

Statistics on pharmaceuticals 2019

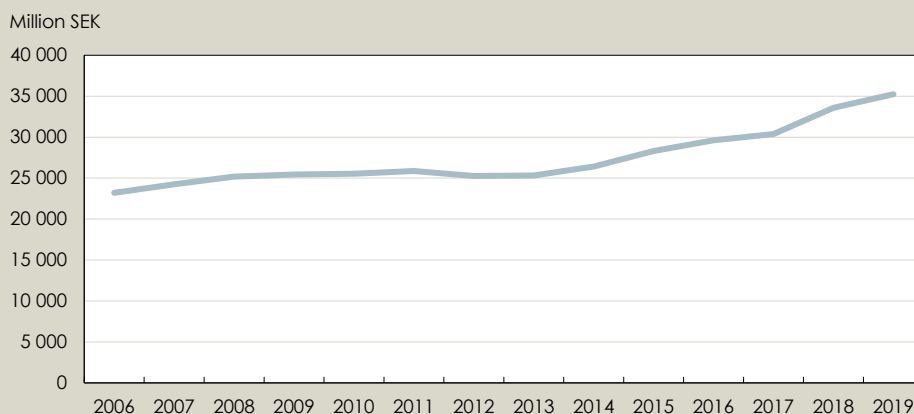
The cost of prescribed pharmaceuticals was about 35 billion SEK in 2019. The prescription of ADHD drugs and melatonin continues to increase and these drugs are most common among adolescents. Every fourth man over the age of 74 years was treated with a drug against benign prostatic hyper-trophy.

The cost for prescribed drugs increases

The cost of prescription drugs has increased by almost 25 percent over the past five years and amounted to over 35 billion SEK in 2019. The total proportion of the population that retrieves a prescription drug during a year has been quite stable, around 67 percent for many years.

The increase of costs is at its highest for pharmaceuticals within the ATC classification system belonging to the anatomical main groups *Blood and blood forming organs* and *Antineoplastic and immunomodulating agents*. The cost for *Blood and blood forming organs* has increased by around 60 percent over the past five years and amounted to nearly 4.2 billion SEK in 2019. For *Antineoplastic and immunomodulating agents* the cost has increased by nearly 50 percent and amounted to 7.8 billion SEK in 2019. This increase may be partly due to the introduction of new drugs within both groups.

Figure 1. Costs for drugs on prescription 2006–2019



Source: eHälsomyndigheten

More use long-acting contraception

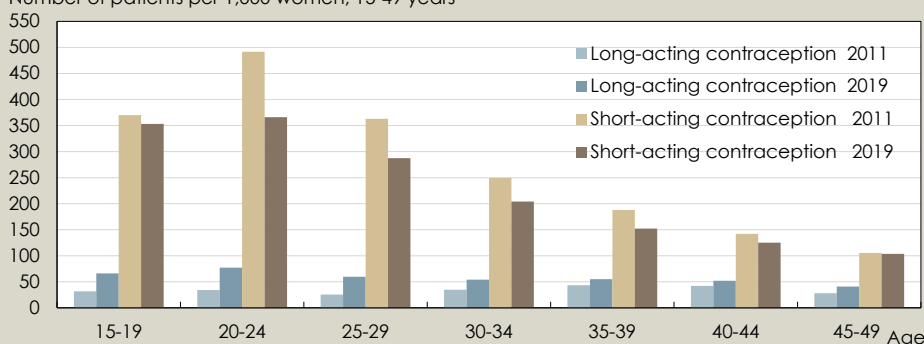
The proportion of women who received long-acting contraception (medicated intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants) has increased by more than 60 percent since 2011. During the same period short-acting contraception, of which birth control pills are the most common, has declined by almost 20 percent. A

contributing factor to the increase in long-acting contraceptives is that it has become more common to offer intrauterine devices to women who have not been pregnant. This has led to an increased use of medicated intrauterine devices among young women.

Figure 2. Contraceptives to women aged 15–49 years, 2011 och 2019

Long-acting contraception (medicated intrauterine devices and contraceptive implant) and short-acting contraception (birth control pills, vaginal ring, contraceptive patch and contraceptive injection)

Number of patients per 1,000 women, 15-49 years



ATC-code long-acting contraception : G02BA, G03AC08, short-acting contraception : G02BB, G03A (exkl. G03AD, G03AC08)

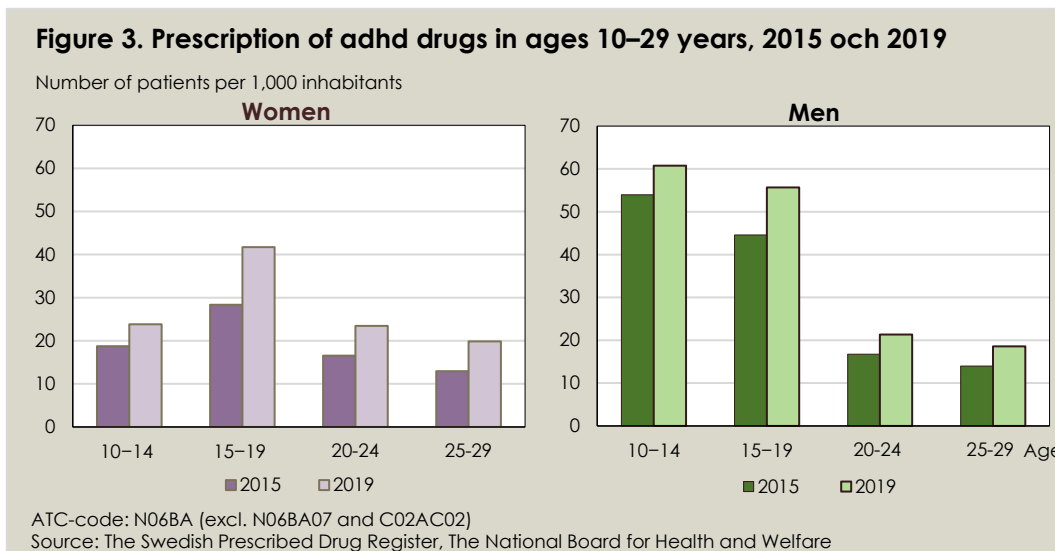
Source: The Swedish Prescribed Drug Register, The National Board for Health and Welfare

In year 2011 49 percent of the women aged 20–24 received short-acting contraception and in 2019 the proportion had declined to 37 percent. The increase in prescription of long-acting contraceptives has also been greatest in that particular age group, from just over 3 percent in 2011 to just below 8 percent in 2019. The statistics include prescribed contraceptives retrieved at pharmacies. Non-prescribed contraceptives, for example copper intrauterine devices, diaphragms or condoms, are not included. Long-acting contraceptives work for a longer period of 3–5 years and are therefore not prescribed every year.

ADHD drugs continue to increase

The prescription of ADHD drugs has been steadily increasing for many years. During the past five years the proportion of women in the population who have received ADHD drugs has increased from 0.8 percent in 2015 to 1.1 percent in 2019. Among men, the prescriptions increased during the same period from 1.2 percent to 1.5 percent of the population. The prescription increases in almost all age groups, but the largest percentage increase during the last five years, around 80 percent, has occurred in the age group 60–69 years. Adolescents are the group that are prescribed ADHD drugs to the greatest extent. About 6.1 percent of the boys aged, 10–14 years had, an ADHD drug prescribed in 2019, compared to 5.4 percent in 2015. Among girls, use is most common in the late teens. During 2019, 4.2 percent of the girls, aged 15–19 years received an ADHD drug at pharmacies, compared to 2.8 percent in 2015.

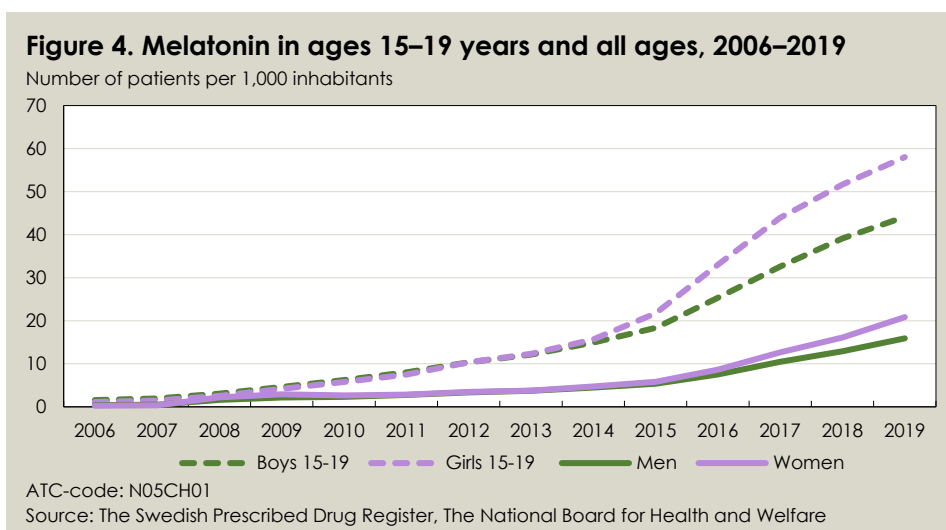
For older adolescents and young adults, the prescription of these drugs is just as common among men and women.



More women than men use melatonin

Melatonin is a hormone naturally found in the body that regulates sleep and wakefulness. It was introduced as a drug in Sweden in 2008 and since then the use of it has increased every year. Since 2015 prescription has increased significantly. During 2019 nearly 2.1 percent of women received melatonin at least once, compared to nearly 1.6 percent of the men.

Many who are diagnosed with ADHD are prescribed melatonin, since sleep disorders are common among these patients. The trend with increasing prescription of melatonin might be due, among other things, to an increasing number of people being diagnosed with ADHD. The increase may also be related to the fact that depression and anxiety syndrome are increasing among young people, and that melatonin is increasingly prescribed instead of other sleep medications as it is considered to cause less serious side effects.

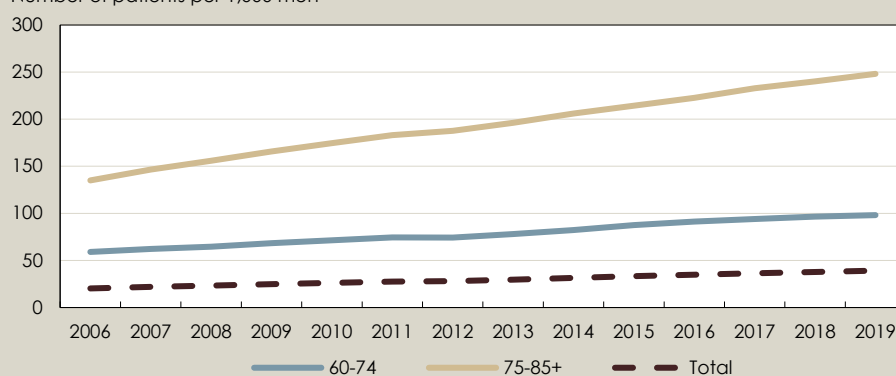


Similar to ADHD drugs the prescription of melatonin is most common among adolescents. In the age group of 15-19 years, 5.8 percent of girls and 4.4 percent of boys had melatonin prescribed some time during in 2019.

The prescription of drugs used in benign prostatic hypertrophy increases

Figure 5. Drugs use in benign prostatic hypertrophy 2006–2019

Number of patients per 1,000 men



ATC-code: G04C

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

Benign prostate enlargement is a common condition that affects many middle-aged men. Some of these men get urinary problems and need treatment. In some cases the patient undergoes surgery, while those with mild discomfort manage without treatment or are treated with drugs. In 2019 approximately 200,000 men received drugs for benign prostate enlargement. This corresponds to about 4 percent of the total male population and the proportion has almost doubled compared to 2006. The use increases with age, and among men over the age of 74, about one in four men receive this type of drug.

More information

You can find more tables, graphs and information here (choose *visa bilagor*): <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik-och-data/statistik/statistikamnen/lakemedel/> (in Swedish, but with English list of terms).

If you want to use our statistical database (in Swedish): https://sdb.socialstyrelsen.se/if_lak/val.aspx

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