

Publication Summary



Prescribing and Medicines:

Prescription Cost Analysis, Minor Ailment Service Dispenser Remuneration and Prescription Charges



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About this Release

This release provides information on the number of registrations and treatment for the Minor Ailment Service for financial year 2010/11. Information on the prescription cost analysis and associated statistics; volume, cost, and the top 10 drugs for financial year 2010/11 are also considered. Generic prescribing figures for 2009/10 are shown and dispenser remuneration and prescription charges for the final quarter of 2010/11 are also represented.

Key Points

- At 31st March 2011, 790,509 people were registered for MAS, with almost 1.7 million items being dispensed during financial year 2010/11.
- The total volume of items dispensed in Scotland in 2010/11 is 91.1 million, a rise of 2.4% between 2009/10 and 2010/11, whilst the total (net) cost rose by 2.5% in 2010/11 compared to 2009/10 to almost £1.14 billion.
- In 2010/11 aspirin (primarily prescribed to help prevent cardiovascular disease) was the most commonly prescribed drug by volume and atorvastatin (used for controlling cholesterol) was the most expensive by gross ingredient cost; these are consistent with 2009/10.
- Due to falling charges, the total income generated by sales of all prescriptions has steadily decreased. As of 1 April 2011, prescription items are now dispensed free of charge in Scotland.
- The gross ingredient amount of payments to dispensing contractors for the financial year 2010-11, in respect of various fees and allowances for dispensing prescriptions and providing pharmaceutical services was £1.16 billion. This is an increase of £12million (1.2%) when compared to the financial year 2009-10.

Background

The Minor Ailments Service (MAS) was introduced to allow community pharmacies to provide direct care for common conditions. MAS went live across Scotland in July 2006, following the success of pilots in NHS Ayrshire & Arran and NHS Tayside.

The generic prescribing rate is based on how a drug is written on a prescription by a prescriber; either generically or proprietary and not how the dispenser endorsed the prescription. The generic rate only looks at drugs within BNF chapters 1 to 15 and excludes all dressings and appliances. Information that has been manually processed by PSD are not captured under a BNF chapter and will be excluded from the rate.

Prescription cost analysis information is obtained from NHS prescriptions dispensed in Scotland that are prescribed in Scotland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. All these prescriptions are dispensed by community pharmacies, dispensing doctors, a small number of specialist appliance suppliers and stoma providers. GPs write the vast majority of these prescriptions, with the remainder written by authorised prescribers such as nurses and dentists. Also included are prescriptions written in hospitals that were dispensed in the community, but exclude prescriptions dispensed within hospitals.

In 2007 the Scottish Government published a proposal to [abolish prescription charges](#) by April 2011. Since then, the cost of a single prescription item and [prepayment certificate](#) (PPC) has been decreasing and, as at 1 April 2011, prescriptions are once again dispensed with no charge to the patient. All NHS boards are kept informed of pending changes via Scottish Government circulars, the most recent of which, [PCA\(P\)\(2011\)05](#), was published in March 2011.

Dispensing contractors, i.e. community pharmacists, dispensing doctors and appliance suppliers, are contracted by NHS Scotland to provide a service to the populace of Scotland. To ensure drugs are available for dispensing when a patient arrives with a prescription, dispensing contractors purchase drugs in advance. Therefore, dispensing contractors receive two distinct types of payment; remuneration for the service they provide and reimbursement for the drugs they dispense.

All statistics with the exception of prescription charges are official national statistics.

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Further Information

Further information can be found in the [prescription cost analysis](#), [minor ailments](#), [prescription charges](#) and [dispenser remuneration](#) publication reports on the ISD website.

Further information can be found on the [ISD website](#).

About ISD

Scotland has some of the best health service data in the world combining high quality, consistency, national coverage and the ability to link data to allow patient based analysis and follow up.

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