

Antidepressant dispensations in Alberta: 2010-2016

Age-standardized dispensation rates for antidepressant medications by First Nations status and sex

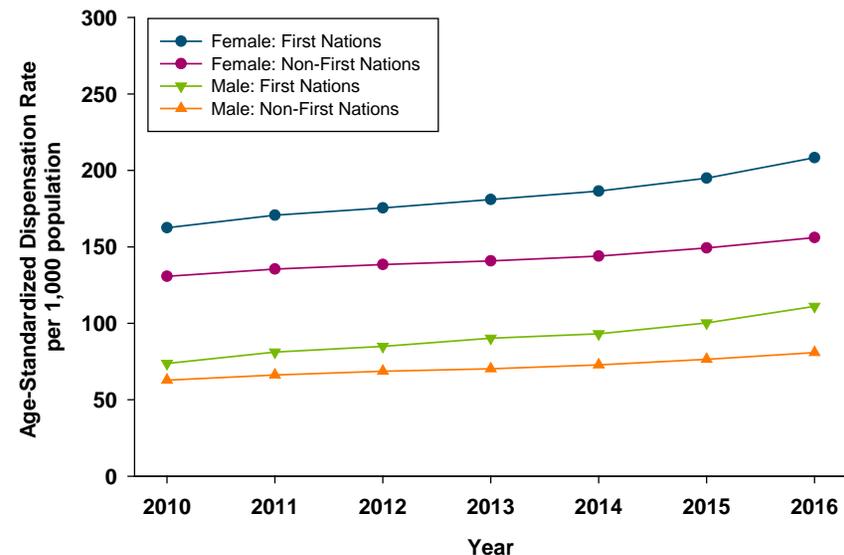
Beyond the ups and downs of everyday life, clinical or major depression is a common mood disorder that can be accompanied by symptoms such as fatigue, stomach issues, and muscle or joint pain.¹ According to the Statistics Canada 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey, approximately 4.7 per cent of people in Canada reported having major depression.² Antidepressant medications are generally used to treat depression. These drugs are also used for the treatment of chronic pain and anxiety and obsessive compulsive, attention-deficit hyperactivity, and sleep disorders.

In today's edition of *First Nations – Health Trends Alberta*,³ we present age-standardized rates per 1,000 population for at least one dispensation of antidepressants by First Nations status and sex between 2010 and 2016. The Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN) was used to obtain antidepressant drugs dispensed from community pharmacies in Alberta.

Antidepressant dispensation rates increasing over time for all populations; highest among First Nations women

In Alberta, there was an annual average of 403,000 (17,000 First Nations and 386,000 non-First Nations) people with at least one dispensation of antidepressants, which represented approximately 10 per cent of the total population. The dispensation rate was 1.4 times higher among First Nations (161 per 1,000 population) compared to non-First Nations (118 per 1,000 population) in 2016. The average rate increase between 2010 and 2016 for people with at least one antidepressant dispensation was 13 per cent higher among First Nations peoples (35 per cent increase for First Nations and 22 per cent increase for non-First Nations from 2010).

Overall, antidepressant dispensation rates were two times higher among women (160 per 1,000 population) than men (80 per 1,000 population). Dispensation rates for antidepressants among First Nations women were the highest and ranged between 160 (in 2010) and 200 (in 2016) per 1,000 population.



¹ <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/mi-mm/depression-eng.php#ref2>

² <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2013001/article/11855-eng.htm>

³ This is the 18th in a series of First Nations-specific Health Trends compiled in collaboration by Alberta Health and the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre (AFNIGC). To suggest future topics, please contact the AFNIGC (communications@afnigc.ca; 403-539-5775).