Abstract

Introduction: home artificial nutrition (HAN) is a growing therapy, but the absence of obligatory registries complicates the calculation of its real economic burden. The aim of this study was to assess the state and economic impact of HAN in our health area. Methods: an observational, prospective study was designed to calculate the cost of nutritional formulas and materials in patients who initiated HAN in the nutrition unit during a year. Results: we included 573 new patients with HAN during the study period, 60% of whom were treated with oral supplements. The median daily cost of oral HAN was 3.65 (IQR 18.63) euros compared to a cost of 8.86 (IQR 20.02) euros for enteral-access HAN. The daily expenditure per 1 000 kcal of diet was higher for patients on oral HAN than for patients with tubes (5.13 vs. 4.52 euros, p < 0.001). The median cost of the complete HAN treatments during the study period was also calculated (186.60 euros and 531.99 euros for oral and tube HAN, respectively). The total estimated cost for all patients who initiated HAN in the study period was around one million euros. Conclusions: HAN represented an important economic burden in our health area, but the estimated daily cost of HAN was moderate, probably because of the high frequency of oral HAN, the adjusted treatments, and the centralized dispensation by the hospital pharmacy.

Keywords
Malnutrition, Nutritional support, Home enteral nutrition, Costs, Economics.