Monetary valuation of a Quality-adjusted life year (QALY) for depressive disorders

Online Resources

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Supplement 1: Translation of the health state description

Depressive disorder

“In this survey, we ask for your willingness to pay for a treatment of depression. In the following abstract, we present the clinical picture of a depressive episode.

A depressive episode is a mental disorder. Common symptoms are a depressed mood, rumination and feeling unpowered. Often, joy and the feeling of delight, productivity, empathy, and the will to live are lost. Those symptoms can be experienced by healthy people for a short period of time. Within a depressive episode, these symptoms are experienced for a longer period a time, are more severe and significantly reduce quality of life. Other common symptoms are hopelessness and suicidal ideation and impulses. According to the Federal Statistical Office, in 2015 alone 10,078 people in Germany died due to suicide.

As mentioned above, we would like to investigate your willingness to pay money for treatment of a depressive episode. We would therefore like to ask you to imagine that there are no insurance companies in Germany and that you would not have to pay contributions or premiums for health insurance. Your net income would therefore be higher by that respective amount. Instead, you would have to pay for medical treatments out of your own pocket. As you have known this for a long time, you have savings in the amount of a yearly income to be prepared for unexpected medical costs.

The amount of money you are willing to pay for a treatment provides an indication of the value you attribute to the increase of your well-being and your health achieved by this treatment method (compared to other treatment options).”
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Supplement 2: Sample scenario

1. Introduction to the hypothetical nature of the questionnaire

“We would like to ask you to imagine that there are no insurance companies in Germany and that you would not have to pay contributions or premiums for health insurance. Your net income would therefore be higher by that respective amount. Instead, you would have to pay for medical treatments out of your own pocket. As you have known this for a long time, you have savings in the amount of a yearly income to be prepared for unexpected medical costs.”

2. Assessment of sociodemographic variables

3. Presentation of the health state description

See Online Resource 1 for the translation of the health state description

4. Presentation of the scenario: Example of scenario A

“Please imagine that in one year - instead of living the next 4 years at your current health state - you would suffer from a depressive episode, which would reduce your health state by 25 points on the health thermometer. Personally, that would mean that your health would be reduced from 90 points to 65 points (see figure below).

After these four years, at the age of 33, your current health state would be restored for the rest of your life.”

5. Asking for willingness to pay:

“Would you be willing to pay money now (even if it is only a small amount) for a simple, safe and pain-free treatment, which would restore your initial health state after experiencing a depressive episode?”
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4a. If respondent states “No”

“Can you say why you are not willing to pay money for a treatment, that would prevent a reduction of your health state by 25 points over a period of four years, beginning in one year?”

Please choose the main reason why you are not willing to pay money for treatment:

- “It would not be too bad./ I could live with it.”
- “Effects of treatment are not sufficient.”
- “I am thinking about my family/my partner. I want them to have the money instead.”
- “My health would probably improve without treatment.”
- “I value the treatment but cannot afford it at the moment.”
- “I value the treatment, but I don’t want to pay for it. The government should pay for health care costs.”
- Other reasons (please specify).

4b. If respondent states “Yes”

“You said that you would be willing to pay money for a treatment that would prevent a reduction of your health state by 25 points over a period of four years at the age of 29.

What would be the highest one-time payment that you would be willing to pay today at the age of 28 for this treatment, imagining that there are no insurance companies that would pay and if you had savings in the amount of one year’s income?”

Presentation of a table with Euro values that can be sorted into one of three columns: “Willing to pay”, “Not willing to pay” and “Unsure” and open-ended response

5. Asking about current knowledge regarding ECT

“How much do you currently know about treatment of ECT?”

- Nothing
- a little
- some
- much
- very much

“How expedient do you think ECT is?”

- Not at all expedient
- a little expedient
- some
- expedient
- very expedient