

Metabolic syndrome risk factors drive significantly higher health care costs

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Risk factors for metabolic syndrome, such as obesity, high blood pressure, and elevated blood lipid levels, can increase a person's healthcare costs nearly 1.6-fold, or about \$2,000 per year. For each additional risk factor those costs rise an average of 24%, according to an illuminating article in a recent issue of *Metabolic Syndrome and Related Disorders*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Mary Ann Liebert.

A two-year study that compared annual healthcare costs for people with and without diabetes found both higher healthcare utilization and significantly greater expenses (\$5,732 versus \$3,581 per year) for those who had risk factors for [metabolic syndrome](#). A group of researchers from the Center for Health Studies (Seattle, WA); United BioSource Corp. (Bethesda, MD); University of Arizona, Tucson; Kaiser Permanente's Colorado Clinical Research Unit in Denver and Northwest Center for Health Research in Portland, Oregon; Genzyme (Cambridge, MA); and Sanofi-Aventis (Bridgewater, NJ), led by D.M. Boudreau, PhD, from United BioSource, evaluated healthcare utilization among more than 170,000 men and women, approximately 58% of whom had risk factors for metabolic syndrome.

The study, entitled "[Health Care](#) Utilization and Costs by Metabolic Syndrome Risk Factors," also compared the annual healthcare costs for subjects who had both diabetes and metabolic syndrome risk factors and found them to be nearly double the costs for people who did not have diabetes but had similar risk factors for metabolic syndrome (\$8,067 vs. \$4,638).

"This important study clearly brings home the enormous economic burden that the metabolic syndrome extracts in a very large sample. Future studies should be directed at targeting the dyslipidemia, hypertension, etc., to see what the savings would be with respect to complications and economic burden," says Ishwarlal (Kenny) Jialal, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal and Robert E. Stowell Endowed Chair in Experimental Pathology, Director of the Laboratory for Atherosclerosis and Metabolic Research, and Professor of Internal Medicine at the University of California, Davis Medical Center, in Sacramento, CA.

More information: The article is available free online at www.liebertpub.com/met.

Source: Mary Ann Liebert

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