

Letters to the Editor

Pharmaceutical costs for inflammatory bowel disease units — An issue for department heads? The GESTIONAEII survey

Key words: Inflammatory bowel disease. Department heads. Pharmaceutical costs. Biologics.

Dear Editor:

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) units have a relevant weight within gastroenterology departments. In order to gain insight into the managerial aspects of IBD diagnosis and treatment, SEPD submitted a survey (GESTIONAEII) to department heads, IBD specialists, and other gastroenterologists. In this letter, we discuss the results obtained from gastroenterology department heads.

The above-mentioned survey included 28 questions and was responded by 30 department heads, most of them older than 50 years and working for a tertiary university hospital. Only 13 respondents are aware of biologic drug prices (mean expense, € 950,000 per year); 63% of them consider that costs will rise in the upcoming years, but 84% consider that biosimilars will lower their prices. As regards the method for prescription regulation, 47% responded it is per protocol, and in 26% of hospitals, a biologics committee has been set up with pharmacists, medical

directors, and specialists. However, the fact that 37% of them do not know who is in the committee is to be highlighted. In most (63%) sites it is the pharmacist who negotiates prices. Among respondents, 63% acknowledges pharmaceutical costs as an issue for their departments because of its rising during the past 2 years.

According to these results, many department heads obviously ignore the financial managerial aspects of their IBD units. This is likely because such IBD units are managed by IBD specialists to whom cost management functions have been delegated (1).

This survey has been promoted and executed by SEPD. Both this organization and the authors of the paper have worked with full scientific independence and they declare no conflict of interest related with this work. Nonetheless, both authors and SEPD have received, on several occasions sponsorships or grants from companies with interest in IBD.

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References

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