

[Oral Presentation Abstract]

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**Mental health care research in Germany:
Sociodemographic characteristics of the Nordbaden database.**

OBJECTIVES: The Nordbaden Project was initiated in 2003 as a cross-sectional analysis of the real-world prevalence, resource use, and direct medical costs associated with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Meanwhile, the project has evolved into a longitudinal patient-centered study, allowing to follow-up identified patients over prolonged periods of time and to study the impact of moderators (e.g., coexisting conditions) and mediators (e.g., specialist involvement) on the quality and cost of health care services provided. The database enables retrospective health care utilization studies based upon administrative claims data of the Kassenaerztliche Vereinigung (KV) in Nordbaden ("Regierungsbezirk Karlsruhe"), an above-average affluent region in South-western Germany.

METHODS: The database covers the complete regional population enrolled in statutory health insurance (SHI; >2.2 million lives). Based upon prospective data analysis plans, the vdek group of sick funds within SHI offers prescription data for the subsample of patients insured by its member companies (850,000 lives in year 2009). Here, sociodemographic data of the study sample are compared to national averages (year 2009) to assess its representativeness.

RESULTS: The demographic structure (by age and gender) of the Nordbaden sample (including its vdek subgroup) compares well to the national population. However, regional population density is much higher (396/sqkm versus 229/sqkm in 2009), and GDP per capita (34,800€ versus 29,300€) as well as the rate of persons insured by private sick funds (instead of SHI: 18.2% versus 14.6%) exceed the national average. There are also relatively more health care specialists in Nordbaden (for example, 11,400 persons per mental health care specialist and 3,200 per psychotherapist) compared to Germany (17,200 and 3,900, respectively), whereas the relative number of general practitioners is somewhat lower (with 1,500 persons per g.p. versus 1,400). The number of patients with a diagnosis of ADHD increased from 11,887 in 2003 to 21,287 in 2009. A control group was defined, matched by age, gender, and type of statutory health insurance.

CONCLUSIONS: The Nordbaden sample constitutes a well-characterized study population. Compared to Germany as a whole, the region is somewhat more affluent and the number of medical specialists (relative per population) exceeds the national average. Interpretation of observations should take into account the well-documented differences between region and nation.

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