



# Exploring the drivers of user costs as a barrier to accessing HIV testing from Rural Malawi

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## Background

- HIV prevalence remains high in Malawi at 10.6%
- Men and young people have high testing gaps
- Key barriers to testing include direct and indirect costs and lack of convenience

## Mean Reported Costs (By Gender)

- Median cost for all categories except lost income was zero
  - Testing usually accessed opportunistically or via provider-initiated services while attending care
- Mean cost of accessing HIV testing was \$2.45
  - \$3.81 for men & \$1.83 for women

## Discussion

- ❖ Reported user costs ~3 times their average daily earnings
- ❖ Modifiable supply side factors:
  - long travel
  - Waiting times
 contribute to high opportunity costs.
- ❖ Men's costs ~ twice as high as women's

## Regression Analysis

Determinants (Reference Category)		Two-Part Model		
		Logit	Log-transformed OLS	
Gender (Male)	Female	-0.221	-0.517***	
	Wealth (Lowest Quintile)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lowest Quintile	-0.196	-0.0113
		Middle Quintile	-0.108	0.398***
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Highest Quintile	-0.168	0.0644
	Highest Quintile	0.342	0.161	
Age Category (16-19)	20-24	0.468	0.610***	
	25-39	0.777**	0.964***	
	40-64	0.674	1.031***	
	65+	-0.323	0.736***	
Education (No Formal Edu.)	Primary Education	0.177	-0.0569	
	Incomplete Secondary Education	0.430	0.248	
	Complete Secondary Education	0.951	0.628***	
Number of Children	No. of Children	0.0604	-0.0164	
	Testing Location (Facility)	Community Testing	-0.946***	-0.204
	Other	-0.820	0.0617	
Time Taken	Hours	0.203***	0.0161	
Reason for visiting (HIV Test + Other)	HIV Test	0.393*	0.0374	
District (Blantyre)	Machinga	0.253	0.0857	
	Mwanza	0.666*	0.434***	
	Neno	-0.190	0.0594	
	Constant	-0.0902	-0.118	
	Observations	746	746	

## Aim:

To explore the costs and the associated cost drivers of accessing HIV testing services in rural Malawi

### Baseline Household Survey

- Adults aged 16 years or more
- Living in 22 pre-selected enumeration villages

**N=5,551**

Random 25% sample asked to consent to:

- Extended Questionnaire (n=749)
- User Costs of HIV Testing
- Discrete Choice Experiment

Completed Costing Questions and recently tested (N=749)

Included in current study if HIV tested in last 12 months

Cost	Men Mean US\$	Women Mean US\$	Total Sample Mean US\$	Proportion
Transport	0.25	0.16	0.19	7.8%
Consultation	0.03	0.03	0.03	1.2%
Food	0.18	0.13	0.14	5.7%
Other	0.05	0.02	0.03	1.2%
Child Care	0.06	0.01	0.03	1.2%
Lost Income	3.24	1.48	2.03	82.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Recommendation

- ❖ There's need to explore flexible testing options e.g. HIVST in order to reduce access costs

