Drug costs and out-of-pocket spending in cancer clinical trials.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To estimate the effect of clinical trial participation on drug utilization, drug costs, and out-of-pocket expenditures for cancer patients.

METHODS: The study used a national probability sample of patients participating in cancer clinical trials and a matched cohort of patients not enrolled in trials but receiving treatment for the same cancers from the same providers. Subjects were interviewed about prescription drug utilization and out-of-pocket drug expenditures. We estimated treatment costs based on a large pharmacy transaction database. Multivariate regression was used to estimate the effects of trial participation on drug costs and out-of-pocket expenditures.

RESULTS: Participants in clinical trials incurred higher prescription drug costs than non-participants: an average of $131 over a six-month period. However, there was no significant difference in out-of-pocket expenditures for the two groups.

CONCLUSIONS: Participation in clinical trials was associated with a modest increase in prescription drug utilization and costs, but these costs did not necessarily impose an economic burden on cancer trial participants.

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