INTRODUCTION

The pharmacological treatment and prevention of gastric acid–correlated diseases is a strong matter of debate among different stakeholders, not only general practitioners, specialists and pharmacists, but also pharmacoeconomists and institutions (AIFA, MH, ISS). Indeed, Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) represent a great class of expense, furthermore evidences suggest a large and diffuse non–appropriate prescription trend, which highly impacts on the Italian National Healthcare System (Figure 1).

OBJECTIVES

The analysis aimed to evaluate the evolution of the national and regional public expenditure regarding Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) in Italy, in relation to national and regional policies.

METHODS

The analysis combined data published by the Italian Medicines Agency (AIFA) and Regions and regional and national laws, to understand the impact of the applied policies on PPIs expenditure.

RESULTS

Over the past ten years, PPIs consumption increased by 280% (around 14% yearly, range 6-21%) (Figure 2), with lansoprazole reaching +533%. The number of patients ≥ 18 treatable with PPIs in 2013 was 2.873.500 (6% of adult population), being the first class in terms of expenditure with a per capita value of 15.2€ and consumptions of 74 DDD/1.000 inh./die. Consumptions and expenditure in 2013 increased by respectively 6.5% and 1.6% vs 2012 (Figure 3). AIFA also highlighted a trend to prescriptive inappropriateness over the years, where the 46.5% of patients do not meet the reimbursability criteria by law. At regional level, many Regions have issued a number of regional laws to contain both consumptions and expenditure (e.g. through reference pricing or guidelines to encourage the prescription of generic drugs), identifying specific performance indicators and target values. We estimated potential savings from the correct application of the reimbursability criteria amounting to 260 million €/year, if Regions were able to control prescriptive appropriateness, to which additional savings could be added through focused cost-containment measures.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite a number of efforts at both central and regional level, the trend towards inappropriateness and expenditure increase of PPIs is confirmed. A review of both national and regional policies on PPIs expenditure is key to reduce the current waste of economic resources and, with a stable total budget, guarantee additional funding for innovation.