Long Acting Reversible Methods of Contraception (LARC) in Scotland
Year ending 31 March 2018

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About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) reports on the proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49) prescribed long acting reversible methods of contraception (LARC) and very long acting reversible methods (vLARC) in primary care and sexual health settings by NHS Board of treatment.

Main Points
In primary care and sexual health settings combined in 2017/18:

- vLARC (contraceptive implant, intrauterine device & intrauterine system) prescribing rates fell slightly over the five year reporting period, from 53.0 per 1,000 women in 2013/14 to 51.2 in 2017/18.

- The most common method of vLARC was the contraceptive implant: prescribing rates were 26.2 per 1,000 women compared to 18.7 for the intrauterine system (IUS) and 6.2 for the intrauterine device (IUD).

vLARC prescribing rate by age group, 2017/18
• Women under the age of 35 were more likely to be prescribed the contraceptive implant while women aged 35 and over were more likely to be prescribed the IUS.

• The most deprived areas had higher vLARC prescribing rates than the least deprived at 44.8 per 1,000 women compared to 37.4.

Background

In typical use, the 'long-acting' or 'lasting' methods of contraception (the contraceptive injection, contraceptive implant, IUD and IUS) have a lower failure rate than alternative reversible methods, for example, the contraceptive pill or condoms.

In August 2011, the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework 2011-2015 was launched, followed in 2015 by the Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Framework 2015-2020 Update. Both of these support the use of LARC and the 2015-2020 update states that work has been carried out to improve access to such contraception.

Contact

Stuart Wrigglesworth  Duncan McMaster
Senior Information Analyst  Information Analyst
0131 275 7128 0141 282 2081
nss.isdmaternity@nhs.net  nss.isdmaternity@nhs.net

Further Information

The data from this publication is available to download from our web page along with a metadata document which provides additional information about data sources and tables presented.

ISD publishes a wide range of information on birth, pregnancy and sexual health, including teenage pregnancies and terminations of pregnancy in Scotland. Further information can be found on our Maternity and Births and Sexual Health pages.

The next release of this publication will be September 2019.