What is the Value of Specialist Shoulder Physiotherapy? A Cost-Utility Analysis

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We have no relevant financial relationships to disclose 2017
Passed as a service evaluation by our Clinical Audit Board
No Ethical Approval required

Purpose

- The cost of healthcare is increasing faster than the budget to pay for it
- Patients, clinicians and commissioners need to understand the relative costs and benefits of various treatments

Methods

- Utility is a measure of the ‘satisfaction’ (benefit) obtained from consuming goods and services.
- Economic perspectives can be from the patient, hospital, society or commissioner’s point of view
- Prospective pre & post treatment Health-related Utility scores are routinely completed by patients at NUH specialist shoulder unit.
- Utility scores were calculated from the UK values set for the EQ-5D-5L
- Using the EuroQol Valuation Protocol (Devlin 2016, Feng 2016)
- Quality-Adjusted Life-Years (QALYs) were calculated by the area-under-the-curve method (Manca et al., 2005)
- Costs were calculated from the commissioners’ perspective (product of treatment costs and number of treatments)

Results

- N=142
- Complete scores for 107 (74%, moderate follow-up, Cochrane)
- Mean duration of symptoms from onset to start of treatment, 4.9 years
- 76/142 had previously had physiotherapy elsewhere for the same problem
- Median number of treatments =5
- Nominal cost per treatment £53.94 for a first non-admitted face to face attendance, and £41.73 for follow-up visits
- Mean duration of treatment 6.7 months (max 2.6 years)
- Mean utility changed from 0.64+/-.23 to 0.79+/-.23, (paired t-test, t=8.7, p<0.01)

Conclusions

- UK National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines suggest CUR below £20000 are acceptable for most healthcare treatments (Phillips, 2009)
- As a comparator, we assumed that no treatment (no cost) would have no benefit
- We feel that this is justifiable given the long time that people were symptomatic prior to this treatment, and the large proportion of people still seeking treatment after previous intervention

- Subject to our assumptions, our results suggest that specialist shoulder physiotherapy may be excellent value for money
- This is with a 1:5 NP:FU model
- Even with a complex, chronic, tertiary caseload, many of whom had previously failed to benefit from treatment

Implications

- Incremental Cost-Effectiveness Ratio (ICER) was £785