

Benefits case study summary - 'Prescriptions Dispensed in the Community' publication

Prescriptions Dispensed in the Community publication overview

Annually, the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) produces the Prescriptions Dispensed in the Community publication, which highlights national findings, changes and trends on prescriptions dispensed in the community. The most recent publication, [Prescriptions Dispensed in the Community, England 2004-2014](#), was released in July 2015 and reported various findings, including:

- 1.1 billion prescription items, at a net ingredient cost (NIC) of £8.9 billion, were dispensed in 2014.
- 89.9% of all prescription items were dispensed free of charge in 2014.

The annual publication is aimed at enabling stakeholders to understand national patterns and trends in prescriptions dispensed and, through subsequent analysis of granular data, investigate improvement opportunities and concerns. In some cases, the investigations will lead to changes in prescribing and dispensing services, with the ultimate aim of generating improvements (benefits).

Case study purpose and publication uses

The purpose of this case study summary is to briefly describe how stakeholders have used the Prescriptions Dispensed in the Community publication to inform analytical, reporting and contract negotiation activities. Examples of such uses include:

- Department of Health's (DH's) Medicines, Pharmacy and Industry division has used the 2013 and 2014 publication findings to inform the following analytical activities:
 - the 2013 publication finding of 90.0% of all prescriptions dispensed free of charge was used to request from the Business Services Authority (BSA) monthly breakdown of exemption numbers and NIC for all exemption categories and pre-paid certificates. The resulting data fed into an estimate on the impact of prescription charging fraud on revenue.
 - the 2013 finding of 64.2% of prescriptions dispensed free of charge for age exemptions was used to request from the HSCIC data, split across five age bands (and 'all ages'), on the number of prescriptions dispensed in 2013. This detailed data helped inform the development of a model to better understand the demand for prescriptions.
 - the 2014 publication finding of £376 million NIC for British National Formulary (BNF) 9.4: Oral nutrition, which includes gluten-free products (e.g. gluten-free bread), was used to request, from the HSCIC, item-level breakdown for BNF 9.4.1: Foods for special diets. The granular data reported that, in 2014/15, 1.26 million items, at an NIC of £90.9 million, were dispensed for special diet foods.
- Public Health England (PHE) established the *English surveillance programme for antimicrobial utilisation and resistance (ESPAUR)*, in response to the *UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013 to 2018*. In ESPAUR's first report (2014), PHE used the 2013 publication's antibacterial data (BNF 5.1) to set out ten-year dispensing trends for various antibacterial drugs, including penicillin and macrolides.
- NHS England used the publication to:
 - negotiate with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) on the future role of pharmacies and pharmacy contracts. PSNC also used the publication for the same purposes.
 - help assess the effectiveness of NHS England's role in supporting the UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy 2013 to 2018.
- The PSNC used the publication to help monitor how much remuneration community pharmacies are expected to generate from prescription dispensing activities.
- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) used the publication to advocate the role and importance of community pharmacists, through approaches such as describing publication findings on RPS website.

Web link

The case study summary can be accessed at <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/benefitscasestudies/publications>