About this release

This release from the Information Services Division provides an annual update on hospital stays relating to drug misuse in Scotland. The topics covered are: the number of hospital stays, the number and characteristics of patients, substances used and geographical variations. This includes information about inequalities and some of the health impacts of drug misuse.

Main Points

- The rate of drug-related general acute stays increased steadily from 41 to 162 stays per 100,000 population between 1996/97 and 2016/17. After a lengthy period of stability, the rate of drug-related psychiatric stays increased from 29 to 36 stays per 100,000 population between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

- Stays among individuals aged 35 and over increased over the time series. For general acute stays among 45-49 year olds, there was a greater than eighteen-fold increase from 11 to 203 patients per 100,000 population between 1996/97 and 2016/17.

Drug-related general acute patient rates, by age group
(Scotland; 1996/97 to 2016/17)

- In the most recent available year’s data, 61% of drug-related general acute stays were due to opioids (drugs similar to heroin) while 51% of drug-related psychiatric stays were associated with ‘multiple/other’ drugs.
In the most recent available year’s data, approximately half of patients with general acute or psychiatric stays in relation to drug misuse lived in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland.

In 2015/16, 3,860 patients (72 new patients per 100,000 population) were treated in hospital (general acute/psychiatric combined) for drug misuse for the first time. The drug-related new patient rate has increased since 2006/07 (49 new patients per 100,000 population).

**Background**

Hospital activity data are collected across the NHS in Scotland and are based on nationally available information routinely drawn from hospital administrative systems across the country. The principal data sources are the SMR01 (general acute inpatient and day case) and SMR04 (psychiatric inpatient and day case) returns.

SMR01 and SMR04 are episode-based patient records relating to all inpatient and day cases (excluding maternity, neonatal and geriatric long stay) discharged from general acute and psychiatric hospitals in NHS Scotland. Attendances at Accident and Emergency that do not result in a hospital admission are not included. Individual patients may have more than one stay in hospital, therefore the number of people discharged within a year will be less than the total number of stays.

Rates referred to in this publication are European Age-Sex Standardised Rates (EASR) per 100,000 population.

‘Multiple/other’ drugs includes hallucinogens, volatile solvents, multiple drug use and use of other psychoactive substances (e.g. ecstasy).

**Contact**

Lee Barnsdale  
Principal Information analyst  
leebarnsdale@nhs.net  
0131 275 6055

Joanna Targosz  
Senior Information Analyst  
joanna.targosz@nhs.net  
0131 275 6667

nss.isdsubstansemisuse@nhs.net

**Further Information**


Data accompanying this report are published in an [electronic dashboard](http://www.isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/).

Other ISD publications on drug and alcohol misuse can be found at the [drug and alcohol topic pages](http://www.isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/) on the ISD website.

The Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) provides information on various aspects of drug misuse in Scotland: [ScotPHO drug misuse section](http://www.isdscotland.scot.nhs.uk/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/).

The next update of this publication will be in September 2018.