

Lay Summary: The Economic Impact of Steroid Use in Severe Asthma

People with severe asthma often need strong medications to control their symptoms. One common treatment is oral corticosteroids (OCS), which are powerful anti-inflammatory drugs. However, using these steroids for a long time can lead to serious health problems like high blood pressure, sleep issues, stomach problems, and mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

This study looked at how much these side effects cost healthcare systems in 11 European countries. The researchers used a computer model to simulate what would happen over 10 years if fewer people with severe asthma used steroids. They focused on four side effects that might improve if steroid use is stopped: high blood pressure, sleep disorders, stomach issues, and psychiatric conditions.

The results showed that reducing steroid use could save a lot of money—up to 30% of the costs related to these side effects. The more people who stop using steroids, and the sooner they stop, the more money could be saved. For example, in France alone, stopping steroid use in just 25% of patients could save over €116 million in 10 years.

The study supports the idea that switching patients to newer treatments, like biologic drugs, which don't have the same harmful side effects, could be both healthier for patients and more cost-effective for healthcare systems.

In short, cutting back on steroid use in severe asthma isn't just better for patients—it's also a smart financial move for public health.