



Trends in attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) medications among children and young adults in Ireland: a repeated cross-sectional study from 2005 to 2015.¹

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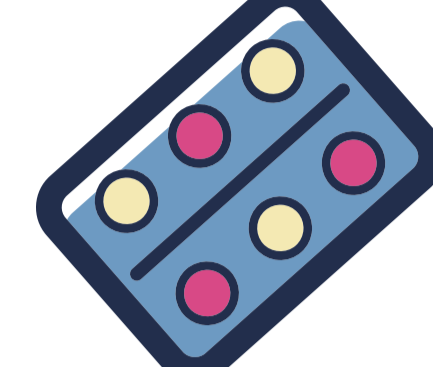
Background

Attention-deficit and hyperactivity disorder or ADHD for short is a complex disorder characterized by persistent symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.




Symptoms

ADHD is the most common childhood neurodevelopmental disorder, and it is now recognised that the symptoms and impairments associated with ADHD may persist into adulthood.



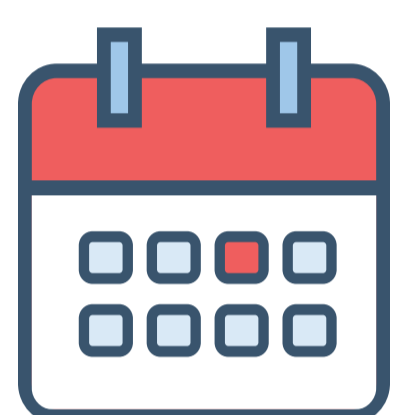
Prevalence

A systematic review of the prevalence of ADHD reported it as 5.9%–7.1% in children and 5% in adults² and the use of ADHD medicines on the increase



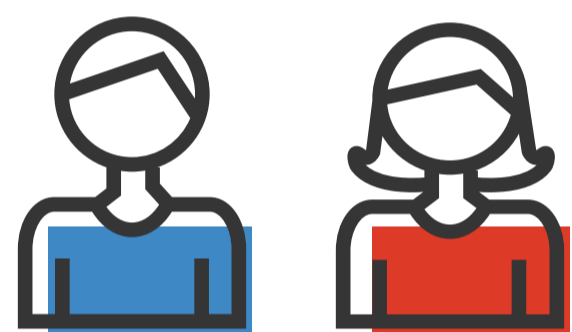
Boys and men

Boys and men are more commonly affected than girls and women; in a ratio of 3-4:1



Aim of study

Our study examined the prescribing patterns of ADHD medications in Ireland between 2005 and 2015 in children, adolescents and young adults, and the concomitant use of psychotropic medication.



Trends in ADHD medicines 2005- 2015 by gender

We used pharmacy claims data available from the HSE to examine these trends over time in boys/men and girls/women.

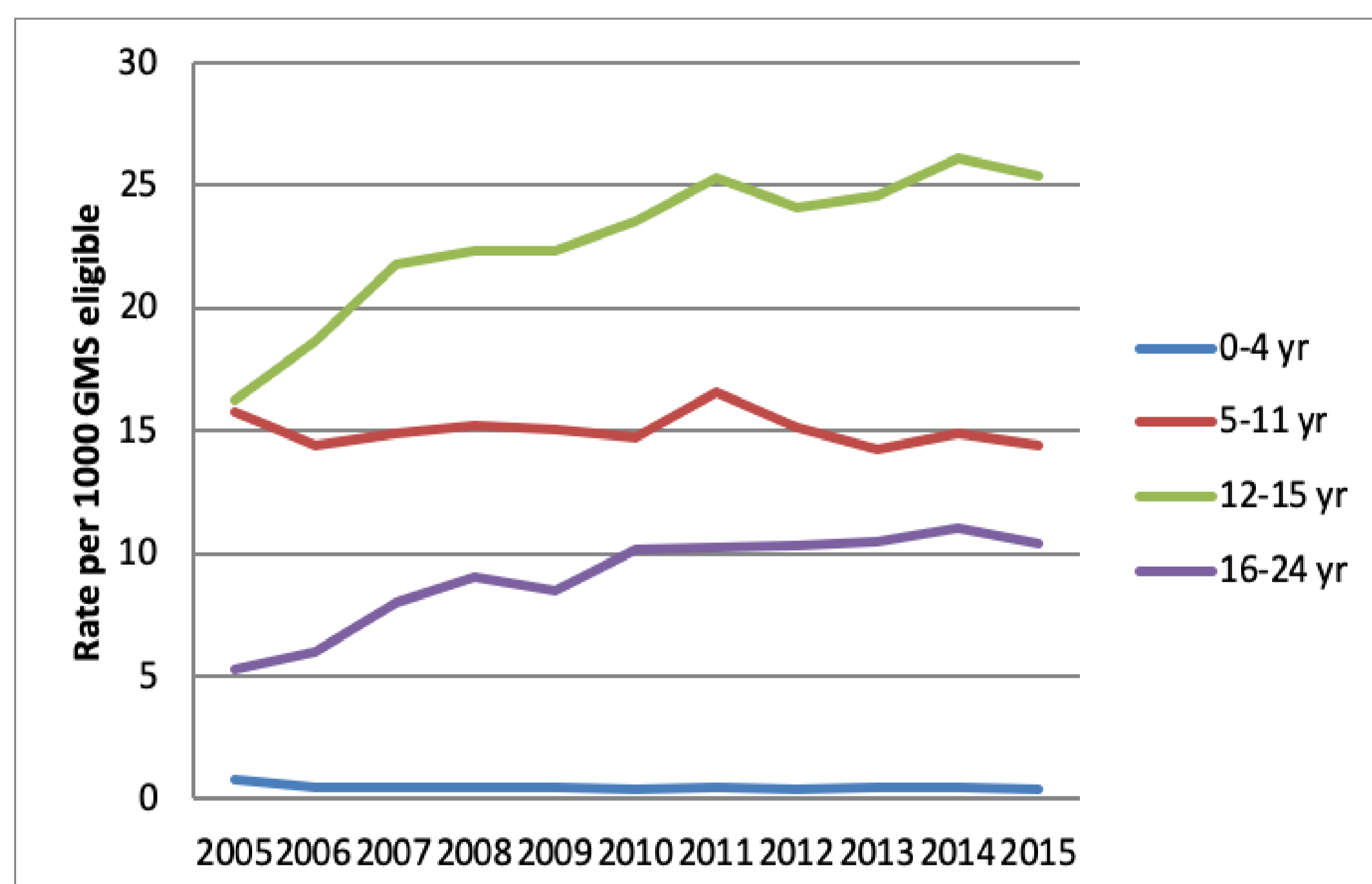


Figure 1 - Rates of prescribing of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder medications per 1,000 eligible males by age groups over 2005-2015

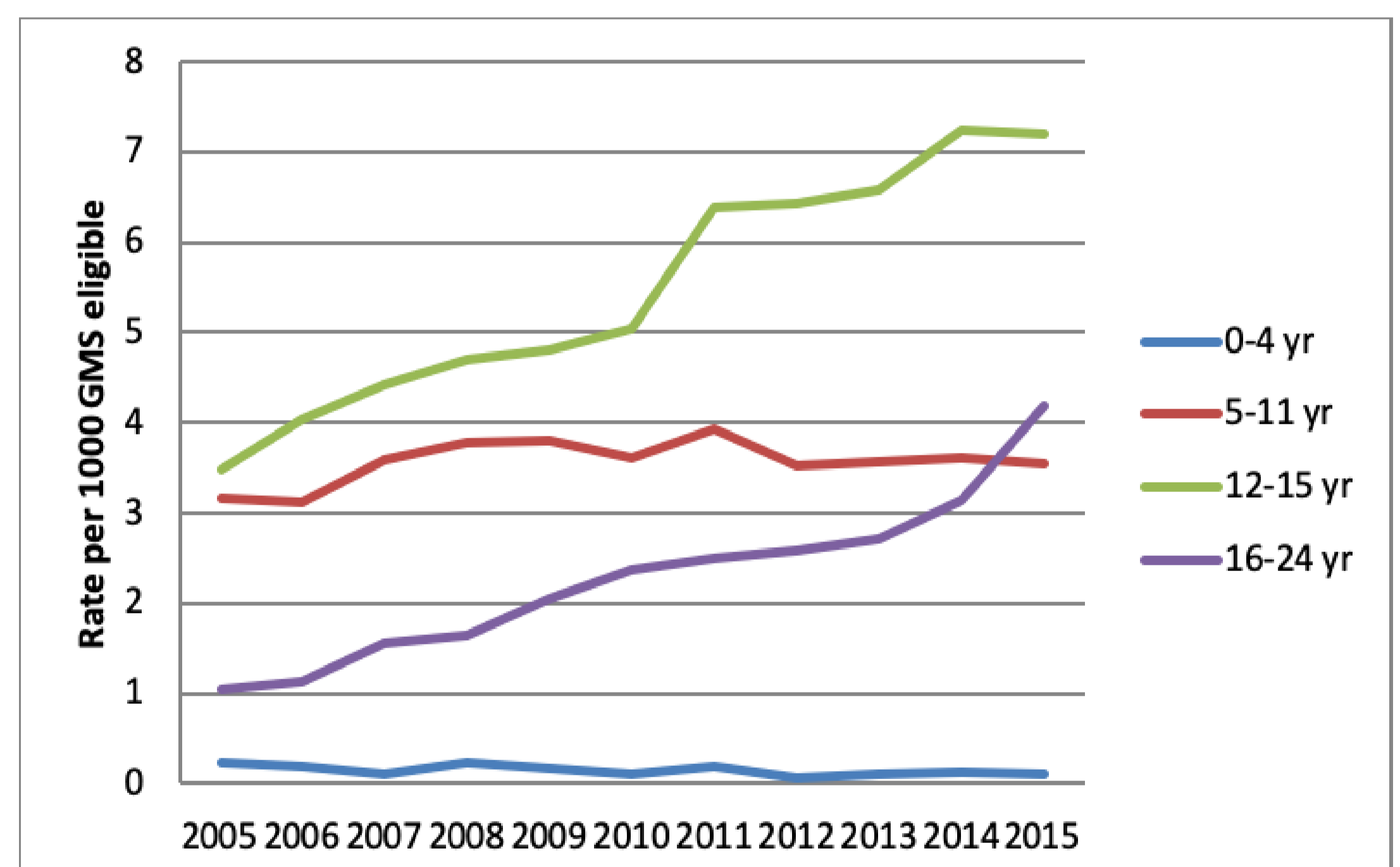
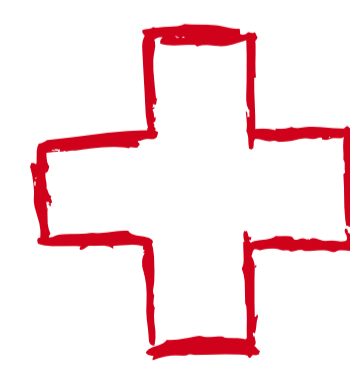


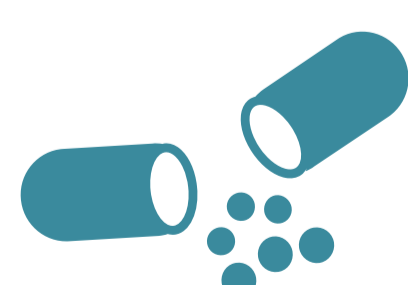
Figure 2 - Rates of prescribing of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder medications per 1,000 eligible females by age groups over 2005-2015



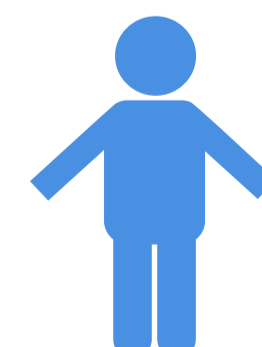
Our study found that the prescribing rates for ADHD medications increased significantly from 2005 to 2015 for both boys/men and girls/women based on data from the HSE-PCRS database.



Our results are in keeping with other studies and may reflect increasing awareness and diagnosis of the condition, possibly due to increased facilities for managing neuropsychiatric illness in children and adolescents over time.



The results also showed an increased use of concomitant antidepressants, antipsychotics and hypnotics over time.



This may reflect increasing levels of comorbidity in ADHD and increased access to child and adolescent mental health services over time.