

Appendix 1

Human resources costs

To quantify the costs for public health in Río Negro, the Palliative Care Service (PCS) of the Cipolletti Hospital was taken as a reference. The PCS operated in 2019 with the following human resources: 4 doctors, three nurses, one part-time social worker, one part-time occupational therapist, one part-time psychologist, and one driver. Likewise, the service had four medical passive guards and three passive nursing guards.

Gross monthly salaries for each speciality were obtained from the Department of Salaries of the Ministry of Health in the Province of Río Negro. Based on the number of weekly hours each speciality allocates to the PCS, the annual cost of human resources was calculated by multiplying the gross salary by 13 (to include the complementary yearly salary). Likewise, the cost per hour was calculated by dividing the annual value by 52 weeks and then by the weekly hours worked by each speciality. The fee for passive guards performed by medical and nursing professionals was added.

In the case of professionals who share assistance tasks in the PCS with other services, the cost of their salary was assigned in the proportion of hours they dedicate to the service concerning the total weekly hours of their workday.

Cost of medications and disposables

The monthly requirements for disposable supplies and opioid medications carried out by the PCS during 2018 were obtained. A monthly average consumption was calculated. Likewise, the purchase price of opioid medicines in 2019 was available, according to type and presentation, by the Ministry of Health of Río Negro.

Their acquisition price was not available for disposable supplies, so their sale price to the public was revealed in April 2021 through the internet and telephone calls to suppliers. The unit price was adjusted with a 30% discount, which is generally obtained for purchases in quantity and was taken to July 2019, deflating the value with the Health chapter of the National Consumer Price Index for the Patagonian Region (77).

Fuel cost for the transfer

The service reports an average consumption of 30 liters of fuel per month for staff transfers to patients' homes. This consumption was multiplied by the unit fuel price in 2019 to obtain the monthly cost.

Support equipment cost

The monthly requirements for PCS support equipment were acquired. The market unit prices were surveyed in April 2021 for each piece of equipment. Each unit price was deflated by the Home Equipment and Maintenance chapter of the National Consumer Price Index for the Patagonian Region (77) to estimate costs as of July 2019. Given that some equipment has a useful life that exceeds one year, the percentage obtained of annual amortisation and the annual amortisation cost of each piece of equipment were estimated.

References

77. INDEC. Índice de Precios al Consumidor con cobertura nacional. [Internet]. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires; 2021 May. Available online: https://www.indec.gob.ar/ftp/cuadros/economia/sh_ipc_aperturas.xls