

Pill Nation USA: Are Americans Over-Medicating?

By [Global Research News](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Science and Medicine](#)

American is a nation of pill poppers.

Nearly 13 prescriptions were prescribed per man, woman, and child last year.

We're one of only two countries in the world which allows direct-to-consumer Rx advertising; and Rx have slowly grown to be the third highest medical cost.

Welcome to the pill nation.



PILL NATION

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The Math

Average American= \$898 in Rx spending last year. [4]

+

48.5% (1/2) of Americans on Rx last month. [6]

+

1/5 Americans on 3 or more Rx.

+

1/10 Americans on 5 or more Rx.

=

4.02 billion prescriptions filled last year. [7]

Our only larger healthcare costs = hospital care and clinical services.[5].

Rx are the fastest growing sector of US healthcare costs:

In 1980: \$12 billion industry (4.9% of total healthcare spending)[12]

In 2010: \$275.6 billion industry (10.6% of total healthcare spending)

Our Rx costs greatly outpace the rest of the world.

\$898 per year/per American

\$609 per year/per developed country citizen (and that's by 2016!)[8]

\$91 per year/per emerging country citizen (and that's by 2016!)

Top medication types by spending:

\$11 billion Antidepressants.

\$7 billion on ADHD drugs.

\$4.5 billion sleeping meds.

Or, \$71 for every man, woman, infant and child.

Just for antidepressants, ADHD, or sleeping meds.

(And that's with 11% of Americans not receiving Rx due to high costs.) [6]

Antidepressants: 400% rise since the 80's[10]

ADHD Meds: [9]

(A brief timeline)

1950's-60's: DSM-I (manual of psychiatric illnesses)

"Minimal Brain Dysfunction"

1960's-70's: DSM-II

"Hyperkinetic Reaction of Childhood"

1980's: DSM-III

"ADD with or without hyperactivity"

1980's-90's: DSM-III-R

"ADHD, undifferentiated ADD"

1990's-2000's: DSM-IV, DSM-IV-TR

"ADHD, combined subtypes"

The arrival of:

Metadate ER, Concerta, Methylin ER, Focalin, Adderall XE, Metadate CD, Ritalin LA, Strattera, Methylin, Focalin XR, Daytrana, Vyvanse, Intuniv and Kapway.

Sleeping meds:

4% of adults take sleeping pills. Up from 0% before 1982[17]

But new drugs do cost A LOT to create

With only 1/10 medicines that are tested in human clinical trials succeeding. [13]

[pharmaceutical/number of drugs approved since 1997/total R&D Spending/ total R&D per approved Drug]

AstraZeneca/ 5/ \$58.955 billion/ \$11.790 billion

GlaxoSmithKline/ 10/ \$81.708 billion/ \$8.170 billion

Sanofi/8/ \$63.274 billion/ \$7.909 billion

Roche Holding AG/ 11/ \$85.841 billion/ \$7.803 billion

Pfizer/ 14/ \$108.178 billion/ \$7.727 billion

Johnson & Johnson/ 15/ \$88.285 billion/ \$5.885 billion

Eli Lilly & Co./ 11/ \$50.347 billion/ \$4.577 billion

Abbott Laboratories/ 8/ \$35.970 billion/ \$4.496 billion

Merck and Co Inc/16/\$67.360 billion/ \$4.209 billion
Bristol-Myers Squibb Co./11/\$45.675 billion/ \$4.152 billion
Novartis/ 21/ \$83.646 billion/ \$3.983 billion
Amgen/9/\$33.229 billion/ \$3.692

Amgen, with the lowest per drug R&D cost, could still buy:

742 Super Bowl ads
32 million official NFL footballs
4 pro football stadiums
Almost every NFL player, twice
And every seat in every NFL stadium for 12 weeks.

For the average R&D cost for one of their drugs.

The Top Twenty

Pain, Arthritis, Upper Respiratory, Diabetes Medicines dominate the list:

By Money Made:

Abilify–Anti-psychotic
Nexium–Acid-reflux
Cymbalta–Depression, anxiety, pain
Humira–Arthritis, Crohn’s disease
Crestor–Cholestorol
Advair Diskus–COPD, Asthma,
Enbrel–Arthritis
Remicade–Arthritis, Crohn’s disease
Copaxone–Multiple sclerosis
Neulasta–White blood cell shortage
Rituxan–Arthritis, lymphoma
Spiriva–COPD, asthma
Atripla–HIV
Lantus Solostar–Diabetes
Januvia–Diabetes
Avastin–Cancer
OxyContin–Pain
Lantus–Diabetes
Lyrica–Neuropathic pain
Truvada–HIV

By Packages Sold:

Budesonide–Asthma
Acetaminophen/hydrocodone–pain, inflammation
ProAir HFA–Bronchitis, COPD, Asthma
Cymbalta–depression, pain
One Touch–Diabetes
Nexium–Acid Reflux
Advair Diskus–Asthma, chronic bronchitis
Lantus–Diabetes
Omeprazole–Acid reflux

Lantus Solostar-diabetes
Atorvastatin-cholesterol
Enoxaparin-blood thinner
Fentanyl-pain
Crestor-cholesterol
Ventolin HFA-Asthma, bronchitis
Spiriva-COPD
Levemir-Diabetes
NovoLog FlexPen-Diabetes
metoprolol-blood pressure, angina
Novolog-Diabetes

Why?

The U.S. is one of only two countries in the world allowing pharmaceuticals to advertise directly to everyday people.

New Zealand

And

The US

2011 spending on ads by pharmaceuticals: \$2.4 billion

Where every \$1 spent on advertising increases retail sales by \$4.20.[14]

The Jury's Out:

[15]

With 1/2 of doctors thinking patients who see direct-to-consumer advertising ask more informed questions.

And the other 1/2 disagreeing.

And 8% of Doctor's feeling strongly pressured to prescribe the advertised drug.

And it's likely to stay that way, with the pharmaceutical lobby being one of the strongest in the U.S.

With over 1,300 lobbyists spending \$171 million last year.

Including many of our big researchers above:

[client/spending on lobbying][16]

Pharmaceutical Rsrch & Mfrs of America \$13,802,500

Eli Lilly & Co \$7,400,000

Pfizer Inc \$6,800,000

Amgen Inc \$6,790,000

Novartis AG \$6,135,000

Biotechnology Industry Organization \$5,960,000

Sanofi \$5,528,000

Merck & Co \$5,210,000

Johnson & Johnson \$4,755,000

Bayer AG \$4,090,000

Hey, it's big business. Welcome to the Rx Nation



Citations:

- [Types of Medicines](#)
- [Most Sold Rx in America 2013](#)
- [Medicine Net](#)
- [Prescription Spend Drops for First Time in 58 Years](#)
- [Countries with the Highest Health Care Costs](#)
- [Drug Facts, CDC](#)
- [IMS Prescription Outlook 2016](#)
- [CDC timeline of ADHD](#)
- [WebMD 400% increase in antidepressants since 1988](#)
- [ABC News, Sleeping Pill Study](#)
- [AETNA, RX forecasts](#)
- [Forbes, the Truly Staggering Cost of Inventing New Drugs](#)
- [Kaiser, Impact of Direct-to-Consumer Advertising on Prescription Drug Spending](#)
- [FDA, Resources for Prescription Consumers](#)
- [Open Secrets, Pharmaceutical Lobby](#)
- [CNS Spectrum, Is it a Sleeping Pill?](#)

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