

# Research Prescription Drug Abuse Using CIHI Data



Prescription drug abuse (PDA) — also referred to as “problematic prescription drug use” — can lead to addiction, overdose and death. Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) data from across the Canadian health system can support research in areas such as risk factors; drug monitoring and surveillance; resource use; and program, policy and intervention outcomes. Through partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, CIHI is leading the development of a coordinated pan-Canadian approach to PDA monitoring, surveillance and reporting to better inform policies and practices.

## Prescription drug data

Drug claims data can provide insight into the prescribing and utilization of drugs at high risk for problematic use. This data is available in CIHI’s [National Prescription Drug Utilization Information System \(NPDUIS\) Database](#), which houses information from public drug programs in all provinces except Quebec. The database includes information related to

- Drug claims;
- Formularies;
- Policies; and
- Population statistics.

See *CIHI’s Drug Claims Data Related to Prescription Drug Abuse* on [www.cihi.ca](http://www.cihi.ca) for more details, including relevant drug classification codes.

## Hospital and emergency department data

Pan-Canadian data on hospitalizations and emergency department (ED) visits can support research on the effectiveness of prevention and treatment policies, programs and activities. It can also inform studies on resource use due to addiction, poisoning and overdose.

5 CIHI databases contain 3 types of PDA-related acute care information:

- Demographic (e.g., age, gender, province);
- Administrative (e.g., dates of admission and discharge); and
- Clinical (e.g., diagnosis, length of stay, interventions).

CIHI's [Discharge Abstract Database \(DAD\)](#) has data from acute inpatient facilities in all jurisdictions except Quebec; information from that province is in the [Hospital Morbidity Database \(HMDB\)](#).

The [National Ambulatory Care Reporting System \(NACRS\)](#) contains data on some ED visits in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Yukon — and on all ED visits in Ontario and Alberta.

Data from across the country is available in the [Hospital Mental Health Database \(HMHDB\)](#), while the [Ontario Mental Health Reporting System \(OMHRS\)](#) contains data from all hospitals with designated adult mental health beds in that province. OMHRS also receives data on child/adolescent mental health beds from 2 psychiatric hospitals and from 3 facilities outside Ontario.

See *CIHI's Hospital and ED Data Related to Prescription Drug Abuse* on [www.cihi.ca](http://www.cihi.ca) for more details, including relevant diagnosis codes.

## Linking CIHI data

CIHI's data holdings may be even more valuable for research when they are linked. NPDUIS and DAD data for Newfoundland and Labrador, P.E.I., Manitoba, Alberta and B.C. is linkable. Areas that could be explored using such linked data include

- Identifying which prescription drugs are related to hospitalizations;
- Assessing the impact of a policy, program or intervention on hospitalizations; and
- Tracking prescription use among patients before and after hospitalization for surgery requiring pain management.

Please note that data linkage requires approval from CIHI's Privacy, Confidentiality and Security Committee. See CIHI's [Privacy Policy, 2010](#) for more details.



### Talk to us

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