

STATISTICAL BRIEF #60

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Top 10 Outpatient Prescription Medicines Ranked by Utilization and Expenditures for the U.S. Community Population, 2002

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Introduction

This Statistical Brief provides a summary of the top 10 outpatient prescription medicines by utilization and expenditures as reported by households in the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized (community) population in calendar year 2002. The brief further displays the increase in total expenditures in outpatient prescription medicines over time. This brief is intended to highlight the 2002 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) prescribed medicine data and is the first of several planned Statistical Briefs to be released in tandem with the annual release of the MEPS prescribed medicines public use files.

The data used to provide the estimates in this brief are derived from the Household Component of the 2002 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS-HC). All results discussed are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Over-the-counter medicines and free samples are not included in these estimates.

Findings

In 2002, the top 10 household-reported prescribed medicines when ranked by annual expenditures totaled \$28.86 billion. This represented 19.2 percent of the \$150.6 billion spent on all prescription medicines in 2002 (figure 1) and included the following:

Top 10 Prescribed Medicines by Total Expenditures, 2002

Rank	Prescribed medicine name	Total dollars (in billions)
1	Lipitor	\$5.91
2	Zocor	\$4.41
3	Prevacid	\$2.96
4	Prilosec	\$2.60
5	Celebrex	\$2.38
6	Paxil	\$2.24
7	Pravachol	\$2.13
8	Zoloft	\$2.10
9	Claritin	\$2.07
10	Norvasc	\$2.06
Total	Total of top 10	\$28.86

Highlights

- Expenditures for prescribed medicines reported as purchased by respondents in the U.S. community population totaled \$150.6 billion in 2002, an increase of 12.3 percent from the \$134.1 billion total reported in 2001, and an increase of 131 percent from the \$65.3 billion total prescribed medicine expenditures in 1996.
- In 2002, when ranked by total expenditures, the top 10 prescribed medicines totaled \$28.86 billion, representing nearly 20 percent (19.2 percent) of total prescribed medicine expenditures.
- Lipitor, a cholesterol-lowering medicine, ranked number one in terms of total utilization (66.68 million prescriptions) and total expenditures (\$5.9 billion) in 2002.
- Lipitor, Zocor, and Pravachol, the three cholesterol-lowering prescribed medicines that ranked in the 2002 top 10 list for total expenditures, totaled \$12.5 billion and accounted for approximately 8 percent of total prescribed medicine expenditures in 2002.
- In 2002, Hydrochlorothiazide, Atenolol, Toprol, Norvasc, and Furosemide, five antihypertensive medicines, made the 2002 top 10 list when ranking by total purchases and had total prescriptions of 206.37 million, which represented 7.6 percent of all prescriptions purchased by the U.S. community population.

In 2002, Lipitor, a cholesterol-lowering medicine, ranked first in terms of expenditures at \$5.91 billion, and Zocor, also a cholesterol-lowering medicine, ranked second at \$4.41 billion. Pravachol, the third cholesterol-lowering medicine to make the top 10 list when ranking by total expenditures in 2002, ranked seventh with a total of \$2.13 billion. These three medicines alone totaled \$12.5 billion, and represented 8.3 percent of total prescription medicine expenditures in 2002.

Ranking third and fourth in 2002 total prescription medicine expenditures were two antiulcer medicines, Prevacid and Prilosec. Prevacid ranked third with a total of \$2.96 billion, and Prilosec ranked fourth with \$2.60 billion. The total expenditures for these two medicines combined (\$5.56 billion) represented 3.7 percent of total prescription medicine expenditures in 2002.

Paxil and Zoloft, two antidepressant medicines, ranked sixth and eighth, respectively, with expenditures of \$2.24 billion and \$2.10 billion, respectively. The total for these two medicines, \$4.34 billion, represented 2.9 percent of total prescription medicine expenditures in 2002.

Celebrex, a Cox-2 Inhibitor anti-inflammatory, ranked fifth in total prescription medicine expenditures in 2002 with expenditures of \$2.38 billion. Rounding out the top 10 medicines when ranked by total expenditures in 2002 at the ninth and tenth spots were Claritin (an antihistamine) and Norvasc (an antihypertensive). In 2002, expenditures for Claritin totaled \$2.07 billion and Norvasc totaled \$2.06 billion.

In 2002, the top 10 household-reported prescribed medicines when ranked by total annual utilization totaled 439 million prescriptions. This represented 16.3 percent of the 2.7 billion total prescription medicines purchased in 2002 and included the following:

Top 10 Prescribed Medicines by Total Utilization, 2002

Rank	Prescribed medicine name	Total utilization (in millions of prescriptions)
1	Lipitor	66.68
2	Synthroid	51.72
3	Hydrochlorothiazide	48.25
4	Atenolol	47.53
5	Toprol	42.77
6	Premarin	42.71
7	Zocor	37.09
8	Norvasc	35.01
9	Albuterol	34.44
10	Furosemide	32.81
Total	Total of Top 10	439.01

Lipitor ranked first in terms of utilization (as well as expenditures, as stated above) with a total of 66.68 million prescriptions purchased in 2002. Zocor ranked seventh in terms of total number of prescriptions purchased with 37.09 million prescriptions. The utilization for these two cholesterol-lowering medicines combined totaled 103.77 million prescriptions and represented nearly 4 percent (3.9 percent) of total medicine purchases in 2002.

Synthroid, a thyroid medicine, was second when ranking by total purchases with 51.72 million prescriptions purchased in 2002.

The medicines ranked third (Hydrochlorothiazide), fourth (Atenolol), fifth (Toprol), eighth (Norvasc), and tenth (Furosemide) are all antihypertensive medicines and had the following in terms of total prescriptions purchased in 2002: 48.25 million, 47.53 million, 42.77 million, 35.01 million, and 32.81 million prescriptions, respectively, for a combined total of 206.37 million prescriptions. This combined total represented 7.6 percent of the 2.7 billion prescriptions purchased in 2002.

Premarin, an estrogen, ranked sixth with 42.71 million prescriptions purchased in 2002. In the ninth spot, in terms of the top 10 medicines by total number of purchases in 2002, was Albuterol, a bronchodilator. In 2002, Albuterol had a total of 34.44 million prescriptions purchased.

Data Source

The estimates in this Statistical Brief are drawn from analyses using the 2002 MEPS Prescribed Medicines public use file, HC-067A.

About MEPS-HC

MEPS-HC is a nationally representative longitudinal survey that collects detailed information on health care utilization and expenditures, health insurance, and health status, as well as a wide variety of social, demographic, and economic characteristics for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. It is cosponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the National Center for Health Statistics.

For more information about MEPS, call the MEPS information coordinator at AHRQ (301-427-1406) or visit the MEPS Web site at <http://www.meps.ahrq.gov/>.

References

For a detailed description of the MEPS-HC survey design, sample design, and methods used to minimize sources of nonsampling error, see the following publications:

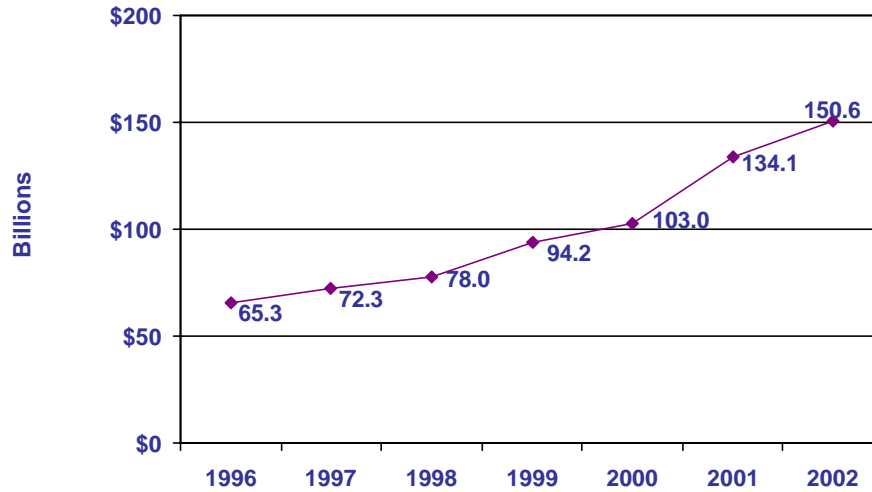
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Figure 1. Total prescription drug expenditures for the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population, 1996–2002



Source: Center for Financing, Access, and Cost Trends, AHRQ, Household Component of the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 1996 - 2002

