

ABSTRACT

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TITLE: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CAREGIVER FOR PATIENTS WITH ATRIAL FIBRILLATION: AN ITALIAN SURVEY

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OBJECTIVE: Atrial fibrillation (also called AF) is an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) caused by anatomical and electrophysiological features of left atrium. It can increase the risk of blood clots which can lead to stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications. An average of 2.04% of the population is living with AF and the role of caregiver is very relevant for them. Generally, caregiver is a family member (informal) or an expert (formal), who takes care of a person suffering from a chronic disease. Most of AF patients follow an anticoagulant therapy and need a specific support to reach periodically hospital centers, as well as many others services.

METHODS: FederAipa (Federation of Italian Anticoagulant Patient Associations) had conducted a survey among AF patients, aiming to analyze the direct non-health needs of patients with atrial fibrillation, focusing on welfare concerns and the economic impact of formal and informal caregiver. FederAipa provided surveys between May and July 2016 and received 364 responses. The responders were represented for 52.2% by men and 47.8% by women and the average age was 71.3 years.

RESULTS: It has been observed that 19.2% of those interviewed need to pay for home care due to their limited autonomy condition, leading to a cost between 159 euro and 468 euro per week. Furthermore, the analysis showed that the average annual cost of caregiver can vary from 11,384.00 euro per patients without stroke to 15,897.00 euro per patients with stroke, considering the assumption of 18.14 euro per hour. Therefore, having a stroke increases the direct cost for caregiver assistance by + 39.6% than to those who did not have a stroke.

CONCLUSION: The difference of the economic impact of formal and informal caregivers between patients with stroke and patients who did not have stroke among responders at the FederAipa questionnaire, resulted very high and significant.