

# ESTIMATION OF HIDDEN COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH DRUG RETURNS IN CLINICAL TRIALS AT A CANCER CENTER PHARMACY

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## BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE

Clinical trials (CTs) provide patients with access to innovative therapies. Hospital pharmacies play a central role in their operational management, including drug return (DR) processes.

These activities generate organizational dysfunctions that often remain invisible but result in **hidden costs (HC)**.

In our pharmacy, the **Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM)** [1] has been implemented to identify, quantify, and reduce these costs.

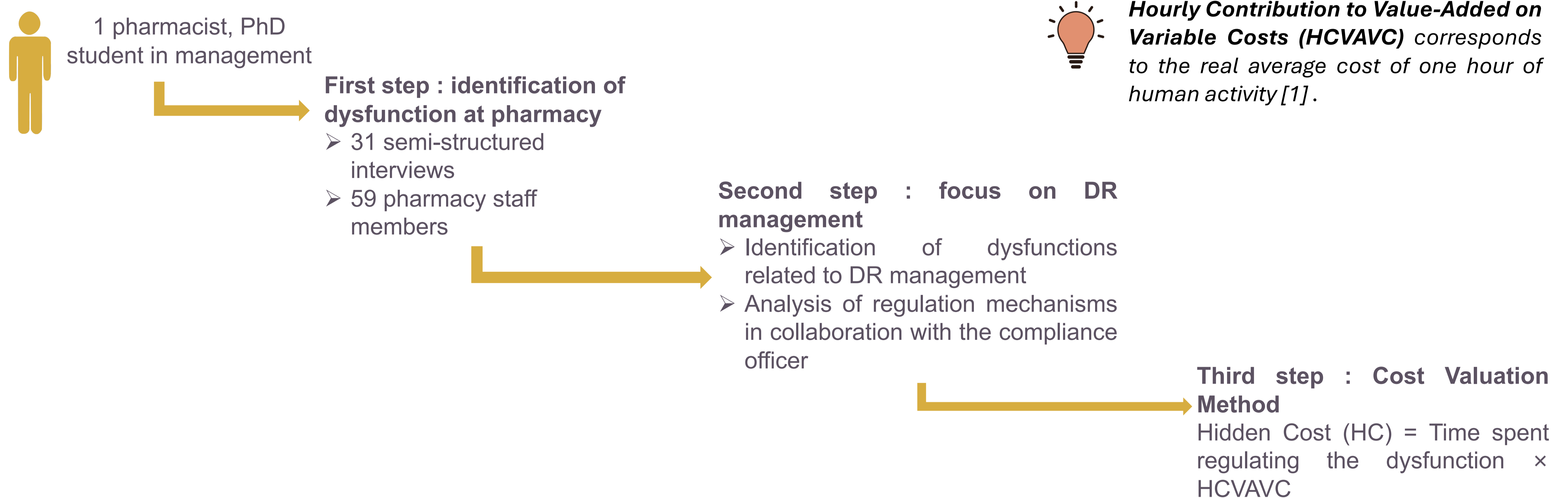
Hidden costs correspond to expenses generated by the regulation of dysfunctions, such as:

- Overtime
- Resource overconsumption
- Excess salary costs

## OBJECTIVE

To estimate the hidden costs associated with the management of drug returns from clinical trials in a cancer center pharmacy.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS



## RESULTS

Calculated HCVAVC was **€47/hour**

Six major dysfunctions were identified and their HC calculated (table 1) :

Dysfunctions	Type of regulation	Hidden cost (euros)
Counting drug returns	Overtime	€ 57 246,00
Entering return dates	Overtime	€ 7 081,00
Retrieving experimental products	Overtime	€ 1 158,00
Presenting drugs returns during monitoring visits	Overtime	€ 963,00
Storing drug returns pending accounting	Overtime	€ 470,00
Storing drug returns and related documentation	Overtime	€ 376,00
<b>Total hidden costs</b>		<b>€ 67 294,00</b>

Table 1 : distribution of six major dysfunctions and their hidden cost

Total annual hidden cost was **€67 294**.

This represents:

- **3.5%** of the pharmacy's annual clinical trial management costs
- Approximately **1.5 full-time clinical research associate (CRA)**

Counting drug returns was the primary cost driver.

## CONCLUSION AND RELEVANCE

The amount of €67,294 per year, confirming the economic impact of dysfunctions.

Quantifying and contextualizing HC provides a management tool to prioritize corrective actions (CA) according to their economic significance.

Employees involvement is essential for change management and remains at the heart of SEAM.

→ Next assessment will quantify performance gains and validate the benefits of the CA.

## REFERENCES

[1] Cappelletti L, Savall H, Zardet V. *Socio-Economic Approach to Management: Science-Based Consulting for Sustainability*. Springer Nature Switzerland; 2024.

