

Non-Communicable Diseases Cost Switzerland CHF 109 Billion a Year

Healthcare costs in Switzerland rose by 37 percent between 2012 and 2022. Non-communicable diseases account for the majority of healthcare costs and production losses, totaling 109 billion Swiss francs per year.

In 2022, non-communicable diseases such as dementia, cardiovascular disease, and mental illness resulted in healthcare costs of CHF 66 billion (72% of total costs) and production losses of CHF 43 billion (61% of all production losses). The total cost of non-communicable diseases amounted to 109 billion Swiss francs, equivalent to 14 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Rising treatment costs per case are the primary driver

Between 2012 and 2022, the cost of healthcare rose by 37 percent. For some types of illness, the figure was much higher. The healthcare costs of cancer rose by 55 percent, while the costs of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, increased by 83 percent. "Forty-eight percent of the increase in healthcare costs is down to higher costs per patient," explains ZHAW researcher Prof. Simon Wieser. Population growth contributed 33 percent to the rise in costs, while an ageing population accounted for 19 percent.

Dementia is the most expensive single disease

Neurological diseases led to the highest healthcare costs (CHF 9.9 billion), followed by cardiovascular and mental illnesses (CHF 9.5 billion each). At CHF 6.7 billion, Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia led to the highest costs of all individual diseases. Most of these costs were incurred in nursing homes.

Avoidable risk factors are also expensive

Being overweight or obese cost the nation CHF 3.7 billion in 2022, with production losses amounting to CHF 2.9 billion. Lack of exercise resulted in health costs of 1.7 billion Swiss francs and production losses of 849 million Swiss francs. These risk factors, which are significantly influenced by our lifestyle, account for six percent of healthcare costs and nine percent of lost productivity. "Chronic illnesses, which are associated with notable reductions in quality of life, account for the majority of healthcare costs. However, a significant proportion of this burden is attributable to avoidable risk factors, though targeted prevention could reduce these costs," explains Wieser, summarizing the findings.

Hidden costs: Production losses due to illness

Total production losses in Switzerland were estimated for the first time. These arise from premature death, disability, absence from work (absenteeism), or reduced productivity (presenteeism) and correspond to a loss of income for those who are unwell. At CHF 70.5 billion, they accounted for

around nine percent of the country's gross domestic product in 2022. Mental and musculoskeletal illnesses accounted for the highest production losses, at 17 percent each.

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Study: *Costs of Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases and Costs of the Risk Factors Overweightness/Obesity and Lack of Exercise in Switzerland*: The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) commissioned the ZHAW School of Management and Law, the University of Lucerne, and Bern University of Applied Sciences and Arts to conduct a study on the monetary costs (health costs and production losses) and healthy life years lost due to diseases in Switzerland for the years 2012, 2017, and 2022. Healthcare costs encompass all healthcare expenditures and are categorized into 66 causes, 20 healthcare services, 17 payers, 20 age groups, and gender for all three years. Total production losses were estimated from scratch for Switzerland for the first time and analyzed by type of production loss and disease group, as well as by age and gender. Health losses, in the form of years of healthy life lost, were obtained from the Global Burden of Disease Study and calculated for Switzerland. The study provides the most comprehensive picture to date of the social costs of diseases in Switzerland and can serve as a basis for informed health policy decisions.