

Changes in retail prices for prescription dermatologic drugs from 2009-2015

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Prices among 19 brand-name prescription dermatologic drugs increased rapidly between 2009 and 2015, with prices for topical antineoplastic drugs to prevent the spread of cancer cells increasing an average of 1,240 percent, according to an article published online by *JAMA Dermatology*.

Landmark health reform in the United States has done little to curb the rising price of prescription drugs. Patients across the United States have little protection from health plans excluding coverage for expensive prescription drugs.

Steven P. Rosenberg, M.D., of the Miller School of Medicine at the University of Miami, and Miranda E. Rosenberg, B.A., of the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, surveyed prescription [drug prices](#) at four national chain pharmacies in the West Palm Beach, Fla., area (Costco, CVS, Sam's Club and Walgreens) in 2009, 2011, 2014 and 2015.

A total of 19 name-brand drugs with data available from all four surveys were selected for final analysis and grouped by treatment indication: acne and rosacea; psoriasis; topical corticosteroids; antiinfectives; and antineoplastics. The antineoplastic class did not include systemic medications for metastatic melanoma or [basal cell carcinoma](#) because such medications were not available in 2009.

The authors found that between 2009 and 2015:

- Prices of all surveyed classes of brand-name drugs increased; the average increase was 401 percent.
- Prices of topical antineoplastic drugs had the greatest average absolute and percentage increase of nearly \$10,927 and 1,240 percent.
- Prices of drugs in the antiinfective class had the smallest average absolute increase of almost \$334.
- Prices of psoriasis medications had the smallest average percentage increase of 180 percent.
- The retail prices of seven drugs more than quadrupled during the study period, with the vast majority of price increases occurring after 2011.

"Percent increases for multiple, frequently prescribed medications greatly outpaced inflation, national health expenditure growth, and increases in reimbursement for physician services," the study concludes.

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