



ADHD Medication Prescribing in Scotland in 2016/17

**Scottish ADHD Coalition Analysis
March 2018**

www.scottishadhdcoalition.org



Notes on data sources

Prescribing data was obtained through a data request to ISD Scotland to add more detail by age and Health Board, based on their publication *Medicines used in Mental Health 2016/17*

These were analysed by the Scottish ADHD Coalition against the *Mid Year Population Estimates for Scotland by age and NHS Health Board 2016 (National Records of Scotland)*

Notes:

- Data is based on British National Formulary (BNF) March 2015 for section 4.4 (medicines for ADHD), excluding Modafinil (which is exclusively for the treatment of narcolepsy).
- It is possible that some ADHD medications are prescribed for people with other diagnoses than ADHD. However, this is very rare except in the very elderly population.
- The number of people taking ADHD medication is only a proxy for the rate of diagnosis. It is not known what proportion of people with ADHD are taking medication, but a recent survey by the Scottish ADHD Coalition of parents showed that 88% of parents of children with confirmed ADHD reported that their child was taking an ADHD medication currently (n=214 respondents). The proportion of adults with diagnosed ADHD taking medication *may* be much lower.
- Individual patients prescribed ADHD medication were identified by CHI number (the unique identifier assigned to each NHS patient in Scotland). Island Health Boards and children below the age of 6 are excluded from the analyses due to very small numbers.

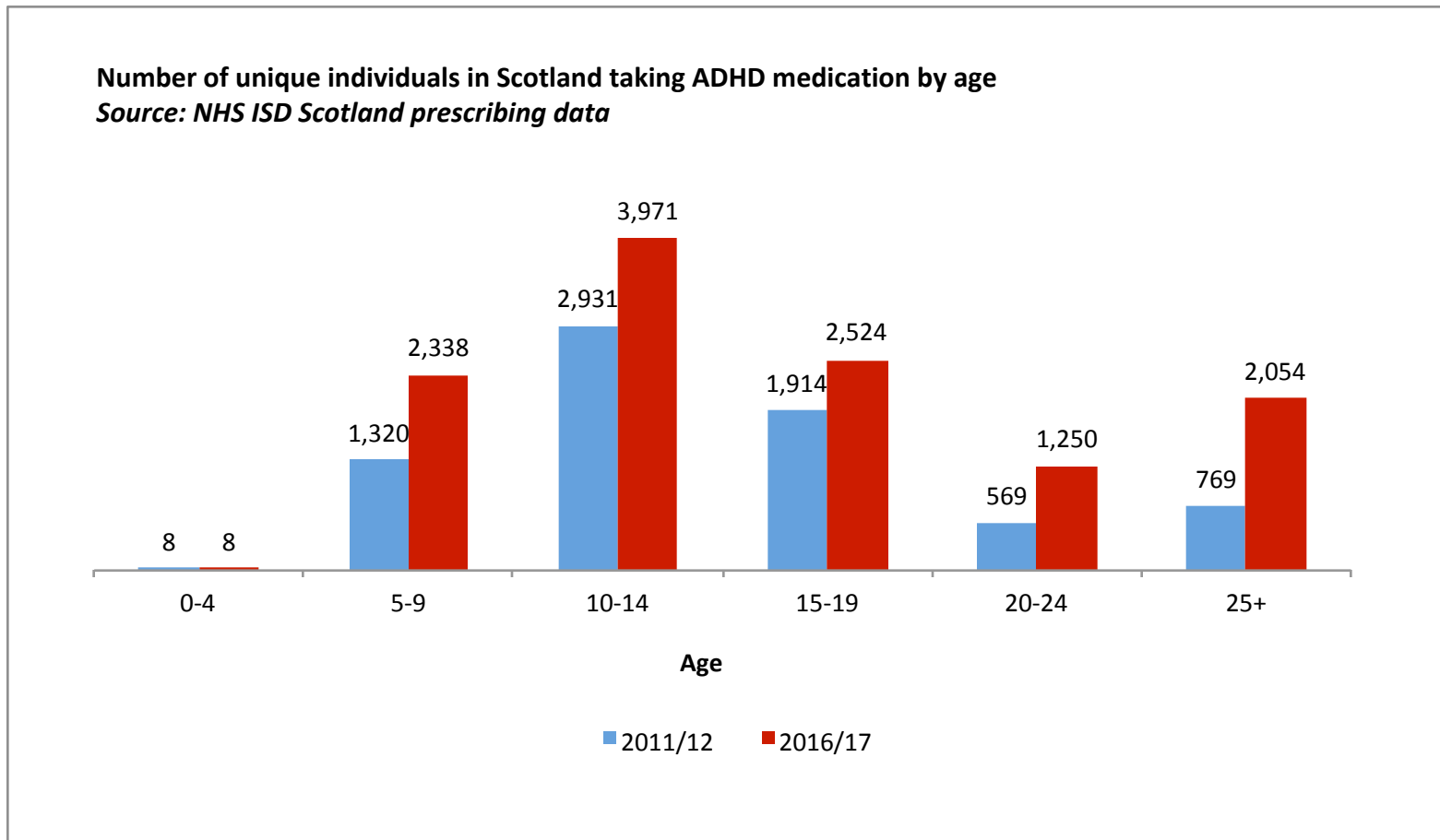
In 2016/17 there were 8,000 children and 3,000 adults prescribed ADHD medication in Scotland

Total number of unique individuals prescribed ADHD medication by Health Board, 2016/17
(Mainland Health Boards only)

Source: NHS ISD Scotland prescribing data



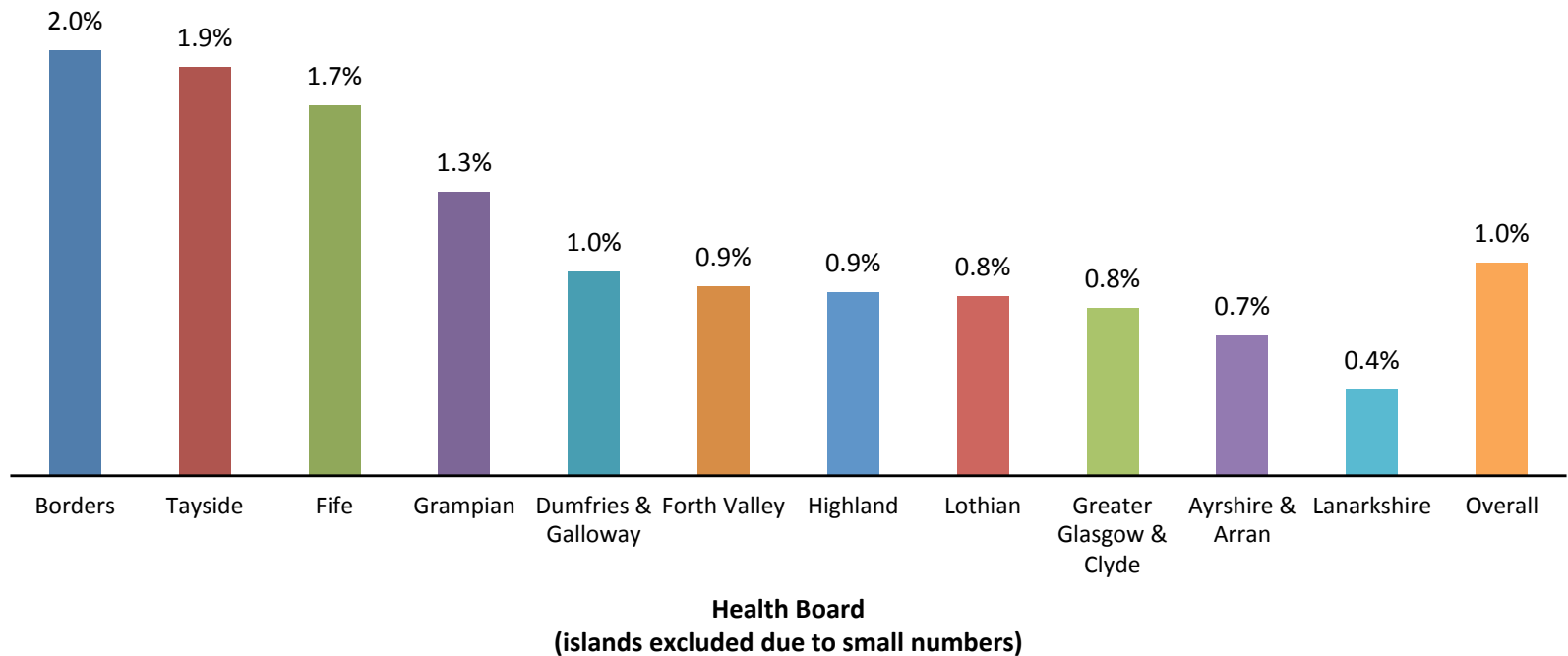
The total number of children (up to 19) taking ADHD medication in Scotland has increased by 43% in the past 5 years since 2012 (when the final [ADHD Services over Scotland](#) report was published). The number of adults has increased more.



However overall, only 1% of children were on ADHD medication in 2016/17 and there remains a fivefold variation in prescribing rates between Health Boards

Percentage of population aged 5-19 taking ADHD medications 2016/17

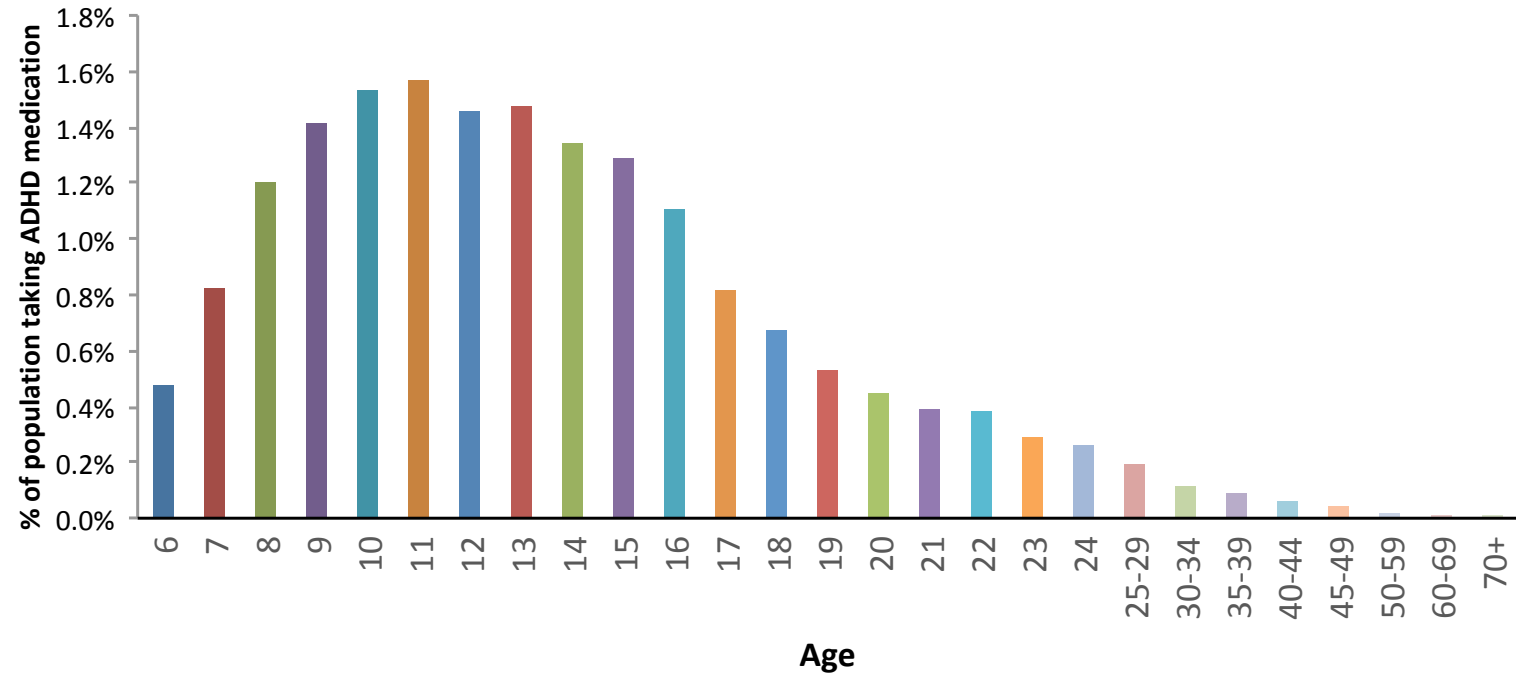
Source: NHS ISD Scotland prescribing data , Scottish Government mid year population estimates 2016, Scottish ADHD Coalition analysis



The proportion of the population on ADHD medication peaks at age 11 (at 1.6%) but falls off rapidly as children transition to adulthood

Percentage of population taking ADHD medications by age, 2016/17
(Mainland Health Boards only)

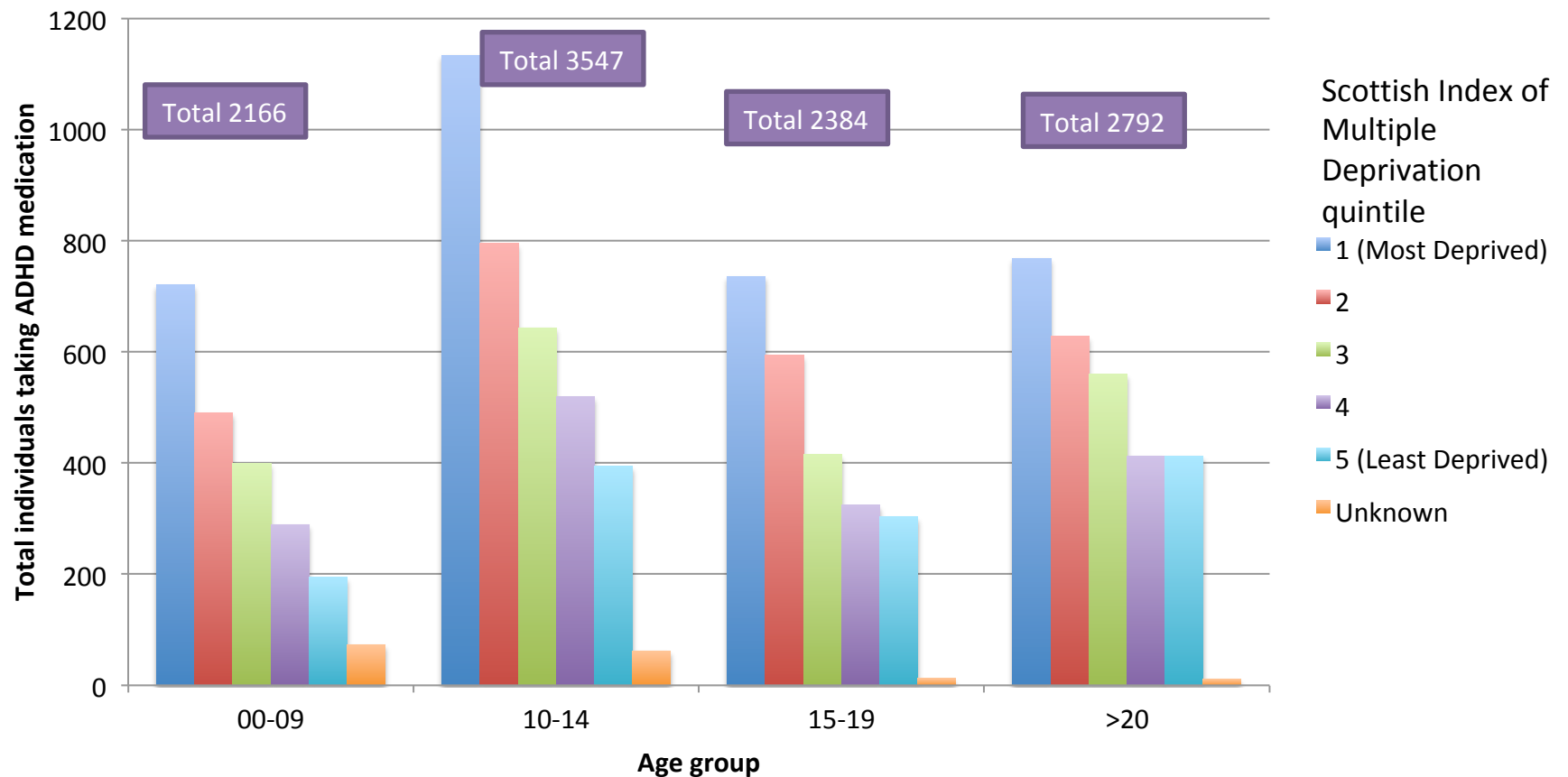
Source: NHS ISD Scotland prescribing data, National Records of Scotland mid year population estimates 2016, Scottish ADHD Coalition analysis



Prescribing of ADHD medication is closely linked to deprivation across all age groups (2015/16 data)

Number of individuals taking NHS prescribed ADHD medication, mainland health boards of Scotland, 2015/16, by SIMD quintile

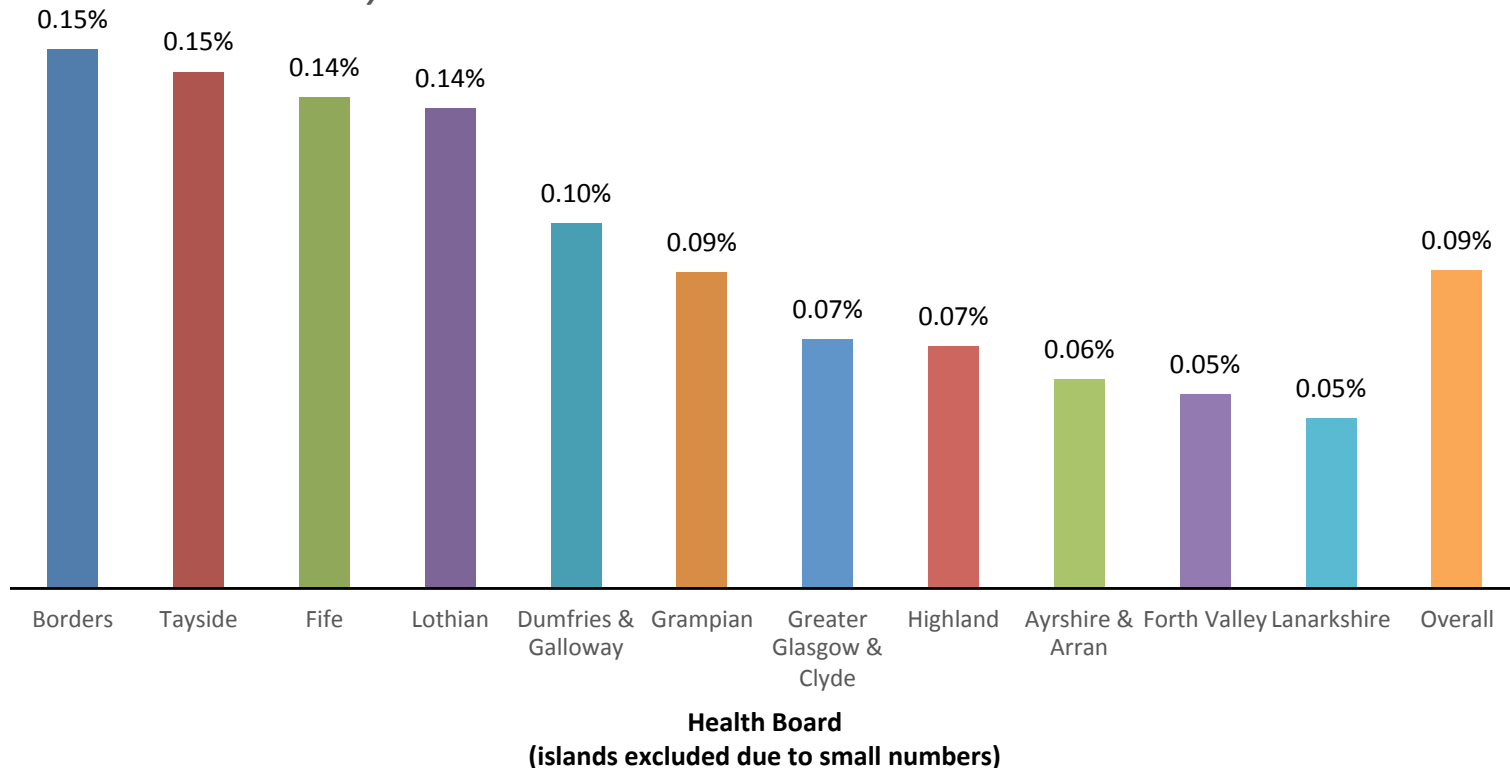
Source: ISD Scotland data (analysis - Geraldine Mynors, University of Glasgow)



The proportion of adults prescribed ADHD medication is much lower at 9 people per 10,000 population aged 20-69, and there is also substantial variation between Health Boards

Percentage of population aged 20-69 taking ADHD medications 2016/17

Source: NHS ISD Scotland prescribing data , Scottish Government mid year population estimates 2016, Scottish ADHD Coalition analysis





***For further information please contact us via
www.scottishadhdcoalition.org***