

June 13th 2018**BY EMAIL**
[REDACTED]Tel: 028 9536 3863
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net**Our Ref: FOI 892**

Dear [REDACTED]

Your request for information was received on May 24th 2018 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to prescribed antidepressants.

Please find this information, below.

Table 1: Estimated number of unique patients under 18 years having been dispensed a defined anti-depressant medication by Financial Year and Age Group

	2017/18
age 0-12	130
age 13-17	2311
Total	2441

Table 2: Estimated units of anti-depressant medication dispensed by Financial Year and Age Group

	2017/18
Tablets/Capsules (Individual tablets or capsules)	
age 0-12	15,573
age 13-17	355,069
Total	370,642
Liquid/Solution (Unit of measure in ml)	
age 0-12	18,793
age 13-17	106,611
Total	125,404



Table 3: Estimated quantity of specified anti-depressant drug items dispensed to under 18 year olds by drug name and financial year

Drug Name	2017/18
Tablets/Capsules (Individual tablets or capsules)	
Cipralex 10mg tablets	28
Citalopram 10mg tablets	15,110
Citalopram 20mg tablets	9,765
Citalopram 40mg tablets	308
Escitalopram 10mg tablets	1,329
Escitalopram 20mg tablets	843
Escitalopram 5mg tablets	597
Fluoxetine 10mg capsules	10,135
Fluoxetine 10mg tablets	195
Fluoxetine 20mg capsules	110,968
Fluoxetine 20mg dispersible tablets sugar free	322
Fluoxetine 30mg capsules	2,822
Fluoxetine 40mg capsules	1,684
Fluoxetine 60mg capsules	522
Fluvoxamine 100mg tablets	674
Fluvoxamine 50mg tablets	1,910
Lustral 100mg tablets	28
Lustral 50mg tablets	168
Paroxetine 10mg tablets	444
Paroxetine 20mg tablets	150
Paroxetine 30mg tablets	196
Seroxat 10mg tablets	242
Sertraline 100mg tablets	82,431
Sertraline 50mg tablets	129,771
Total	370,642
Liquid/Solution (Unit of measure in ml)	
Fluoxetine 20mg/5ml oral solution	88,769
Fluoxetine 20mg/5ml oral solution sugar free	34,465
Prozac 20mg/5ml liquid	70
Seroxat 20mg/10ml liquid	2,100
Total	125,404

Notes:

The figures provided are the number of unique patients that received any prescription from the list of drugs provided during the financial year 2017/18. The same patients could have been receiving combinations of tablets/capsules or liquids within the year. Data can only be produced on age splits of patients where the prescription form has been scanned. Between 10-20% of all prescription forms in any given month cannot be scanned.

Due to this issue all figures provided are estimates only and will be an undercount of the true volume of units prescribed to patients aged under 17 in Northern Ireland. The patient count will be less likely to be impacted as it is a count of unique patients who received an anti-depressant at any point in the year so it only requires one form to have been scanned for the patient details to have been identified.

Not all prescription items will have been dispensed for depressive illness, drugs may be prescribed for other reasons such as neuropathic pain or obsessive compulsive disorder.

It should be noted that there are differences in prescription dispensing and processing in Northern Ireland compared to other UK regions and this should be noted if these statistics are to be used for comparative purposes to other parts of the UK.

For example in Northern Ireland there is no outpatient dispensing.

Source:

The Business Services Organisation (BSO) is the provider of the data. Prescription dispensing data is obtained from the BSO's prescribing and dispensing information systems. The data covers prescriptions that are prescribed in primary care and subsequently dispensed (by a Community Pharmacist, Appliance Supplier or Dispensing Doctor) and submitted to the Business Services Organisation (BSO) for payment. If a patient does not take a prescription to a dispenser and get it provided to them, then the information will not be included in the data.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk
Phone: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place
Belfast
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Liam McIvor', is positioned above the printed name.

Liam McIvor
Chief Executive