

HEALTH INSURANCE

Young professionals find buying health cover expensive: study

There has been a rising prevalence of lifestyle disorders among young professionals in the age group of 23-35 years. A survey conducted by Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd, *Lifestyle and health insurance*, found that its claims data reiterated the fact. It showed that close to 25% of the company's health claims came from this particular age-group.

Moreover, it was found that most young professionals depend solely on employer-provided mediclaim and do not have a personal health cover. This survey was conducted last month where 1,100 working professionals in the age group of 23-35 years in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Gurgaon and Goa, participated.

Here are some key findings from the survey.

Lifestyle diseases go up

It was found that nearly half of the respondents (45%), suffered from lifestyle related disorders. Among those who said they were

VIEW OF BAJAJ ALLIANZ GENERAL INSURANCE

affected, 40% said they suffered from chronic body pain (muscle spasms, joint pain, chronic backache), 20% had weight-related issues (obesity) and 18% suffered from hypertension, 10% from respiratory disorders, 8% from frequent digestive disorders and 4% said they had high blood sugar levels (diabetes).

About 40% of those who suffered from lifestyle related disorders claimed it was due to the nature of their occupation, 28% said it was due to unhealthy diet, 17% said it was hereditary, 10% believed it was due to lack of exercise and 5% gave stress as a reason.

Not enough personal health insurance

Most companies today provide health cover to their employees. But many people make the mistake of being satisfied with that. They do not know

the details of the cover provided and assume it to be enough. The study indicated a similar trend among young professionals as well.

Although three-quarters (75%) of the respondents said they had health insurance, of these, 60% said they relied solely on employer-provided group cover. Only a small percentage, 30%, said they had both employer-provided mediclaim and a personal policy.

The percentage of respondents who had their personal health insurance cover was a low 10%.

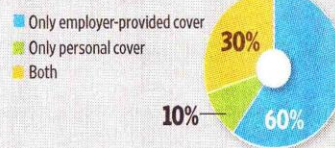
The main purpose for having their own health insurance policy was not the insurance benefits but the tax benefits. Among those with their own health covers, 76% said they had availed it for tax saving purposes, while the remaining 24% said they bought it as a financial security net against medical conditions.

The professionals surveyed who only had employer-provided health cover said they felt the cover provided by their

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

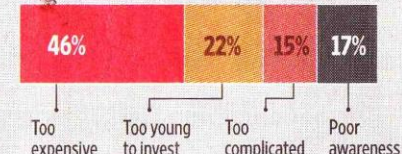
TYPE OF HEALTH INSURANCE COVER

Dependence on employer-provided health insurance remains high.



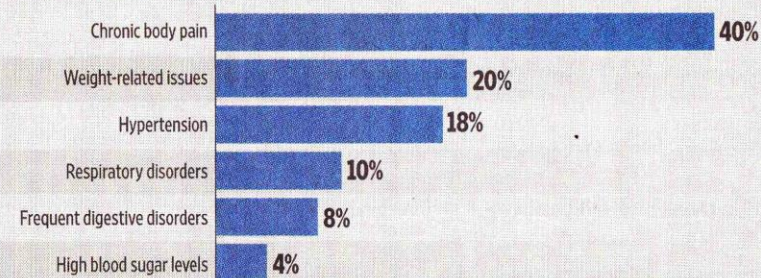
REASONS FOR NOT HAVING MEDICLAIM

Close to half of those who did not have health insurance felt it was too expensive.



TYPE OF LIFESTYLE HEALTH PROBLEMS

Chronic body pain is a common problem among young professionals aged 23-35 years.



Source: Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

PARAS JAIN/MINT

employer was sufficient to take care of their medical expenses.

One of the reasons cited for not having personal mediclaim policies was that they were perceived to be expensive. Of those who did not have health insurance, almost half (46%) said they felt it was an expensive instru-

ment to buy.

In fact, 22% felt they were too young to invest in such a cover. Other reasons included that the product was too complicated (15%) and lack of awareness about health insurance (17%).

The results of the study indicate that awareness of the bene-

fits of an adequate personal health insurance policy is not enough, especially given that health expenses can be overwhelming. Dependence on employer remains high.

Edited excerpts from Bajaj Allianz General Insurance's report, Lifestyle and Health Insurance.