

People aged 65 years and over who received both a benzodiazepine or zopiclone and an antipsychotic in the same quarter during the calendar year

Te Tāhū Hauora
Health Quality & Safety
Commission



Source: [/measure/people-aged-65-years-and-over-who-received-both-benzodiazepine-or-zopiclone-and](#)

Description

This measure shows the percentage of people aged 65 years and over who were dispensed a benzodiazepine or zopiclone and an antipsychotic in the same quarter during the calendar year. This measure cannot assess inappropriate use of these medicines, however, high rates of prescribing may indicate misuse or overuse.

Rationale

Psychoactive medicines such as antipsychotics and benzodiazepines or zopiclone commonly cause adverse effects such as impaired functional ability, agitation, confusion, blurred vision, urinary retention, constipation, postural hypotension and falls. People receiving both medicines have a higher risk of these side effects.

Measure set

[Polypharmacy domain](#)

Health areas and conditions

[Medications](#)

Measure type

Count
Percent

Numerator

PHO-enrolled population aged 65 years or over who received an antipsychotic and either a benzodiazepine or a zopiclone in the same quarter during the calendar year.

Numerator detail

Medicines included: Amisulpride 3884, aripiprazole 3878, chlorpromazine hydrochloride 1283, clozapine 1078, flupenthixol decanoate 1532, fluphenazine decanoate 1533, haloperidol 1583, haloperidol decanoate 2530, levomepromazine 1799, levomepromazine hydrochloride 1798, olanzapine 1140, olanzapine pamoate monohydrate 3940, paliperidone 4025, Paliperidone palmitate 4166, periciazine 1950, pimozide 1990, Pipotiazine palmitate 1994, quetiapine 1183, , risperidone 1011, thiothixene 2260, trifluoperazine hydrochloride 2298, ziprasidone 3873, zuclopenthixol decanoate 3803, zuclopenthixol dihydrochloride 1226, zuclopenthixol hydrochloride 3898 , Lithium Carbonate 2466 Alprazolam 2632, clonazepam 1316, diazepam 1397, lorazepam 1730, lormetazepam 1731, midazolam 2539, nitrazepam 1865, oxazepam 1911, temazepam 2224, triazolam 2295, zopiclone 2484

Denominator

PHO-enrolled population aged ≥ 65 years (on 30 June of each calendar year).

Denominator detail

- Age at end of quarter ≥ 65 years.
- A dispensing of chemical group = benzodiazepine or zopiclone.
- A dispensing of chemical group = antipsychotic.

Medicines:

- antipsychotic: amisulpride, aripiprazole, chlorpromazine hydrochloride, clozapine, flupenthixol decanoate, fluphenazine decanoate, haloperidol, haloperidol decanoate, levomepromazine, levomepromazine hydrochloride, olanzapine, olanzapine pamoate monohydrate, paliperidone, pericyazine, pimozide, pipothiiazide palmitate, quetiapine, quetiapine fumarate, risperidone, thiothixene, trifluoperazine hydrochloride, ziprasidone, zuclopenthixol decanoate, zuclopenthixol dihydrochloride, zuclopenthixol hydrochloride.
- Benzodiazepine: alprazolam, clonazepam, diazepam, lorazepam, lormetazepam, melatonin, midazolam, nitrazepam, oxazepam, temazepam, triazolam, zopiclone.

Data sources

Pharmaceutical Collection (PHARMS)

Primary Health Organisation (PHO) Enrolment Collection

Disaggregation detail

District analysis: By year (2019 –2023), age group (65–74 years; 75–84 years; 85 years and over), gender (female, male), ethnic group (Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian and European/other) and Health New Zealand district of domicile.

PHO analysis: By year (2023), age group, gender, ethnic group, Primary Health Organisation (PHO) most recently enrolled with (for the relevant year), PHO group (small, medium, medium-large and large).

Notes

Data is not presented where the number of people in the numerator was less than 10. This is to preserve confidentiality.

People were assigned to their Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora district (previously referred to as Health New Zealand District Health Board; DHB) of domicile where more than one domicile was recorded in the calendar year, the most recent value was selected.

Age group is assigned using 30 June of each calendar year as the cutoff point. For example, a person turning 65 years old on 30 June 2023 will be assigned to the 65–79 years age group for 2023, while a person turning 65 on 1 July 2023 will be assigned the 25–64 group for the same year.

Ethnic group data presented is prioritised ethnic group (Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian and European/Other).

Unlike other atlases, the Polypharmacy Atlas includes individuals who died during the calendar year in all indicators. This is because polypharmacy is higher among older adults and those in the final stages of life, due to chronic conditions, pain management, and palliative care needs.

For PHO analyses, we analysed indicator #1 to determine number of people who were dispensed a 5 or more medicines in two consecutive quarters among each PHO. Then we categorised them into small (<3,500 people), medium (between 3,500 and 7,000), medium-large (between 7,000 and 10,500) and large (>10,500 people).

People who were excluded from the analysis were:

- individuals with missing demographics— that is, those with no recorded value for one or more of the National Health Index (NHI) fields used to derive the demographic variables of interest (age, gender, ethnicity and district of domicile). For instance, a person with no recorded ethnicity in 2023 is excluded from all indicators for that calendar year. This approach ensures a consistent denominator throughout the analyses.
- those who weren't enrolled in a PHO in the calendar year.

See technical document for details.

Responsible organisation(s)

Health Quality & Safety Commission | Te Tāhū Hauora

Measure methodology last updated

December 2025

Reference period

2019-2023