

The Economic Burden of Mental Disorders: A Systematic Review

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Abstract : Introduction: About a third of the world's population will develop a mental disorder over their lifetime. Having a mental disorder is a huge burden in health loss and cost for the individual, but also for society because of treatment cost, production loss and caregivers' cost. The objective of this study is to synthesize the international published literature on the economic burden of mental disorders. Methods: Systematic literature searches were conducted in the databases PubMed, Embase, Web of Science, EconLit, NHS York Database and PsychInfo using key terms for cost and mental disorders. Searches were restricted to 1980 until May 2019. The inclusion criteria were: (1) cost-of-illness studies or cost-analyses, (2) diagnosis of at least one mental disorder, (3) samples based on the general population, and (4) outcome in monetary units. 13,640 publications were screened by their title/abstract and 439 articles were full-text screened by at least two independent reviewers. 112 articles were included from the systematic searches and 31 articles from snowball searching, giving a total of 143 included articles. Results: Information about diagnosis, diagnostic criteria, sample size, age, sex, data sources, study perspective, study period, costing approach, cost categories, discount rate and production loss method and cost unit was extracted. The vast majority of the included studies were from Western countries and only a few from Africa and South America. The disorder group most often investigated was mood disorders, followed by schizophrenia and neurotic disorders. The disorder group least examined was intellectual disabilities, followed by eating disorders. The preliminary results show a substantial variety in the used perspective, methodology, costs components and outcomes in the included studies. An online tool is under development enabling the reader to explore the published information on costs by type of mental disorder, subgroups, country, methodology, and study quality. Discussion: This is the first systematic review synthesizing the economic cost of mental disorders worldwide. The paper will provide an important and comprehensive overview over the economic burden of mental disorders, and the output from this review will inform policymaking.

Keywords : cost-of-illness, health economics, mental disorders, systematic review

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