

Home Phototherapy is a Less Costly Option for Treating Patients with Severe Psoriasis

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INTRODUCTION

Psoriasis is a debilitating dermatosis affecting nearly 5 million people in the United States alone. It is estimated that 10-30% of psoriasis patients have severe disease covering >10% total body surface area (TBSA) and/or causing significant morbidity (1). Unlike mild disease, which can often be managed with topical therapies, severe psoriasis almost universally requires more aggressive management.

The primary options for severe psoriasis include phototherapy and systemic treatments. Ultraviolet type-B (UVB) phototherapy is a treatment option that can be administered in the inpatient, outpatient, or home setting. The published efficacy of UVB varies widely in published studies, from 60% for broad-band UVB to approaching 80% for narrow-band UVB (2-4). For those patients who find office-based UVB difficult, home UVB offers a convenient treatment option. The purpose of this study is estimate the cost of lifelong treatment with home phototherapy and to compare it to the costs of other treatments for severe psoriasis.

DISCUSSION

A major limitation of most of the cost studies in psoriasis is their short time frame (one year or less). Given the prolonged natural course of psoriasis, we felt it was prudent to estimate the costs of various therapies over a longer period. This new perspective for examining the cost of treatment is able to better show the true cost, and potential cost-savings, of a given treatment to the patient, payor, and society. Additionally, costs for the management of long-term complications can be estimated.

“Based on the results presented here, it is clear that phototherapy continues to be an effective and relatively inexpensive option for many patients.

Insurers should reduce disincentives to phototherapy treatment. Indeed, payors responsible for the management of patients with severe psoriasis should encourage physicians to make greater use of home phototherapy treatment options. Compared to other options available, home UV treatment has the potential to offer convenience to patients and significant savings to the healthcare industry.” *

Treatment	Annual Drug Cost	Annual Tx Admin & Other	Annual Laboratory	Annual Follow-Up	Present value of 30 year course
Home UVB	None	\$2,150	None	\$195	\$7,085
Methotrexate	\$398	\$412	\$241	\$390	\$19,102
PUVA	\$816	\$1,410	None	\$195	\$37,591
Acitretin	\$4,471	None	\$137	\$293	\$75,113
Efalizumab	\$10,702	None	\$73	\$293	\$171,915
Etanercept	\$16,198	None	\$9	\$390	\$257,684
Adalimumab	\$17,818	None	\$9	\$293	\$281,282
Alefacept	\$17,910	\$406	\$1,597	\$293	\$319,356

\$250,000 SAVINGS

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