

SRHC: Availability, Affordability and Stockouts - Zambia 2019

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[Sexual and reproductive health \(SRH\)](#) is an essential right that contributes to the human right to health in Zambia. It plays a vital role in meeting the specific health needs of not only girls and women, but also men. Maintaining good SRH means people need access to reliable information and education and access to quality SRH services of their choosing. These services include access to contraceptives, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy- and childbirth care. In all of this, the rights of the individual are central, meaning everyone can choose for themselves about their SRH and family planning. All of this cannot be realised without access to sexual and reproductive health commodities (SRHC), such as contraceptives, essential medicines, supplies and family planning.

Access to sexual and reproductive health commodities and services plays an important role in improving the health of [people in Zambia](#). Currently, the maternal mortality ratio remains high at 278 deaths per 100,000 live births, and in 2014, 21% of women had unmet family planning needs. National policies on medicine pricing, procurement strategies, health infrastructure and financing are needed to ensure access to medicines. However, without reliable information on medicine prices and availability, governments are working in an evidence vacuum which impedes their ability to develop and implement meaningful policies. Thus, in order to develop evidence-based policies, robust data is required. An adapted version of the Health Action International (HAI)-World Health Organization (WHO) methodology to assess the price, availability, and affordability of medicines has been used since 2017 to measure access to SRH commodities (SRHC) in Zambia. In July 2019, the research was conducted in Zambia's 10 provinces, in a total of 246 facilities across the public, private and mission sectors.

This study provides evidence that there still are large gaps in SRHC availability and that strengthening the supply chain is needed to improve availability and access to SRHC.

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