

Health care expenditure and the burden of disease due to asthma in Australia

Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring

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Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring
Woolcock Institute of Medical Research

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Abbreviations

ACAM	Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
BEACH	Bettering the Evaluation And Care of Health
DALY	Disability-adjusted life year
GP	General practitioner
NHPA	National Health Priority Area
OTC	Over-the-counter
PBS	Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
RPBS	Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme
YLD	Year of life disabled
YLL	Year of life lost due to premature death

Highlights

Health care expenditure

- In the 2000–01 financial year, health expenditure on asthma was \$693 million. This was 1.4% of total health expenditure in that year.
- The proportion of total health expenditure attributed to asthma care was highest among children; particularly boys aged 5–14 years, where it was 5.5% of annual health expenditure in that age group.
- Per capita asthma expenditure was highest for children aged 0–4 years, in which, on average, \$76 was spent per boy and \$66 per girl.
- Among adults, expenditure was higher for females than males, reflecting the higher prevalence of asthma in females.
- Health expenditure on asthma increased by 21% between 1993–94 and 2000–01 (adjusted to 2000–01 dollar values). This was less than the 26% increase in overall health expenditure over the same period.
- Over half (54%) of expenditure allocated to asthma in 2000–01 was attributed to pharmaceuticals. This was substantially higher than the proportion of total health expenditure attributed to pharmaceuticals (16%).
- Asthma-related expenditure for out-of-hospital medical care (general practitioners and specialists) decreased by 16% between 1993–94 and 2000–01 in contrast to total health expenditure for out of hospital medical care, which increased by 18%.
- In each sector (hospital, out-of-hospital medical care and pharmaceutical), over 25% of expenditure for asthma was for children aged 0–14 years. In the hospital sector, 46% of expenditure for asthma was in this age group. Expenditure on out-of-hospital medical care and pharmaceuticals for people with asthma was also relatively high in the older age groups.

Burden of disease

- The Australian Burden of Disease Study estimated that asthma accounted for 64,523 disability adjusted life years (DALYs) in 1996. This figure is comprised of 8,732 years of life lost due to premature death and 55,791 years of life lost due to disability.
- Overall, asthma contributed 2.6% of all DALYs in Australia in 1996 and was the ninth leading contributor to the overall burden of disease.
- Asthma was the leading contributor to burden of disease among children aged 0–14 years, accounting for an estimated 18% of DALYs in this age group in 1996.
- Asthma contributed a similar number of years of life lived with disability as diabetes, injury and cancer. However, estimated DALYs were lower because there were fewer deaths associated with asthma.
- The estimated financial equivalent of the burden of disease due to asthma in 1996 was \$4.3 billion (2000–01 dollars).

