

Price Components of Blood Glucose Meters and Test Strips

In 2023/4, data was collected on mark-ups and other costs (price components) in the private sector supply chain for blood glucose meters and test strips in Peru, China and Uganda.

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Access to self-monitoring blood glucose devices (meters, test strips and continuous glucose monitoring devices (CGMs)) is crucial for the management of diabetes. This was recognised in the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) target of '100% of people with type 1 diabetes have access to affordable insulin and blood glucose self-monitoring', and their inclusion in the 2023 list of essential diagnostics.

In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), retail (patient) prices for self-monitoring blood glucose devices can be exorbitant. In these countries, meters and strips are more commonly used than higher priced CGMs.

In 2023/4, data was collected on mark-ups and other costs (price components) in the private sector supply chain for blood glucose meters and test strips in three countries. The aim was to better understand the impact of supply chain costs on patient prices for blood glucose meters and strips. Such evidence helps inform the development of interventions to improve the affordability of self-testing for people paying for meters and strips out-of-pocket.

Conclusions

High prices of strips impact the number of tests undertaken for people forced to pay for strips out-of-pocket. The price of a meter also matters, as it usually requires a very high one-off payment. While a meter may be supplied free-of-charge, this locks people into using that brand of test strips which may be higher priced or unavailable.

This data shows mark-ups are highly variable depending on brand and location (such as major urban area versus district), and lower manufacturers' selling prices for locally produced brands do not necessarily result in cheaper prices to users of meters and strips. Governments need to control prices and mark-ups of essential medical devices, such as blood glucose meters and strips, to improve the affordability of self-testing especially for people on low wages who use insulin.

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