

Direct and indirect costs attributable to musculoskeletal disorders in Belgium

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Objectives

Musculoskeletal disorders are the major contributors to the loss of productive life years. This study aimed to summarize the average yearly economic impact of low back pain, neck pain, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis in Belgium from 2013 to 2017.

Key messages

- Musculoskeletal disorders have a great societal cost in Belgium
- This study can be used as an input to highlight the potential savings deriving from interventions on the working population

Methods

Datasources

Belgian Health interview Survey 2013-2018 Individual health insurance costs (2013-2017)



Direct costs included ambulatory care, hospital care and reimbursed medication; Indirect costs included cost for days absent from work.

Statistical analysis

We computed the **direct and indirect attributable cost of excess weight**

Compare cost of the observed population with the costs of a population where we assume that everyone is normal weight – method called g-computation

Results



25% of Belgian adults were affected by at least one musculoskeletal disorder in 2018

Adjusted direct costs - **p<0.05, *p<0.10

	Cost ratio (95%CI)	Mean attributable cost (95%CI)
Low back pain	1.43** (1.15; 1.79)	2,405€ (817€; 4,069€)
Neck pain	1.36* (1.03; 1.8)	2,212€ (275€; 4,419€)
Osteoarthritis	1.05 (0.87; 1.27)	299€ (23€; 733€)
Rheumatoid arthritis	1.07 (0.86; 1.32)	298€ (-31€; 789€)

15% of the working population had at least one musculoskeletal disorder in 2018. **People with low back pain** were the only showing a significantly higher indirect cost **with an adjusted cost of 5,875€ per capita**



Total costs

Every year the total adjusted healthcare cost amounted to more than € 3 billion

On average every year Belgium spends around € 2 billion for work absenteeism