

Terminology Used in Economic Evaluations

Term	Definition
Attributable costs	Costs that would not have occurred in the absence of the infection or complication of interest.* Examples include costs associated with additional days as an inpatient (for example, antibiotics, laboratory tests, supplies) to diagnose and treat the infection.
Business case analysis	A type of cost analysis performed from the perspective of a business.*
Direct costs	Costs associated with a particular product, procedure, or service that can be traced directly to that product, procedure, or service.† Examples include nursing staff salaries to care for a patient with a CLABSI or salaries for infection prevention staff to identify and analyze the data associated with the infection.
Fixed costs	Daily operating costs, such as buildings, equipment, and staff salaries. These costs do not vary based on patient volume. It is estimated that more than 80% of hospital costs are fixed.*
Variable costs	Expenses that vary with volume. These costs may be dependent on the number of patients admitted or their length of stay. Variable costs include drugs, tests, supplies, and procedures.*

* Adapted from Perencevich EN, Stone PW, Wright SB, Carmeli Y, Fisman DN, Cosgrove SE; Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. Raising standards while watching the bottom line: Making a business case for infection control. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.* 2007 Oct;28(10):1121–1133.

† Adapted from Dunagan WC, Murphy DM, Hollenbeak CS, Miller SB. Making the business case for infection control: Pitfalls and opportunities. *Am J Infect Control.* 2002 Apr;30(2):86–92.