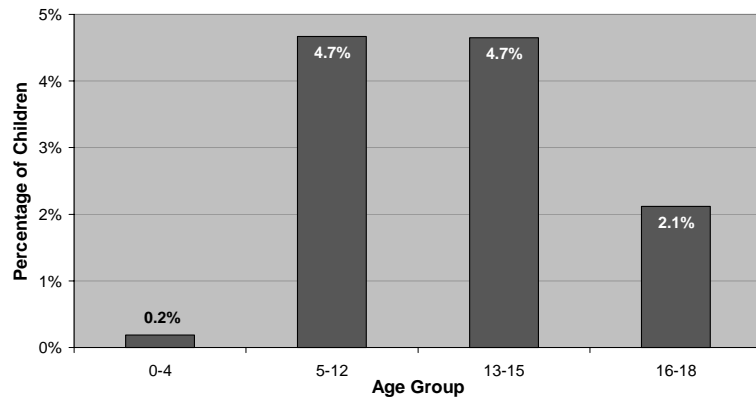


Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a behavioral disorder that is commonly associated with inattentiveness, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. ADHD frequently co-occurs with other conditions such as depression, anxiety, and learning disabilities. Even though stimulants have been shown to be the most effective medication for managing ADHD symptoms, questions have arisen about how frequently stimulant prescriptions are written for children. This update summarizes a recent Utah Department of Health (UDOH) study that documented the percentage of Utah children ages 0-18 who had been prescribed stimulant medication for treating ADHD during 2002.

The UDOH analyzed the Utah Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing prescription drug dataset for calendar year 2002 for ages 0-18. The data set contained a total of 138,456 prescriptions. Prescriptions for methylphenidate, amphetamine, and dextro-amphetamine were included in this study.

Annual Prescription Rate by Age Group

Figure 1. The Percentage of Children Who Had Been Prescribed Medication for ADHD at Least Once During the 2002 Calendar Year by Age Group, Utah Children Age 0-18.

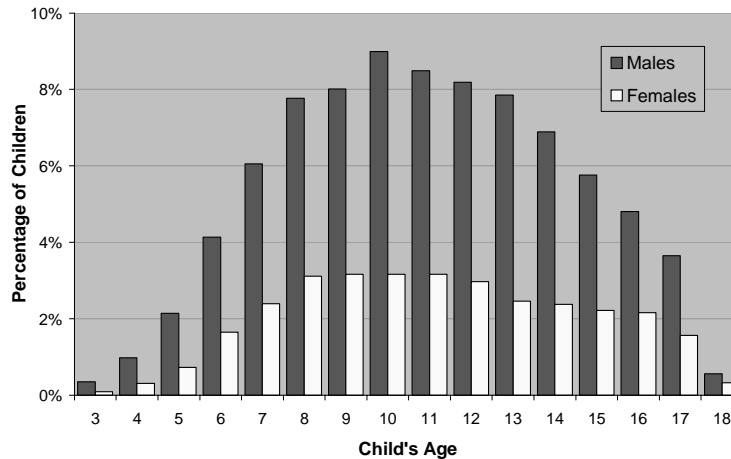


Study Findings

- The unduplicated number of children who were prescribed a stimulant medication at sometime during 2002 was 23,055.
- Figure 1 shows the annual stimulant medication use rate (prescription of a stimulant at any time during the year) by age group.
- The overall annual prescription rate was 2.96%, but the rate differed widely by age group.
- Males were prescribed medication more often than females (see Figure 2).
- Prescription of medication increased with age until about age 10, and declined thereafter.
- The monthly prescription rate is a better indication of the proportion of children on medication for ADHD at any given point in time. Monthly prescription rates for all age groups combined ranged from 1.0% to 1.4% throughout the year.

Annual Prescription Rate by Age and Sex

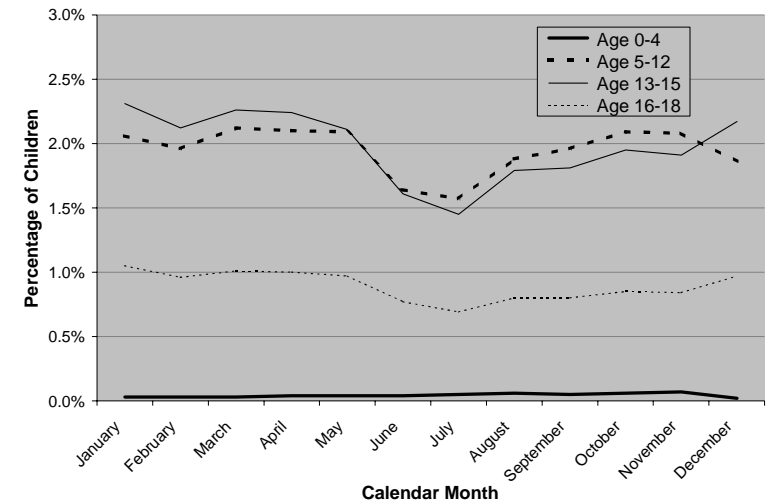
Figure 2. The Percentage of Children Who Had Been Prescribed Medication for ADHD at Least Once During the 2002 Calendar Year by Single Year of Age and Sex, Utah Children Age 3-18.



- The medication prescription rate varied substantially from month to month especially among 5-15 year olds as shown in Figure 3. The number of prescriptions declined starting in May and continued through July. This decline is most likely due to treatment regimens that include medication only during the school year.

Prescription Rate by Age Group and Month

Figure 3. The Percentage of Children Who Had Been Prescribed Medication for ADHD During the Month by Age Group and Calendar Month, Utah Children Age 0-18



A recent national study published in the journal *Pediatrics* examined the 1 year prevalence of stimulant treatment for ADHD for 5 to 14 year olds in 33 states and the District of Columbia. Utah was found to have about average rates of prescription claims for ADHD medication (Figure 4). The *Pediatrics* study used a somewhat different methodology than the Utah study.

33 States and D.C. Ranked by National Study

Figure 4. The Rank Order of States and District of Columbia on Annual ADHD Stimulant Prescription Claims, *Pediatrics* Study¹

Highest Rates	Middle Group	Lowest Rates
Louisiana	Arkansas	Utah
North Carolina	Indiana	Connecticut
Missouri	Kentucky	Massachusetts
Alabama	Oklahoma	Washington
South Carolina	Maryland	New York
Ohio	Tennessee	New Jersey
Michigan	Mississippi	California
Georgia	West Virginia	Colorado
Virginia	Illinois	Nevada
Texas	Kansas	Dist of Columbia
	Arizona	
	Florida	
	Pennsylvania	
	Wisconsin	

Managing ADHD

Many different treatments are available to manage ADHD symptoms. The most common treatments are: parent and teacher education, behavior management at home and school, counseling, and medication therapy. Effective management of ADHD requires an ongoing collaborative effort that includes the parents, the child, the school, and the primary health care provider. A comprehensive evaluation is necessary to establish a diagnosis for ADHD. This evaluation includes a thorough review of the child's medical history; a complete physical, neurological and mental health exam; a review of school records with teacher and parent observations; and, when indicated, standardized tests of specific learning skills.

For a copy of the UDOH report, contact the Utah Department of Health, Division of Community and Family Services at (801) 538-6901.

Resources for ADHD

Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

www.chadd.org

Community and Family Health Services, Children with Special Health Care Needs

801-584-8284

www.health.utah.gov/cschn/cdc

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd

¹ Cox ER, Motheral BR, Henderson RR, Mager D. Geographic Variation in the Prevalence of Stimulant Medication Use Among Children 5 to 14 Years Old: Results from a Commercially Insured US Sample. *Pediatrics*. Feb 2003; 3 (2): 237-243.

May 2003 Utah Health Status Update

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