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For references 15–33 see
www.australianprescriber.com/magazine/32/6/155/9/

Conflict of interest: none declared

Self-test questions

The following statements are either true or false (answers on page 171)

- Antibiotics are not appropriate for bilateral acute otitis media in children less than two years old.
- Topical antibiotics are an effective treatment for chronic suppurative otitis media.

Top 10 drugs

These tables show the top 10 subsidised drugs in 2008–09.

Table 1

Top 10 drugs by DDD/1000 pop/day *†

Constituent drug	PBS/RPBS ‡
1. atorvastatin	77.71
2. irbesartan	36.63
3. ramipril	28.62
4. perindopril	27.46
5. simvastatin	27.31
6. paracetamol	21.77
7. candesartan	21.44
8. esomeprazole	21.34
9. aspirin	17.79
10. frusemide	17.49

Table 2

Top 10 drugs by prescription counts †

PBS drug name	PBS/RPBS ‡
1. atorvastatin	10 950 483
2. esomeprazole	5 888 347
3. simvastatin	5 164 548
4. paracetamol	3 912 494
5. perindopril	3 891 971
6. pantoprazole	3 491 231
7. atenolol	3 224 057
8. metformin hydrochloride	3 201 944
9. rosuvastatin	3 165 641
10. irbesartan	3 134 403

Table 3

Top 10 drugs by cost to Government †

PBS drug name	Cost to Government (\$A)
1. atorvastatin	621 164 182
2. clopidogrel	210 600 588
3. esomeprazole	205 083 299
4. rosuvastatin	201 708 668
5. simvastatin	170 511 054
6. salmeterol and fluticasone	164 181 553
7. olanzapine	158 870 974
8. ranibizumab	154 941 222
9. rituximab	112 256 755
10. venlafaxine	111 236 036

* The defined daily dose (DDD)/thousand population/day is a more useful measure of drug utilisation than prescription counts. It shows how many people, in every thousand Australians, are taking the standard dose of a drug every day. The DDDs now include not only the use of the drug alone, but also its use in combination products.¹

† Based on date of supply. Does not include private prescriptions or prescriptions under PBS co-payment.

‡ PBS Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, RPBS Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme

Source: Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) Database as at 28 September 2009. © Commonwealth of Australia.

Reference

- Department of Health and Ageing. Australian Statistics on Medicines 2007. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing; 2009. www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pbs-pubs-asm2007 [cited 2009 Nov 12]