

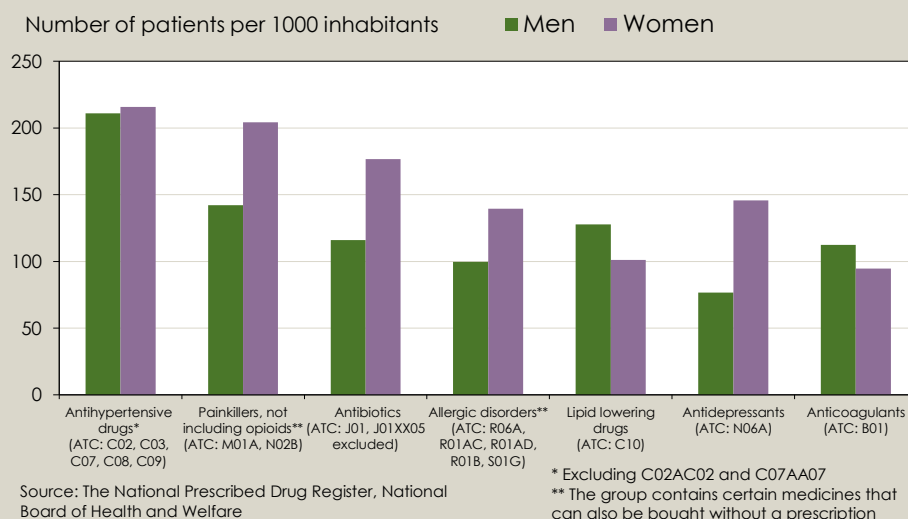
Statistics on pharmaceuticals 2022

More women than men retrieved pharmaceuticals in 2022. Antihypertensive drugs were the group of medicines prescribed to the most patients, both in the general population and among people aged 75 and over. Prescription of antibiotics increased slightly in 2022, while the proportion of the population who received opioids has fallen in recent years.

More women than men receive prescription drugs

In 2022, 66 percent of Sweden's population retrieved at least one prescription drug. For women, the proportion was 74 percent, contraceptives included. The corresponding number for men was 59 percent. Antihypertensive drugs were the group of medicines prescribed to the largest number of patients. In total, approximately 21 percent of the population retrieved this type of medicine during 2022, which corresponds to 1.12 million women and 1.11 million men. The next most common groups were analgesics (opioids not included), antibiotics, drugs treating allergic disorders, lipid lowering drugs, antidepressants and anticoagulants. More women than men retrieved medicines in all groups except lipid lowering drugs and anticoagulants. The gender difference was greatest for antidepressants, which were prescribed to 15 percent of women compared to 8 percent of men.

Figure 1. The seven most common drug groups in 2022, by gender



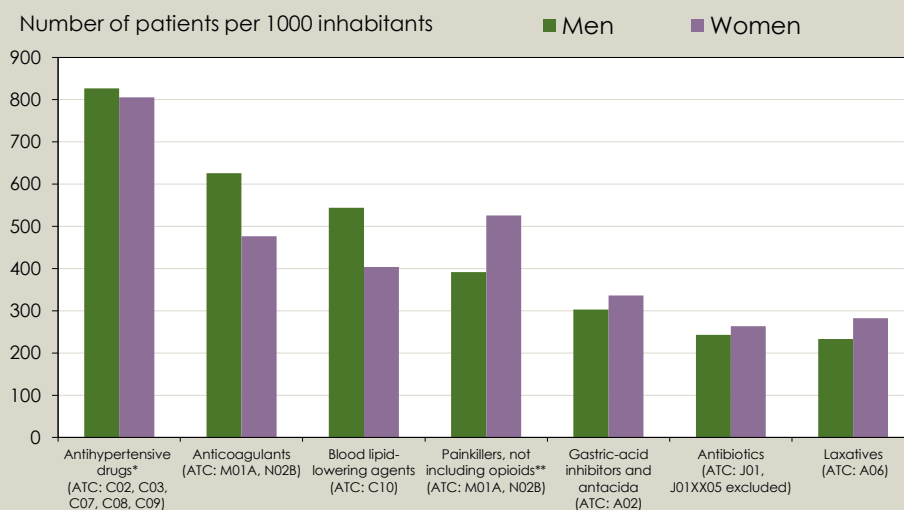
About the statistics

The statistics show the number of persons that has retrieved the pharmaceutical in question at least once during one year from a pharmacy. It does not include pharmaceuticals without prescription nor those distributed by institutions with their own pharmaceutical stocks such as hospitals. Some pharmaceutical groups also include pharmaceuticals that are also available over the counter

More than 80 percent of the elderly receive drugs for high blood pressure

Also among the elderly, antihypertensive drug were the most common drug group. More than 80 percent of those aged 75 and older receive this type of medicine. The next most common groups among the elderly were anticoagulants, lipid lowering drugs, analgesics, gastric-acid inhibitors and antacida, antibiotics and laxatives. Among these groups, the gender difference was greatest for lipid-lowering drugs, which were prescribed to 54 percent of men compared to 40 percent of women.

Figure 2. The seven most common drug groups among the elderly aged 75 years and older in 2022, by gender



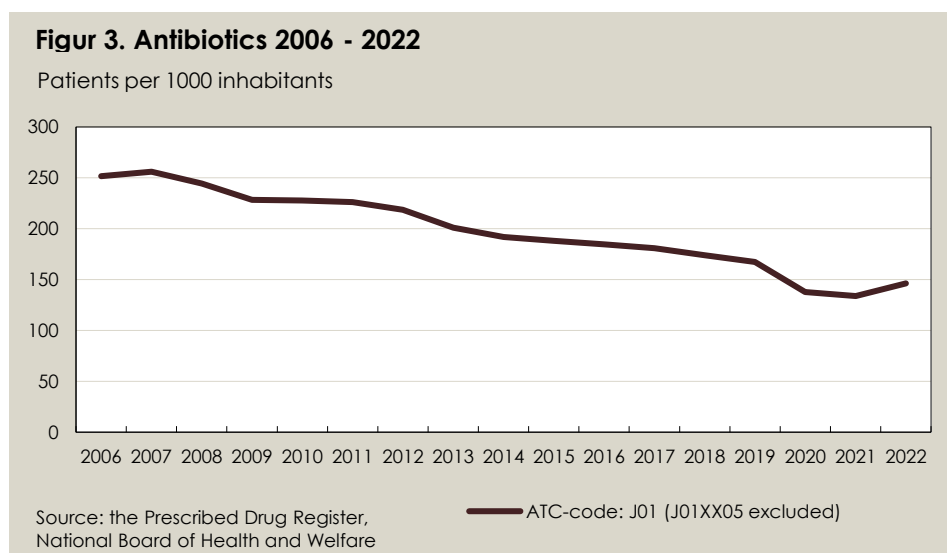
Source: The National Prescribed Drug Register, National Board of Health and Welfare

* Excluding C02AC02 and C07AA07
 ** The group contains certain medicines that can also be bought without a prescription

The use of antibiotics increased 2022

The use of antibiotics is the driving force behind antibiotic resistance, which is a major threat to global health. In Sweden the consumption of antibiotics has gone down substantially since the 1990s, which is clearly visible in the graph below,

that shows the trend since the conception of the National Prescribed Drug Register in 2006. During the pandemic years 2020 and 2021 the use fell quite notably, but last year there was a slight increase, however not to pre-pandemic levels. During 2022, nearly 15 per cent of the population received antibiotics. Children and the elderly are the age groups that receives antibiotic to the highest degree and in total women use them more than men.



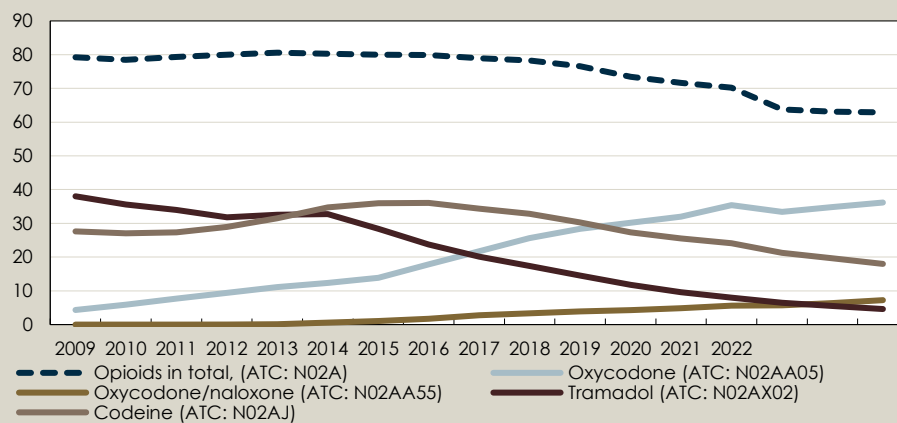
The prescription of opioids is decreasing

Opioids are strong painkillers that are very important in the treatment of acute, post-operative and cancer-related pain. However, the substances all have potentially addictive effects and the medicines should therefore be used with great caution.

An increase or decrease in the individual substances often has effects on the other substances in the drug group. Therefore, it is important to consider the whole group to get a true idea of the prescribing trend. The diagram below shows that the proportion of the population prescribed opioids has decreased in recent years, from approximately eight percent in 2013 to just over six percent in 2022. Within the opioid group, a change in the prescription pattern is seen during the same period, where medicines containing the opioid substance oxycodone have increased since 2013, while the prescription of the opioid substances tramadol and codeine has fallen.

Figure 4. Opioids 2013–2022, total and divided by substance

Number of patients per 1000 inhabitants



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

More information

You can find more tables, graphs and information here:

[www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik-och-data/statistik/statistikammen/lake-](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik-och-data/statistik/statistikammen/lake-medel)www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistical-databasesmedel. If you want to use our statistical database: www.socialstyrelsen.se/en/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistical-databases**Contact information:**

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