Scottish Public Health Observatory
Quarterly Update
September 2018

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About this release
This release by Information Services Division provides the Scottish Public Health Observatory quarterly update on a number of topic areas. Of these topics, ‘Drugs’ (Health harm and Treatment for drug misuse) provide previously unpublished data.

Main Points
Drugs – Health harm
- There were 9,056 HIV infections reported in Scotland between 1985 and 2017, of which 1,658 (18%) were among people who inject drugs.
- Of the 368 new HIV cases reported by NHS Boards in Scotland in 2017, of which 44 (12%) were among people who inject drugs.

Drugs - Treatment for drug misuse
- A decreasing trend in the dispensing of Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) drugs (including methadone) has been evident since 2010/11. From 2010/11 to 2016/17, the number of OST items dispensed in Scotland decreased by 12%. However, there was a slight increase (1%) in OST dispensing in 2017/18, compared to 2016/17.
- In 2017/18, the total cost of methadone dispensing (£5,068 per 1,000 adult population) was lower than the average annual cost for the period from 2007/08 to 2017/18 (£5,578 per 1,000 adult population).
- The minimum number of individuals in Scotland prescribed methadone was 25,906 in 2017/18.

Background
The Scottish Public Health Observatory collaboration is led by the Information Services Division and NHS Health Scotland, and includes the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, National Records of Scotland and Health Protection Scotland. The aim of the collaboration is to make public health information more accessible, to promote the reduction in inequalities and to inform health improvement in Scotland.
Issues associated with recording of the Community Health Index (CHI) number for methadone prescriptions means it is not possible to provide a robust count of the number of individuals prescribed methadone as an OST in Scotland. While the national CHI capture for methadone increased from 64.1% in 2011/12 to 80.7% in 2017/18, it remains below the agreed threshold of reliability (individual analysis is usually only reported when CHI completeness is above 85-90%). As a result of this issue, methadone patient estimates are described as a ‘minimum number’ of individuals prescribed methadone hydrochloride 1mg/ml solution.

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Further Information

All the topic areas updated will be available on the ScotPHO website.

The next release of this publication will be December 2018.

ISD and Official Statistics

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of ‘Official Statistics’. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further information about our statistics.