



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

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Dr. xxxxxx xxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxxxxx  
xxxxxxxxxxxx  
xx xxxxxx

Circular No. 003/12

30 January 2012

Dear Dr. xxxxxx

Please find enclosed a report of the total Benzodiazepine and 'z' drug prescriptions dispensed to your patients for the period of November 2011. You will note that the report enables you to compare your prescribing to your peers' prescribing through the comparison with the national average for the age groups outlined in the report. The diagram demonstrates where your prescribing sits within the national figures. We would anticipate this would enable you to self audit your practice effectively in the coming months.

The previously published Guidelines for Benzodiazepine Prescribing highlight the importance of short periods of treatment to avoid patients becoming addicted to these useful but challenging medications. The Guidelines are available to download on [www.doh.ie](http://www.doh.ie)

To support your self audit, you can access PCRS Prescribing Data Analysis, which is readily available to all those Medical Practitioners who are registered for the GP Application Suite. Please see the Online Services menu at [www.pcrs.ie](http://www.pcrs.ie) for information on how to register for access to the suite.

We acknowledge that not all benzodiazepine prescriptions are initiated by GPs and some may originate in a hospital or out-patient setting. However, we all have a role to play in addressing the difficulties that are arising at many different levels.

We have included a table outlining the number of patients who are on these medications for longer than the recommended period. Notwithstanding the difficulties that present in this cohort of patients, brief interventions have been shown to be of value in reducing prescription usage. You will also note the number of patients who are newly initiated and who should be closely monitored to avoid inadvertent dependence.

If the HSE can assist you with any further information on this report, please do not hesitate to contact the PCRS at 01 8647106 or alternatively send an email to [Benzoassist@hse.ie](mailto:Benzoassist@hse.ie)

It is our intention to circulate such reports on a quarterly basis.

Yours sincerely

Dr Joe Clarke  
HSE Primary Care Clinical Lead



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Benzodiazepines and Z drugs Prescribing Analysis

Explanatory Notes are Included on Page Four

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Reporting Period : November 2011

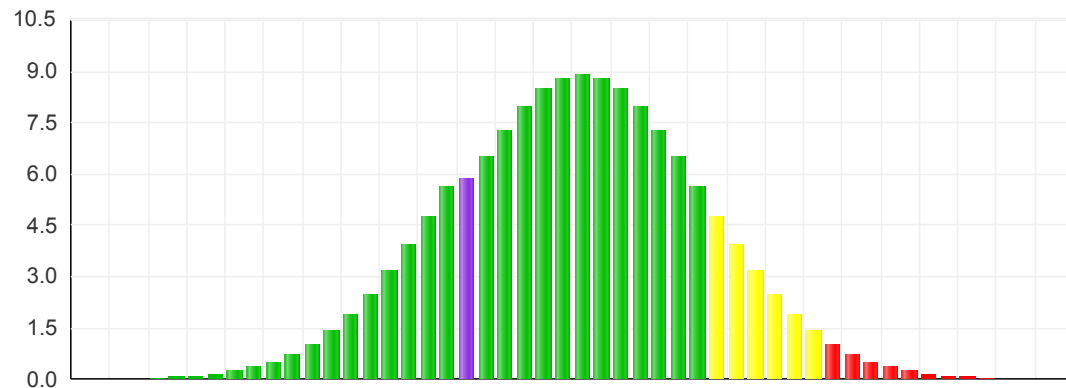
### 1: Benzodiazepines and Z drugs Prescribing

Age	You							National					
	Panel	Male		Female		%	🚦	Panel	Male		Female		%
		#	Qty	#	Qty				#	Qty			
0 - 4	7	0	0	0	0	0.00	-0.26	127,884	40	2,793	30	4,297	0.06
5 - 11	10	0	0	0	0	0.00	-0.29	199,025	53	4,587	41	4,791	0.05
12 - 15	8	0	0	0	0	0.00	-0.32	100,918	48	2,588	47	3,279	0.10
16 - 24	16	0	0	0	0	0.00	-0.79	170,334	753	47,586	956	41,326	0.92
25 - 34	25	0	0	0	0	0.00	-0.84	215,196	2,912	212,866	3,427	182,516	2.92
35 - 44	14	0	0	1	70	7.14	0.52	221,637	4,503	302,992	5,884	329,393	4.78
45 - 54	12	0	0	0	0	0.00	-1.40	179,005	5,499	329,381	8,534	482,266	8.42
55 - 64	13	0	0	0	0	0.00	-1.60	167,635	6,974	383,724	11,793	656,929	11.70
65 - 69	5	0	0	0	0	0.00	-1.70	91,633	3,849	202,562	7,837	400,730	13.41
70 - 74	1	0	0	0	0	0.00	-1.86	112,116	4,783	222,578	9,685	464,327	14.15
75 + over	3	0	0	1	28	33.33	2.06	238,984	11,065	483,020	27,826	1,262,661	16.73
	114	0	0	2	98	1.75		1,824,367	40,479	2,194,677	76,060	3,832,515	6.39

### 2: Prolonged Use Prescribing

Patient Duration	#	%
0 months	112	98.25
1 - 3 months	1	0.88
4 - 6 months	1	0.88
7 - 9 months	0	0.00
10 - 12 months	0	0.00
13 months +	0	0.00
	114	

### 3: Your Prescribing Compared to National Norm



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## General Notes

1. All panels with less than 100 patients have been removed from the analysis to avoid anomalies.
2. Prescribing Rate - For the purpose of this analysis a GPs "prescribing rate" is the percentage of the GPs panel to which these drugs have been prescribed. e.g. a GP has 151 patients in the age group 35-44. Benzo and 'Z' drugs are prescribed to 13 male patients and 9 female patients. This produces a prescribing rate of 14.57% based on  $((13+9)/151)*100$ . A prescribing rate has been calculated for all GPs at an age group level and also at an overall panel level. Section one presents the analysis at an age group level and section three presents the overall analysis.

## Notes on section 1 of this report

1. These tables analyse your prescribing rate vs. the national prescribing rate at an age group level. The numbers of patients involved are also analysed by gender.
2. The panel column shows the number of patients on your panel in the age group presented.
3. The # columns show the number of unique patents to whom these drugs have been dispensed. There are two # columns, one presenting the number of male patients and the other presenting the number of female patients.
4. The Qty column shows the total quantity of drugs i.e the actual number of tablets / capsules dispensed.
5. The % column shows the percentage of patients in the age group presented who have received Benzodiazepines and 'Z' drugs. This percentage is the "prescribing rate" as defined above.
6. The traffic light column shows green when your prescribing rate is lower than or within one standard deviation higher than the national mean prescribing rate.
7. The traffic light column shows yellow when your prescribing rate is between one and two standard deviations higher than the national mean prescribing rate.
8. The traffic light column shows red when your prescribing rate is more than two standard deviations higher than the national mean prescribing rate.

## Notes on section 2 of this report

1. This table indicates the numbers and percentage of patients on your panel to whom these medicines have been dispensed for various periods of time. e.g. the first row presents the number and percentage of patients to whom these medicines have not been dispensed at all. The second row presents the number and percentage of patients to whom these medicines have been dispensed for 1, 2 or three months consecutively and so on.

## Notes on section 3 of this report

1. This chart compares your overall prescribing rate to the national prescribing rate. It shows a normal distribution based on the national mean prescribing rate for these drugs and the national standard deviation.
2. Standard deviation is a measure of variability or diversity used in statistics. It shows how much variation exists from the mean.
3. The presentation of your prescribing rate on this chart is on the basis of the number of standard deviations your prescribing rate is away from the national mean. The position of your prescribing rate is highlighted using the marker bar.
4. The traffic light colours are used to highlight between 1 and 2 standard deviations higher than the national mean and also greater than 2 standard deviations higher than the national mean.