

Statistics on Pharmaceuticals 2015

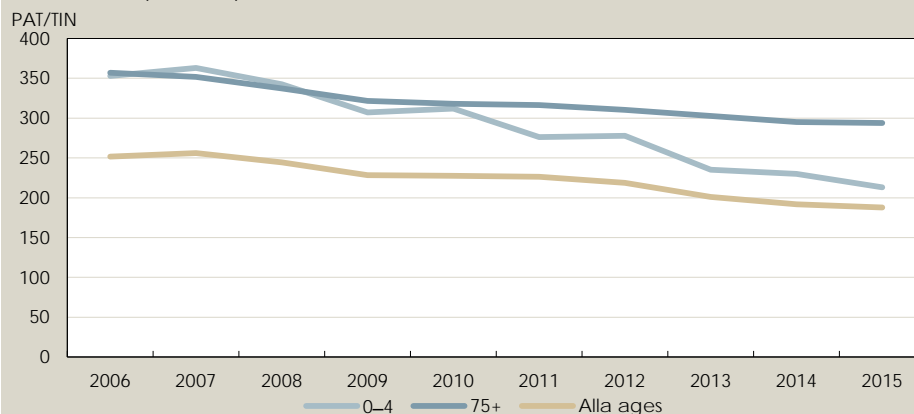
Prescriptions for pharmaceuticals are the most common treatment method in Swedish healthcare. At least one prescribed drug was purchased by 66 percent of the population in 2015. This level has remained almost unchanged for several years. Changes have, however, occurred in the use of individual groups of pharmaceuticals such as antibiotics and hepatitis C drugs.

Antibiotics decrease most among children

The prescription of antibiotics has declined for all ages since 2006. The greatest reduction is found among children 0–4 years old. There are considerable differences between the two age groups in which the prescription of antibiotics is highest, children 0–4 years and the elderly 75+. The proportion of children, 0–4 years, for whom prescribed antibiotics have been purchased at least once, has decreased by 40 percent since 2006, while the corresponding figure for the age group 75 years and older is almost 20 percent.

Figure 1. Antibiotics on prescription 2006–2015

Number of patients per thousand inhabitants (PAT/TIN)



ATC code: J01 excl. J01XX05

Source: the Swedish Prescribed Drug Register, the National Board of Health and Welfare

Purchase of drugs for acidity- related disorders has increased

The proportion of the population that purchased a drug for acidity-related disorders has increased since 2006 by more than 20 percent, while the number of daily doses per capita has increased by almost 70 percent. This indicates that the number of daily doses that a patient purchases on average per year has increased.

Women aged 15–29 is the patient group where the increase of daily doses per patient is most distinct, as more than 70 percent. The corresponding figure for all patients is nearly 40 percent. Around 60 daily doses per patient were purchased by 28,500 women aged 15–29 in 2006. The corresponding figure for 2015 is 38,600 women and 103 daily doses per patient. Drugs for acidity-related disorders may also be bought without prescription but prescribed drugs account for over 80 percent of volume.

Continued increase for new hepatitis C medication

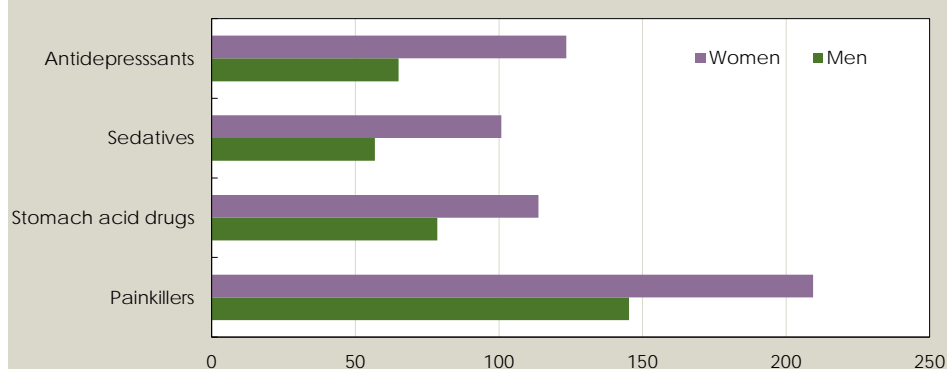
New, effective medication to cure hepatitis C was first used in 2014. In 2015, just over 2,600 patients purchased at least one of these on prescription, compared with about 1,000 patients in 2014. The cost of prescribed hepatitis C medication in 2015 was SEK 1.5 billion.

Women use more prescription medications than men

Women generally use more prescription medications than men. At least one drug has been purchased by 74 percent of women in Sweden, including contraceptives, in 2015 compared to 58 percent of men. Painkillers, drugs for acidity-related disorders, antidepressants and sedatives are some of the medication groups that many women have purchased. The proportions of users in these groups differ significantly between the genders.

Figure 2. Common medication groups among women

Number of patients per thousand inhabitants



ATC codes: Antidepressants = N06A Sedatives = N05CD+N05CF+N05CM06
Stomach acid drugs = A02 Painkillers= M01A+N02B

Source: the Swedish Prescribed Drug Register, the National Board of Health and Welfare

Fewer women purchase short-acting contraceptives

The largest proportion of users of hormonal contraceptives is found among women aged 20–24. Hormonal contraceptives has in this context been divided into two sub-groups, long-acting, which includes hormone spirals and p-rods and short-acting which includes all other hormonal contraceptives such as birth control pills, contraceptive patch and vaginal ring. The use of short-acting contraceptives has in general declined since 2011 while long-acting has increased. Approximately 40 percent of women aged 20–24 purchased at least one short-acting contraceptive in 2015, compared to nearly 50 percent in 2011. In the same age group, the proportion of women who has purchased a long-acting contraceptive increased from 3 percent in 2011, compared to 7 percent in 2015. It is difficult to draw conclusions about how the overall use of hormonal contraceptives has changed over time as long-acting contraceptives are effective over a longer time period of 3–5 years and are therefore not purchased every year.

Continued low level of alcohol dependence medication use

Alcohol dependence is one of the country's greatest public health problems. Figures for alcohol abuse in Sweden are not established but one estimate shows that there are about 330,000 people in Sweden with alcohol dependence [1]. In 2015 there were about 23,300 patients who purchased alcohol dependence medication (ATC code N07BB), and this figure remains almost unchanged since 2006. The largest proportion of users is found among men aged 50–54 years old.

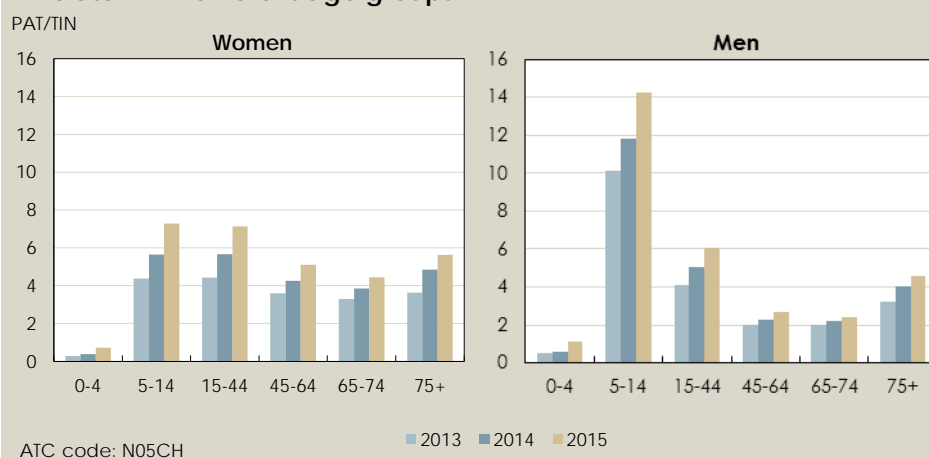
The use of ADHD drugs increases in the age group 45–64 years

Since 2006, the number of patients purchasing ADHD medication increased significantly, not only among children and young adults, but also for those in the age group 45–64. There has been an increase from just over 1,000 patients in 2006 to more than 10,000 patients in 2015. In this age group the use is relatively equally distributed between the genders with 4.2 patients per thousand women and 4.4 patients per thousand men. The largest proportion of users has been found among boys 5–14 years old for the whole period 2006-2015. There has been a decrease from almost 1 percent in 2006 compared to more than 3 percent in 2015.

Melatonin increase in all age groups

Melatonin is a sleep hormone that occurs naturally in the body and is primarily prescribed to patients with insomnia which is common in, for example, ADHD patients. The use of melatonin has increased significantly since 2006. However, it is important to consider that a new drug often has an initially high growth rate. Over the last three years, an increase in all age groups can be observed. Women show steeper increase than men. The use in girls 5–14 years old has increased by 66 percent. The largest proportion of users is found among boys 5–14 years old.

Figur 4. Number of patients per thousand inhabitants (PAT / TIN) for melatonin in different age groups



Source: the Swedish Prescribed Drug Register, the National Board of Health and Welfare

References

Bättre insatser vid missbruk och beroende, del 1. (SOU 2011:35).

More information

You can find more tables, graphs and information in the following Excel file (in Swedish, but with English list of terms):

www.socialstyrelsen.se/publikationer2016/2016-4-25

If you want to use our statistical database (in Swedish):

www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikdatabas/lakemedel

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