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IMPACT OF THE "PUENTE PROJECT" ON THE PUBLIC DISEASE EXPENDITURE OF A PATIENT WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA IN BELGIUM

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Introduction: The "Puente project", rises up the adherence rate with 38 % (1). The aim of the study was to analyse the economic impact of this disease management programme of patients with a schizophrenic disorder.

Subjects and methods: "Puente" stands for a programme of LAAP with active outreaching of patients with schizophrenia. The details of the data collection and the subjects have been described elsewhere (1). The hospitalisation rate and the length of stay of the 117 case control pairs have been compared. The cost of hospitalisation in Belgium, recently adjusted by De Ridder et al. (2), have been used in order to map the differences.

Results: The number of hospital days totalised by 23 cases, was 2,152 days, in comparison to 6,371 realised by 42 controls, which gives 18,6 hospital days per year for the cases and 38.9 days for the controls. Given an hospital cost per day in Belgium of 163.8 € per day, a crude saving of 3,328.5 € per case per year can be realised, corresponding with a net diminution of 2,428.5 € per patient year. Enrolling 1,675 cases per year, creates a saving of 4,066,533 € per year, an equivalent of 24,826 hospital days, or the cost of a psychiatric hospital of 85 beds occupied at 80 %.

Conclusion: The Puente programme realised a substantial drop in public patient expenditure of 3,328.5 € per patient year. This is a very strong argument to implement, to finance and to support "Puente" like disease programmes in Belgium.