

Access a Major Obstacle for One in Two People Using Insulin to Manage Type 2 Diabetes

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A paper published in [The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology](#) estimates that, between 2018 and 2030, the number of people with type 2 diabetes using insulin will rise to 79 million. But without improved availability and affordability, over half of those will face challenges in accessing this life-saving medicine.

Meanwhile, current levels of access are inadequate relative to the estimated 63 million people living with type 2 diabetes requiring insulin. The most striking differences are seen in Asia, the Oceanic region and, in particular, Africa, where insulin is available for only a fraction of those in need.

‘Estimation of global insulin use for type 2 diabetes, 2018-2030’—funded by Health Action International’s (HAI) Addressing the Challenge and Constraints of Insulin Sources and Supply (ACCISS) Study—is the first-ever study to estimate insulin use in type 2 diabetes, at global, regional and national levels.

Lead author of the study, Dr Sanjay Basu of Stanford University, said:

“As the number of people with type 2 diabetes who require insulin grows, so does the critical need to improve access to this essential medicine. This study shows that, without this improved access, the treatment gap between the haves and have-nots will grow even wider.”

Co-author, Professor John S. Yudkin of University College London and advisor to the ACCISS Study, said:

“This study exposes major regional differences in availability of insulin for people living with type 2 diabetes, raising the need for action. In Africa, for example, comprehensive access would mean the proportion of people living with type 2 diabetes using insulin would increase seven-fold compared to current estimates.”

The paper suggests that, for type 2 diabetes, there is the need to tailor blood sugar targets. Professor Yudkin added:

“We found that introducing more liberal targets for glucose control for people over 75 could have an impact on insulin need, while minimising adverse complications and hypoglycaemia related to diabetes.”

HAI Executive Director, Dr Tim Reed, welcomed the findings of the study as further evidence of the need to improve access and affordability of insulin for those who need it:

“Governments should use this information to plan for growing need. By shedding light on the sheer numbers of people affected, we are once again reminded of the important role universal health coverage can play in improving lives. This is particularly pressing because, according to our data, the greatest need occurs where health systems are weak, and availability and affordability is poor.”

The ACCISS Study has made a number of recommendations and developed a [toolkit](#) for use by policy-makers and advocates to improve access to insulin.

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