

## Costs and Outcomes in Alzheimer's Disease

Among Medicare beneficiaries in the United States, the annual cost of care is markedly higher in patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD) than in those without AD, reported Kara Suter, Moran Company, Arlington, Virginia. These observations emerged from a review of records representing more than 2 million Medicare enrollees, 4% of whom had AD. The total health care expenditure for 2008 was 30% higher in patients with AD than in case-matched controls (\$16,102 vs \$10,712, respectively) and more than twice that in the general Medicare population. At least part of the cost differential was likely due to age, as patients  $\geq 85$  years old accounted for 44% of the AD population compared with 11% of overall Medicare beneficiaries. Furthermore, data gathered between 2003 and 2008 showed that comorbidities (including conditions of particular interest, such as epilepsy, injuries, and depression) were far more common among patients with AD as compared with those who did not have AD. On the other hand, the magnitude of the differences in expenditures may have been underestimated, as data on Medicaid recipients were not included, Dr. Suter explained. The study also found that the 4-year survival rate was considerably lower among patients with AD than in matched non-AD patients and the overall Medicare population (18% vs 30% vs 58%, respectively). ■