

Congenital malformations of male sex organs

What the Berlaymont Declaration says:



Congenital malformations, such as hypospadias (birth defect of the penis) and cryptorchidism (non-descending testes), are increasing or levelling off at unfavourably high levels.

Ten years ago, cases of undescended testicles (or cryptorchidism) were said to affect 2-4% of new-born boys. More recent studies suggest rates are now much higher with estimates in the UK at 6% and in Denmark at 9%. (20) These disorders may require early surgery of affected infants. What is certain is that this condition increases the risks of infertility and testis cancer later in life. (21)

The phenomenon of increasing incidence of four conditions: cryptorchidism (undescended testes), hypospadias (congenital malformations in baby boys), testis cancer, and failure of spermatogenesis (infertility) has been labelled “testicular dysgenesis syndrome” (TDS). (22)

Calculated on the basis of medical treatment costs, orchiopexy to correct undescended testicles is estimated to cost €5,715 – 8,415 per case in the US in 2009. (22)

Table 3
Costs and trends in congenital malformations of male sex organs

Endocrine- related disease or condition	Incidence/ prevalence trends	Cost of illness
Cryptorchidism and Hypospadias	As many as one in 15 boys are born with cryptorchidism (22) Annual cases of cryptorchidism have doubled in 10 years	Cost: €0.9 – €1.5 billion per annum in EU28, assuming 6% rate of incidence*

*Since this condition either corrects itself or is often treated in the first year of life, incidence is assumed to equate to prevalence. This incidence rate is further adjusted to 3% to take account of the fact that by 3 months of age, the incidence is usually more than halved due to spontaneous descent of the originally cryptorchid testes (21).