

# Publication Summary



## Prescribing & Medicines: Medicines used in Mental Health

Financial years 2004/05 – 2013/14

Publication date – 30 September 2014



### About this Release

This release updates the medicines used in mental health in Scotland for financial years between 2004/05 and 2013/14. Data on five types of drugs is included: Hypnotics and Anxiolytics (used to treat insomnia and anxiety), Antipsychotics and related drugs, Antidepressants, Drugs used for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Drugs for Dementia. Analysis includes the number of dispensed items, defined daily doses and gross ingredient cost. Data by NHS Board and annual trends are also shown. Counts of patients and counts by patient characteristics (age, gender and SIMD) are also published at NHSScotland level.

### Key Points

- Dispensing of antipsychotics, antidepressants, drugs for ADHD and drugs for dementia has been steadily increasing over the past ten years; dementia also showing a sharp increase in recent years. Dispensing of hypnotics and anxiolytics has remained stable in the past ten years.
- Increased dispensing of drugs classified as antidepressants should be interpreted with caution; a notable proportion of these drugs are prescribed at low dose for conditions other than depression.
- Trends in volume tend to be consistent with trends in patient counts and Defined Daily Doses over time.
- Costs do not necessarily follow the same patterns over time as volumes of mental health drugs dispensed and can show significant fluctuation; the reasons vary for different types of mental health drugs, but in general sharp increases in cost are usually due to drugs being in short supply and sharp decreases are usually due to drugs coming out of patent.
- All of the mental health drugs considered in this report show a consistent pattern of increasing volume dispensed with increasing patient deprivation. For elderly patient dispensed dementia drugs, this pattern is less pronounced, but still evident.
- Dispensing of most mental health drugs peaks for patients in middle age and is consistently higher for females, apart from dementia drugs which are predominantly dispensed to elderly patients and drugs for ADHD which are dispensed mainly to adolescent males.

- There is wide variation in dispensing of mental health drugs between NHS Boards (reflecting different populations and service provision), but the majority of NHS Boards show consistent changes in Defined Daily Dose over time.

## Background

Information on drugs which are indicated for the medicines used in mental health, are obtained from NHS prescriptions prescribed in Scotland that are dispensed in Scotland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. All these prescriptions are dispensed by community pharmacies, dispensing doctors, a small number of speciality 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. Items which are purchased over the counter are excluded.

Patient based analysis is also included in the publication. All NHS patients have a unique Community Health Index (CHI) number which makes it possible to identify which prescription items have been dispensed for individual patients. Prior to April 2009, the proportion of prescriptions with a valid CHI number recorded was not comprehensive enough to make patient based analysis possible. For medicines used in mental health, CHI capture rates have improved, becoming high enough to permit accurate patient analyses from financial years 2009/10 onwards.

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## Further Information

Further information can be found in the [Full Publication Report](#) or on the [ISD website](#).

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