (for children or adults with handicaps, the aged, and psychiatric centers) were selected at random from the French Health Ministry files in 18 predefined strata. Of the