Scottish Atlas of Healthcare Variation

Exploring geographical variation in the health & care system in Scotland

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland
Revised 16 October 2019 – The length of stay figures have been updated as the full length of stay was not included for some patients in the original publication data. The antidepressant measure has been amended to present the rate ‘per 1,000 population’ to ensure consistency with the other prescribing maps; the underlying data has not changed. The updated figures have been highlighted in red.

About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) presents geographical variation in Antipsychotic prescribing for people aged 75 years and over, Antidepressant prescribing for people aged 15 years and over, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) prescribing for people aged less than 15, Dementia prescribing for people aged 55 and over, and Length of Stay for people admitted to General Psychiatry and Psychiatry of Old Age specialties.

Information is reported at Health Board of Residence and Local Authority level for financial years 2013/14 – 2017/18. Length of Stay information is reported for financial years 2014/15 – 2018/19.

Main Points

Antipsychotic prescribing

- In 2017/18 there was a 3-fold variation in the rate of people aged 75 years and over prescribed antipsychotic drugs across NHS Boards, ranging from 21.8 to 64.5 per 1,000 population, adjusted for age and sex. The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 49.5.

Antidepressant prescribing

- In 2017/18 there was a 1.4-fold variation in the rate of people aged 15 years and over prescribed antidepressant drugs across NHS Boards, ranging from 159.5 to 217.4 per 1,000 population, adjusted for age and sex. The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 195.6.

ADHD prescribing

- In 2017/18 there was an 18-fold variation in the rate of people aged less than 15 years prescribed ADHD drugs across NHS Boards, ranging from 0.97 to 17.5 per 1,000 population, adjusted for age and sex. The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 8.

Dementia prescribing

- In 2017/18 there was a 3-fold variation in the rate of people aged 55 years and over prescribed dementia drugs across NHS Boards, ranging from 8.5 to 25.5 per 1,000 population, adjusted for age and sex. The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 17.

Length of stay (80% shortest) - General Psychiatry

- In 2018/19 there was a 2.7-fold variation in the adult average length of stay (for the 80% shortest stays) for General Psychiatry specialty across NHS Boards, with length of stay ranging from 10 days to 27 days. The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 13.4 days.
- NHS Board median stays range from 7 days to 16 days with a corresponding Scotland figure of 10 days.
Length of stay (20% longest) - General Psychiatry

- In 2018/19 there was a 6-fold variation in the adult average length of stay (for the 20% longest stays) for General Psychiatry specialty across NHS Boards, with length of stay ranging from 80.8 days to 489.3 days (approximately 3 months to 16 months). The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 238.7 days (approximately 8 months).
- NHS Board median stays range from 69 days to 132.5 days (approximately 2 months to 4 months) with a corresponding Scotland figure of 84 days.

Length of stay (80% shortest) - Psychiatry of Old Age

- In 2018/19 there was a 5.7-fold variation in the adult average length of stay (for the 80% shortest stays) for Psychiatry of Old Age specialty across NHS Boards, with length of stay ranging from 33.2 days to 190.2 days (approximately 1 month to 6 months). The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 53.9 days.
- NHS Board median stays range from 28.5 days to 153 days (approximately 1 month to 5 months) with a corresponding Scotland figure of 43.5 days.

Length of stay (20% longest) - Psychiatry of Old Age

- In 2018/19 there was a 10-fold variation in the adult average length of stay (for the 20% longest stays) for Psychiatry of Old Age specialty across NHS Boards, with length of stay ranging from 143.2 days to 1,485 days (approximately 5 months to 50 months). The corresponding figure for Scotland as a whole was 630.1 days (approximately 21 months).
- NHS Board median stays range from 117 days to 1,020 days (approximately 4 months to 34 months) with a corresponding Scotland figure of 306 days (approximately 10 months).

Background

The Scottish Atlas of Healthcare Variation aims to highlight geographical variation in the provision of health services and associated health outcomes. It is designed to facilitate discussion and raise questions about why differences exist and promote quality improvement through this conversation.

The Scottish Atlas of Healthcare Variation is an important tool to contribute to eliminating unwarranted variation, realising Realistic Medicine and support reducing harm and waste within the health service. The tool is designed to highlight variation and no judgement on the performance or inferences on quality of care of one geographical area against another should be concluded.

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Further Information

Find out more in the interactive dashboard. The data from this publication is available to download from our ISD web page along with user guide, methodology and metadata documents.

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.