

New Zealand calls for funding automated insulin delivery system

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To ensure that New Zealanders are not left behind in accessing this life changing technology



University of Otago researchers in New Zealand are urging the government to fund an automated insulin delivery system for type 1 diabetes patients, after a recent study showed it to now be “the best way” to manage the disease.

The study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, compares the efficacy of the open source automated delivery system (AID), with the sensor-augmented insulin pump.

While AID systems are available in New Zealand, the critical component – continuous glucose monitoring – is not funded by the drug management agency Pharmac, making it out of reach for many. It is worn on the skin and senses changes in glucose, allowing an insulin pump and maths programme to adjust insulin response, cutting out the need for finger stick monitoring multiple times day and night.

Continuous glucose monitoring is government-funded in Australia and England. Commercial systems are available in New Zealand, however current Pharmac funding means that only those who can afford to buy the continuous glucose monitoring can access it.

“If we really want to decrease health inequity for type 1 diabetes, we need to rapidly arrange access to this technology, prioritise our workforce to engage, and train people how to use systems to get the most out of it.” the researchers say.