

EULAR
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IMPACT OF A NATIONAL TENDER SYSTEM ON BIOLOGIC AND TARGETED DRUG COSTS IN NORWAY

Reducing drug costs may improve access to care

Biologic and targeted synthetic disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (b/tsDMARDs) have caused a shift in the treatment of patients with inflammatory joint disorders, and remission is now attainable. But the high cost of these drugs has caused restrictions on their use and prescription, contributing to inequality of care worldwide. An annual tender system was introduced in 2008 in Norway to reduce the costs of these drugs.

At the 2021 EULAR congress, Brkic and colleagues presented data from people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) treated at Norwegian rheumatology outpatient clinics between 2010 and 2019.

The project BioRheuma (BIOlogic treatment of patients suffering from inflammatory RHEUMATIC disorders in Norway) aimed to monitor people receiving b/tsDMARDs. Anonymized data files from 10 participating centres were merged and analyzed over a 10-year period to show the annual total b/tsDMARD cost, as well as the mean cost per patient for all current users, for all those who started treatment, and for initiating patients naïve to b/tsDMARDs. The cost was calculated based on price offers given at the annual tender process for the different years.

The number of registered RA patients in the databases increased from 4909 in 2010 to 9335 in 2019, and the number of patients receiving b/tsDMARDs increased from 1959 (39.9%) in 2010 to 4209 (45.1%) in 2019. The total treatment expenditure of these b/tsDMARD-treated patients was lowest in 2010 (226 million Norwegian Kroner [NOK]), highest in 2014 (350 million NOK), and second lowest in 2019 (255 million NOK).

For current users of b/tsDMARDs, when the number of treated patients during follow-up doubled, the mean cost to treat one patient was reduced by approximately 50%. The number of patients starting on b/tsDMARDs roughly doubled, while keeping a steady small increase for naïve patients. These data show that the average annual costs of treating a Norwegian RA patient on a current b/tsDMARDs were reduced by approximately 50% over the ten years 2010–2019 by the national tender system. For patients starting on a b/tsDMARD, the average annual cost was reduced by approximately 75%. The consequence for payers is that treatment can be offered at a lower price, and thus costly drugs may become more available for patients. The authors believe that tender mechanisms applied to the commercial pharmaceutical market improve competition, and increase availability and use of costly drugs.

Source

Brkic A, et al. Drug cost for biologic and targeted synthetic DMARDs for rheumatoid arthritis patients in Norway from 2010 to 2019 - A country with a national tender system for drug prescription. Presented at EULAR 2021; abstract OP0238.

About EULAR

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with

RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

About the EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology

Since its introduction in 2000, the annual EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology has become the primary platform for exchange of scientific and clinical information in Europe. It is also a renowned forum for interaction between medical doctors, scientists, people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professionals and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. The EULAR congress is usually held in June in one of the major cities in Europe ([see previous congresses](#)).

The [scientific programme](#) at the congress covers a wide range of topics on clinical innovations, clinical, translational and basic science. Meetings set up by associations of people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professionals and the health care industry complement the programme. The poster sessions, offering lively interaction between presenters and participants, are regarded by many as the heart of the congress.

Over the years, the EULAR Congress has gained a reputation of being a most innovative platform for the practicing physician particularly with respect to the acquisition of information on novel clinical research. The congress attracts more than 18,000 delegates from more than 130 countries.

The aim of the EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology is to provide a forum of the highest standard for scientific, both clinical and basic, educational, and social exchange between professionals involved in rheumatology, liaising with patient organisations, in order to achieve progress in the clinical care of people with rheumatic diseases.

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