

Health as Human Capital Foundation, an independent source of information for policy makers in business, government, and health care, reports the following research summary on November 18, 2007:

While it is the common assumption serious illnesses contribute most to costs, the fact is spending has more to do with the prevalence of an illness than its severity. The condition which almost always has the highest spending in an employed population is back problems. 12% of the population, receiving an average of 17 services (even though the average service cost was only \$66) generated more overall fees than any other condition.

Back problems generate almost twice as much spending as the second condition on the list, coronary artery blockages. In fact, for this population, the cost of treating back pain was about the same as the combined costs for all 20 of the most costly rare conditions.