

Trends in utilization of ADHD medication in Norway before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic



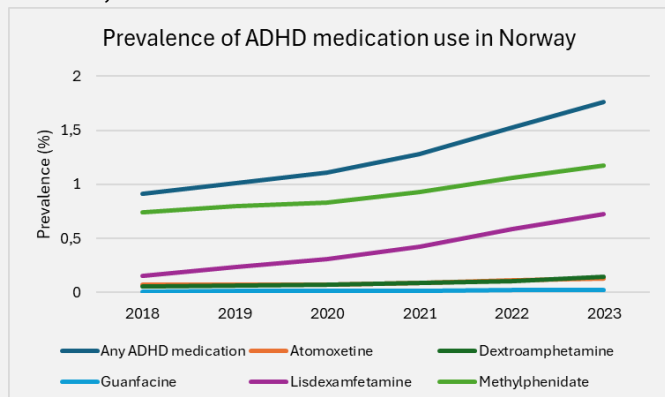
Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a chronic neurodevelopmental disorder affecting both children and adults. Pharmacological therapy forms a central part of its management. Demand for ADHD medications has risen substantially in recent years. This DARWIN EU® study aimed to explore prescribing trends, treatment persistence, and switching behavior over time in Norway.

Study overview

- Design: Drug utilization study in Denmark, Germany, Norway, Spain, and Sweden.
- Population: Individuals in Norway (2018-2023), with ≥ 1 year prior observable data (N = 6.89M).
- ADHD medications were atomoxetine, dextroamphetamine, guanfacine, lisdexamfetamine, and methylphenidate.
- Prevalence and incidence of ADHD medication use was estimated, and ADHD medication user characteristics were described.

ADHD medication utilization in Norway

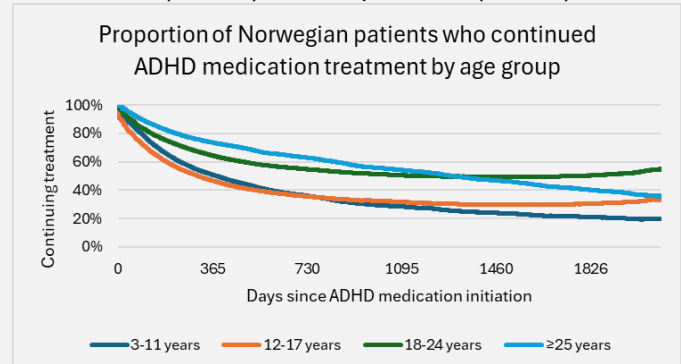
- 123,611 individuals initiated ADHD medication.



- A higher prevalence of ADHD medication use was observed among boys compared with girls (54% vs. 46%) in every age group.
- The prevalence of ADHD medication use increased steadily over time with a sharper rise after the pandemic (2021 onwards), particularly for individuals aged 3-17 years in both sexes.

Patient and treatment characteristics

- 93.7% had a diagnostic code for ADHD in the 7 days prior to ADHD medication initiation.
- Most common comorbidities are anxiety (41.9%), asthma (23.6%), and depression (21.5%).



- The most common first line treatment was methylphenidate (73.1%), followed by lisdexamfetamine (16.8%) and atomoxetine (3.7%).
- Most individuals used only one type of ADHD medication, while slightly over 20% of users switched to another ADHD medication.

Data & Methods notes

- Assumptions on duration of treatment (use of 1 defined daily dose (DDD) per day) and wash-out period (365 days) had to be made.
- This may affect the incidence rates (true new use) and definition of treatment pathways, including add-on therapy and switching. This affects particularly young users, as these are known to take drug holidays on purpose.

How was this useful?

The longitudinal data allowed for the assessment of temporal trends in ADHD medication use, treatment persistence, and switching behavior. The prevalence and incidence of ADHD medication use increased over the years, with the fastest increase after the pandemic (2021 onwards). Patterns of use differed by age and sex. Treatment persistence declined over time, but was higher in Norway compared to other countries (e.g. at 5 years after initiation: 24.5% vs. 1.7-15.5%). Monitoring real-world utilization of ADHD medications is essential to anticipate demand, support continuity of treatment, and inform public health and regulatory planning.

Access to the full report

[DARWIN EU® – Trends in utilisation of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\) Medications](#)

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