

Aging into medicare tied to higher drug costs for people with diabetes

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As people with diabetes age into Medicare, they face increased quarterly out-of-pocket costs for medication, according to a study [published](#) online July 9 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Douglas Barthold, Ph.D., from the University of Washington in Seattle, and colleagues examined whether reaching age 65 years is associated with changes in type 2 diabetes (T2D) [medication](#) out-of-pocket costs and utilization. The analysis included seven years of prescription drug claims data for 129,997 individuals with T2D identified from the TriNetX Diamond Network (before and after turning 65 years).

The researchers found that reaching age 65 years was associated with an increase of \$23.04 in mean quarterly [out-of-pocket costs](#) for T2D drugs, including an increase of \$56.36 at the 95th percentile of spending, after utilization adjustment. At age 65 years, utilization decreased by 5.3 percent (3.40 claims per quarter to 3.22 claims per quarter). A shift in utilization composition showed increased insulin use, which was associated with additional increases in patient costs.

"The increased patient cost burden at age 65 years and a modest reduction in overall T2D drug utilization suggest that as people with T2D age into Medicare, there is potentially an increase in nonadherence and diabetes complications," the authors write.

More information: Douglas Barthold et al, Patient Out-of-Pocket Costs for Type 2 Diabetes Medications When Aging Into Medicare, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.20724](#)

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