

## Statistics on Pharmaceuticals 2016

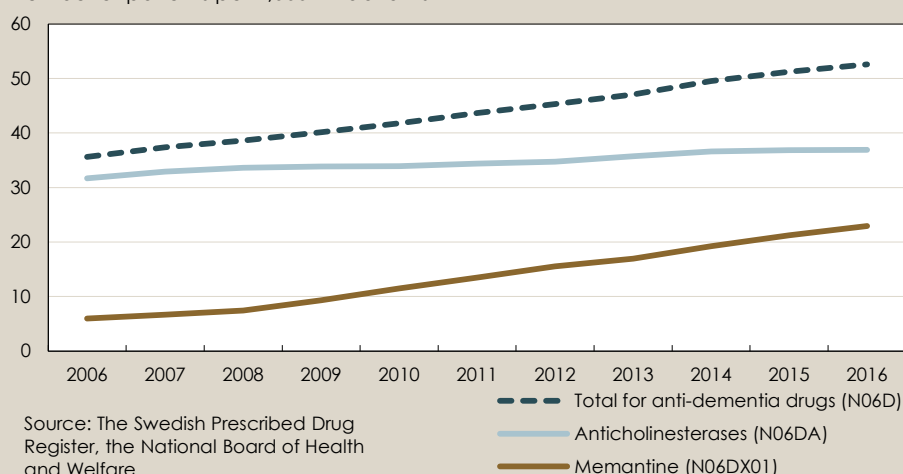
**The number of people who purchased the sleep hormone melatonin has increased sharply since 2015. The increase is noticeable in all age groups and for both sexes. Since 2014, the use of the older drug warfarin has decreased, while the use of newer direct oral anticoagulants has increased.**

### Anti-dementia drug use increases

The proportion of people aged 75 years and older who have purchased an anti-dementia drug has increased from about 3.5 percent to about 5 percent since 2006. Two types of drugs are used for dementia: anticholinesterases and NMDA receptor antagonists (memantine). Memantine has seen the largest increase. In 2006, just over 0.5 percent of people aged 75 or over purchased memantine at least once, while the corresponding number for 2016 is just over 2 percent.

**Figure 1. Anti-dementia drugs for the age group 75 years and older 2006–2016**

Number of patients per 1,000 inhabitants



### Sharp increase in melatonin use

The use of melatonin had increased steadily since the drug was introduced in 2008. Between 2015 and 2016 the trend has increased considerably and the proportion of people who purchased the drug at least once rose by more than 40 percent. The increase is noticeable in all age groups and for both sexes. The largest proportion of users is found among boys aged 10–19, where about 2.5 percent purchased melatonin at least once in 2016. The largest increase of almost 70 percent is found among women aged 30–44. The proportion of women that purchased melatonin in this age group at least once in 2016 was 0.7 percent, which is corresponding to about 6,900 women. This is to be compared to 0.4 percent and about 4,000 women in 2015.

## Drug use for type 2 diabetes increases

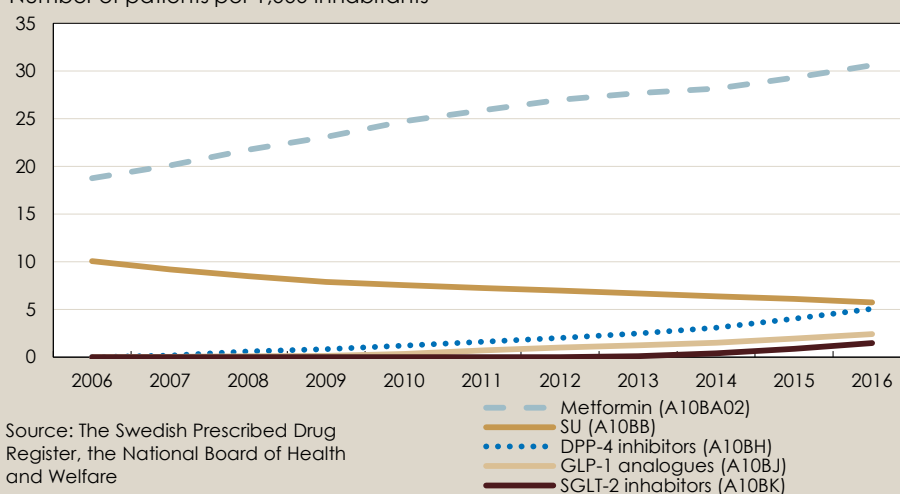
Over 340,000 people purchased an anti-diabetic agent excluding insulins at least once in 2016, an increase of over 40 percent since 2006. This group of drugs is primarily used by people with type 2 diabetes, and consists mainly of anti-diabetic agents in tablet form. Metformin is the first choice for people with type 2 diabetes, and its use has increased by more than 60 percent since 2006. Use of sulfonylureas (SU) has, however, decreased by almost 40 percent since 2006. This group of drugs can be given when metformin is contraindicated or as an add-on when metformin does not provide adequate treatment. The risk of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) can however increase when treated with SU.

Newer drugs, like DPP4 inhibitors and GLP-1 analogues, contribute a small part of the total amount of purchased anti-diabetic agents, but their usage is increasing. DPP4 inhibitors and GLP-1 analogues have both increased by about 25 percent since last year, and SGLT-2 inhibitors by 70 percent.

Men aged 70–79 have the largest proportion of users of anti-diabetic agents excluding insulins. Over 15 percent of this group has purchased these drugs at least once in 2016 compared to just over 10 percent in 2006.

**Figure 2. The five largest drug groups of anti-diabetic agents excluding insulins 2006–2016**

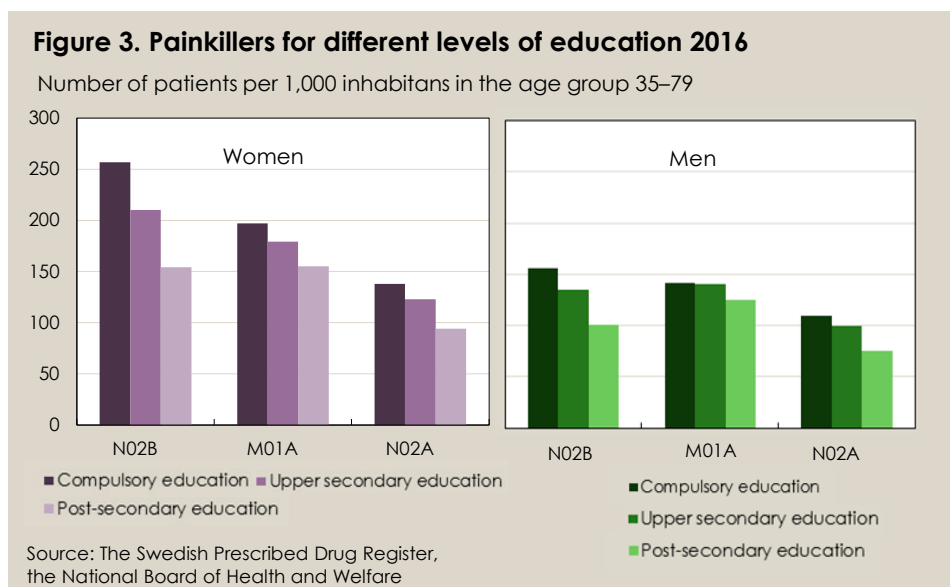
Number of patients per 1,000 inhabitants



## Painkillers are prescribed more to people with lower educational level

Painkillers on prescription are most often prescribed for chronic pain or other conditions that require a continuous dose. Painkillers are prescribed more frequently to people with compulsory education as their highest level of education compared to those with either upper secondary or post-secondary education. Painkillers include *other analgesics and antipyretics* (ATC code N02B e.g. paracetamol), *anti-inflammatory agents* (ATC code M01A e.g. naproxen) and

*opioids* (ATC code N02A e.g. oxycodone). The 'other analgesics' group has the largest difference between educational levels. Approximately 25 percent of all women with compulsory education as their highest education had at least one purchase in this drug group, compared to 15 percent of those with post-secondary education. The corresponding figures for men are more than 15 percent for the lower level of education compared to 10 percent for the higher level.



## More young people purchase antidepressants

The proportion of young people aged 10–19 who purchased an antidepressant at any time during the year has more than doubled in 10 years, from about 1 percent among boys and 1.5 percent among girls in 2006 to nearly 2 and 3.5 percent in 2016. In total, 27,800 young people aged 10–19 purchased at least one antidepressant in 2016, of whom 65 percent were women.

## Large increase in thyroid hormone for women aged 25–39 in the last 10 years

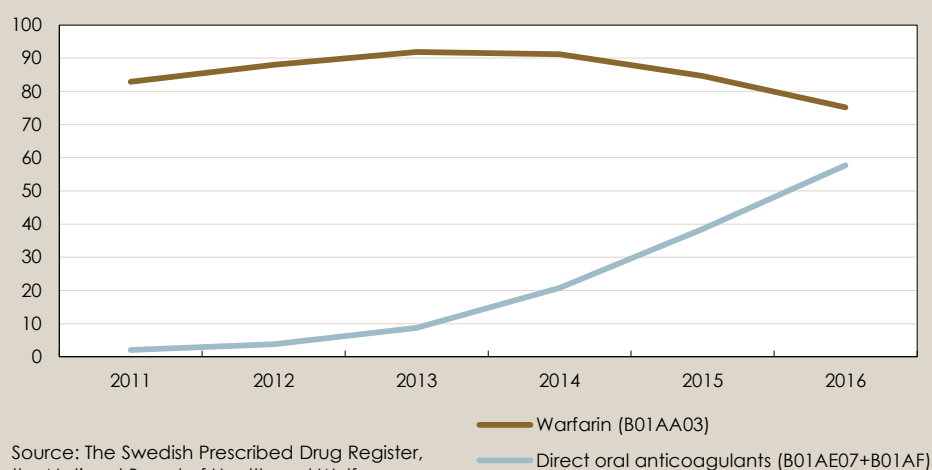
The thyroid gland produces hormones that affect almost all body functions. The number of women per 1,000 inhabitants aged 25–39 who purchased a thyroid hormone has increased by over 90 percent in 10 years. Almost 3 percent in this age group, about 23,800 women, purchased a thyroid hormone in 2006. The corresponding figures for 2016 are just over 5 percent and 48,000 women. The largest proportions of users are, however, among women over 85, where over 20 percent purchased at least once in 2016, an increase of about 30 percent from 2006.

## Use of direct oral anticoagulants increases

Anticoagulants are used to prevent and treat blood clots and approximately one million people purchased a drug in this drug group at least once in 2016. Warfarin is one of the most commonly used anticoagulant drugs in Sweden. Since 2014, however, the use of warfarin has decreased while the use of direct oral anticoagulants has increased. These have fewer serious bleeding side effects and require fewer checks but they lack in most cases an antidote to a life-threatening bleeding and there is a limited knowledge of the long-term effects. The proportion of users aged 65 and older has increased from about 1 percent in 2013 to nearly 6 percent in 2016.

**Figure 4. Warfarin and direct oral anticoagulants 2011–2016**

Number of patients per 1,000 inhabitants in the age group 65 years and older



### More information

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

[www.socialstyrelsen.se/publikationer2017/2017-3-34](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/publikationer2017/2017-3-34)

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

[www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikdatabas/lakemedel](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik/statistikdatabas/lakemedel)

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