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## **B3** Prescription statistics

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### Key Points

- The rate of prescribing all types of methadone has increased over the last few years from 14 prescriptions per 1 000 population in 1992/93 to 63 prescriptions per 1 000 population 2001/02. (Table B3.2)
- The rate of prescribing diazepam has increased steadily, while the rate of prescribing temazepam has progressively decreased over the last few years. (Table B3.2)
- In 2001/02 the cost of methadone ingredients and dispensing fees for Scotland per 1 000 population was around £2 260. (Table B3.4)

### Background

Methadone mixture 1mg/ml is prescribed mainly as an adjunct in the treatment of opiate dependence. These figures include all methadone formulations – while methadone mixture for the treatment of opioid dependence comprises the majority of methadone prescribing, other formulations of methadone used in the treatment of severe pain and palliative care are included in these data. Methadone may also be prescribed as a linctus to control distressful cough in terminal illness, and as tablets and injections to control severe pain in terminal illness.

Temazepam and diazepam are prescribed to sedate, induce sleep, and relieve severe anxiety. Dihydrocodeine is used in the relief of moderate to severe pain. Buprenorphine is used for the relief of moderate to severe pain. It has recently been licensed as a substitute in the treatment of opiate dependence.

Defined Daily Doses (DDDs) cited in the following data are considered to be a more accurate index of prescribing volume than the number of items prescribed alone. A DDD is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the typical adult daily maintenance dose of a drug <sup>1</sup>.

Although DDDs are considered to be superior to number of items as a unit of comparative analysis, difficulties may arise when they are used in estimating disease prevalence, because they correspond to a drug's principal indication<sup>2</sup>.

Defined Daily Doses used in the production of the following data are based on the WHO Definitions:

Methadone mixture 25mg;  
Dihydrocodeine 120mg;  
Buprenorphine 1.2mg;  
Diazepam 10mg;  
Temazepam 20mg.

## Outline of tables

Table B3.1 & Chart B3.1 presents data on the number of prescriptions for the named drugs that have been dispensed by each health board per 1 000 population; and in terms of Defined Daily Doses (DDDs) per 1 000 population.

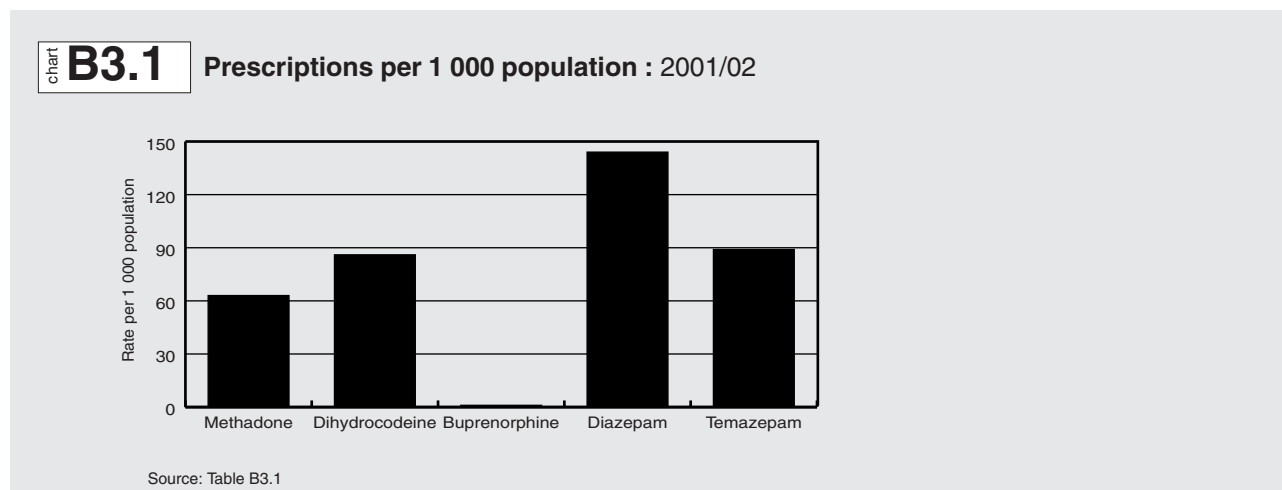


Table B3.2 presents data (per 1 000 population), for the years 1992/93 to 2001/02, on prescriptions dispensed and defined daily doses of the drugs dispensed.

Table B3.3 & Chart B3.2 presents data on the number and rate per 1 000 population of prescriptions for all methadone formulations dispensed in each health board for the years 1997/98 - 2001/02. The rate of prescribing methadone has increased steadily over the last five years. In 2001/02, there were 63 prescriptions for all methadone formulations per 1 000 population; this compares to 38 prescriptions per 1 000 population in 1997/98.

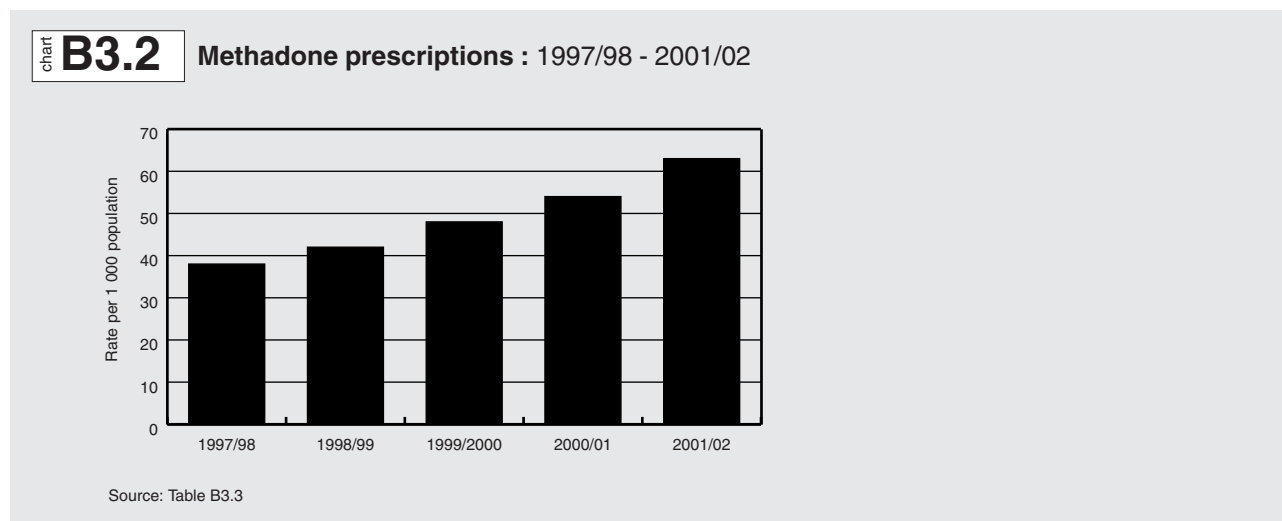
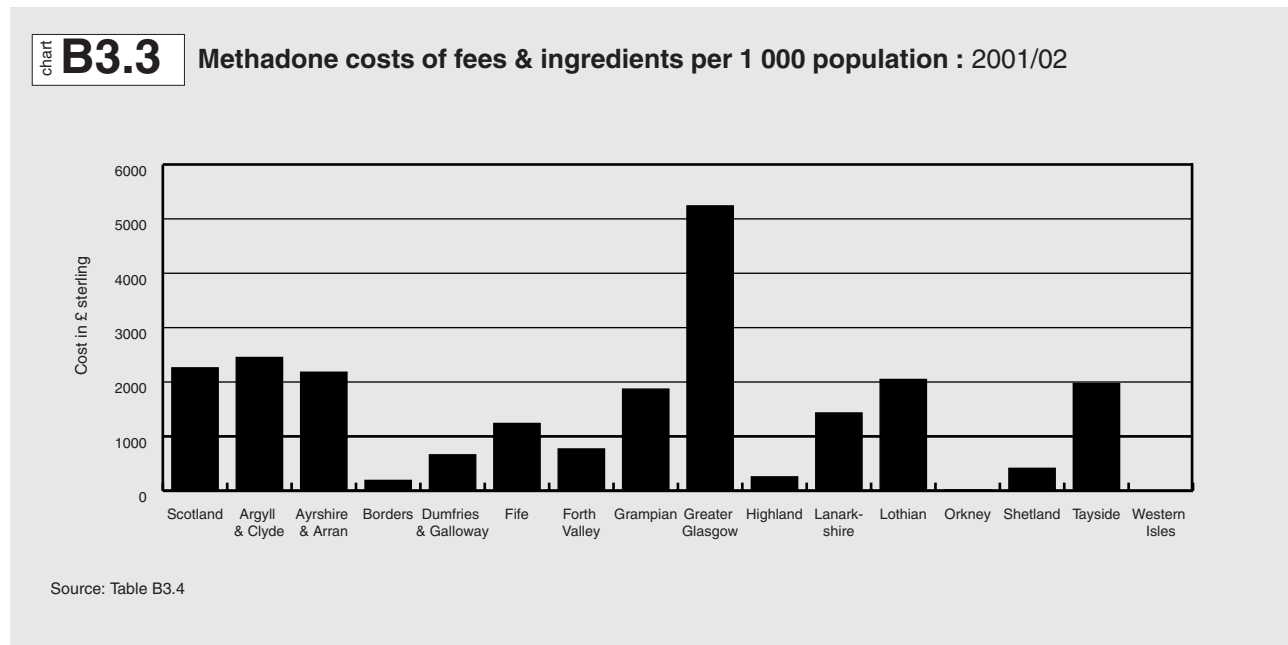


Table B3.4 & Chart B3.3 presents data on methadone costs for 2001/02. The cost of fees shown is the value of dispensing fees paid to contractors for methadone dispensing. These fees are based on a locally negotiated rate paid per dispensing event. Supervision fees are not included in this data.



Figures for Orkney and Western Isles NHS boards should be compared with caution, due to the very small numbers involved.

A change in the method of claiming dispensing fees from April 2001 led to incorrect submission of forms by community pharmacies in 2001/02. Information on single and instalment dispensings are therefore not available for 2001/02.

### References

- 1 World Health Organisation (WHO) (1991). Guidelines for defined daily doses. WHO Collaborating for Drug Statistics Methodology. Oslo.
- 2 Frischer M, Chapman S (1998). Issues and directions in prescribing analysis. In: Medicines Management. Eds. Panton R, Chapman S. 82-84 BMJ and Ph.Press. London.

## B3.1 Prescriptions & Defined Daily Doses per 1 000 population : 2001/02

NHS board, drug type

	Methadone <sup>1</sup>	Dihydrocodeine	Buprenorphine	Diazepam	Temazepam
<i>Prescriptions per 1 000 population<sup>2</sup></i>					
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>89</b>
Argyll & Clyde	66	78	1	150	91
Ayrshire & Arran	92	105	1	129	83
Borders	6	79	1	115	110
Dumfries & Galloway	54	85	2	163	107
Fife	35	74	3	128	82
Forth Valley	14	82	1	119	97
Grampian	57	73	1	111	78
Greater Glasgow	127	98	1	186	90
Highland	11	80	1	144	79
Lanarkshire	62	66	1	159	87
Lothian	39	92	1	119	87
Orkney	1	50	2	81	59
Shetland	33	63	6	123	52
Tayside	50	108	1	171	107
Western Isles	-	82	2	133	152
<i>Defined Daily Doses per 1 000 population<sup>2</sup></i>					
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>1 739</b>	<b>2 472</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3 620</b>	<b>2 298</b>
Argyll & Clyde	1 786	2 044	19	3 337	2 246
Ayrshire & Arran	1 662	2 638	24	3 016	2 109
Borders	165	1 838	10	2 336	2 222
Dumfries & Galloway	638	1 961	46	3 199	2 457
Fife	929	2 157	53	3 375	1 910
Forth Valley	455	2 365	14	2 680	2 478
Grampian	1 384	1 949	26	2 934	1 987
Greater Glasgow	3 833	2 623	12	4 408	2 251
Highland	223	1 714	16	2 376	1 721
Lanarkshire	1 078	1 844	25	3 569	2 378
Lothian	1 878	3 476	25	4 453	2 390
Orkney	13	1 142	19	1 211	1 671
Shetland	436	1 192	160	1 602	2 246
Tayside	1 534	3 321	14	4 398	3 314
Western Isles	-	1 927	27	2 334	3 251

1 These figures include all methadone formulations.

2 List size inflation is caused by a lag between patients relocating and community health index records being updated. To eliminate variances caused by list size inflation, data is now expressed as per 1000 population, based on GRO mid year estimates.

Source : ISD Scotland - Prescribing Information System (PIS).

### B3.2 Prescriptions & Defined Daily Doses per 1 000 population : 1992/93 -2001/02

drug type

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
<i>Prescriptions per 1 000 population<sup>2</sup></i>										
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>383</b>
Methadone <sup>1</sup>	14	19	22	27	33	38	42	48	54	63
Dihydrocodeine	62	68	69	69	72	77	82	85	86	86
Buprenorphine	9	6	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	1
Diazepam	98	100	105	109	117	126	131	133	138	144
Temazepam	200	186	168	139	122	114	107	101	94	89
<i>Defined Daily Doses per 1 000 population<sup>2</sup></i>										
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 250</b>	<b>9 260</b>	<b>9 294</b>	<b>8 905</b>	<b>8 963</b>	<b>9 282</b>	<b>9 345</b>	<b>9 560</b>	<b>9 813</b>	<b>10 152</b>
Methadone <sup>1</sup>	199	293	473	622	774	938	1 042	1 205	1 427	1 739
Dihydrocodeine	1 371	1 590	1 706	1 759	1 874	2 017	2 164	2 312	2 395	2 472
Buprenorphine	97	71	51	40	34	30	26	24	24	23
Diazepam	2 086	2 189	2 384	2 596	2 916	3 204	3 265	3 353	3 513	3 620
Temazepam	5 497	5 117	4 681	3 888	3 365	3 094	2 848	2 666	2 453	2 298

1 These figures include all methadone formulations.

2 List size inflation is caused by a lag between patients relocating and community health index records being updated. To eliminate variances caused by list size inflation, data is now expressed as per 1000 population, based on GRO mid year estimates.

Source : ISD Scotland (PIS).

### B3.3 Methadone<sup>1</sup> prescriptions : 1997/98 - 2000/01

NHS board of prescribing, number and rate per 1 000 population<sup>2</sup>

	1997/98		1998/99		1999/00		2000/01		2001/02	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>193 046</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>214 921</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>243 481</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>274 450</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>319 361</b>	<b>63</b>
Argyll & Clyde	13 929	32	18 526	43	21 805	51	24 319	57	27 967	66
Ayrshire & Arran	21 924	58	24 015	64	25 415	68	26 576	71	34 381	92
Borders	477	4	474	4	424	4	521	5	691	6
Dumfries & Galloway	6 495	44	7 237	49	6 567	45	7 238	50	7 880	54
Fife	6 880	20	7 703	22	9 537	27	11 398	33	12 159	35
Forth Valley	2 971	11	2 439	9	2 569	9	3 094	11	3 954	14
Grampian	15 810	30	18 325	35	23 017	44	26 931	51	29 917	57
Greater Glasgow	76 383	84	80 901	89	87 369	96	98 897	109	115 049	127
Highland	1 174	6	1 711	8	2 477	12	2 388	11	2 201	11
Lanarkshire	12 587	22	17 886	32	24 956	44	28 940	51	34 560	62
Lothian	19 159	25	19 713	25	23 178	30	26 312	34	30 818	39
Orkney	17	1	19	1	16	1	9	-	24	1
Shetland	278	12	425	19	365	16	652	29	723	33
Tayside	14 955	38	15 537	40	15 775	41	17 172	45	19 035	50
Western Isles	7	0	10	0	11	0	3	-	2	-

1 These figures include all methadone formulations.

2 List size inflation is caused by a lag between patients relocating and community health index records being updated. To eliminate variances caused by list size inflation, data is now expressed as per 1000 population, based on GRO mid year estimates.

Source : ISD Scotland (PIS).

## B3.4 | Methadone<sup>1</sup> costs and fees: 2001/02

NHS board of prescribing

	Cost of ingredients (£)	Cost of fees (£)	Cost of fees & ingredients (£)	Cost of fees & ingredients per 1 000 population <sup>2</sup> (£)
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>6 672 619.00</b>	<b>4 876 700.63</b>	<b>11 549 319.63</b>	<b>2 260.73</b>
Argyll & Clyde	554 910.00	479 329.16	1 034 239.16	2 451.87
Ayrshire & Arran	473 493.00	338 254.52	811 747.52	2 180.59
Borders	13 213.00	7 225.75	20 438.75	190.95
Dumfries & Galloway	69 870.00	26 029.55	95 899.55	661.50
Fife	246 572.00	187 971.00	434 543.00	1 238.55
Forth Valley	100 830.00	113 560.34	214 390.34	769.45
Grampian	565 796.00	409 370.50	975 166.50	1 870.18
Greater Glasgow	2 601 296.00	2 126 720.70	4 728 016.70	5 239.51
Highland	34 719.00	18 744.96	53 463.96	256.29
Lanarkshire	452 422.00	351 946.00	804 368.00	1 431.51
Lothian	1 108 416.00	503 870.50	1 612 286.50	2 047.76
Orkney	206.00	88.00	294.00	15.16
Shetland	7 382.00	1 779.75	9 161.75	412.91
Tayside	443 488.00	311 805.90	755 293.90	1 971.94
Western Isles	6.00	4.00	10.00	0.37

1 These figures include all methadone formulations.

2 List size inflation is caused by a lag between patients relocating and community health index records being updated. To eliminate variances caused by list size inflation, data is now expressed as per 1000 population, based on GRO mid year estimates.

Source : ISD Scotland (PIS).