

DATA SNAPSHOT

Patterns of treatment for people living in NSW who use medications for mental health, 2011

In 2015, the Commission asked people who experience mental illness, their carers and clinicians to share their experiences with the use of mental health-related medications. Our report, *Medication and mental illness: Perspectives*, contains the main themes that emerged.

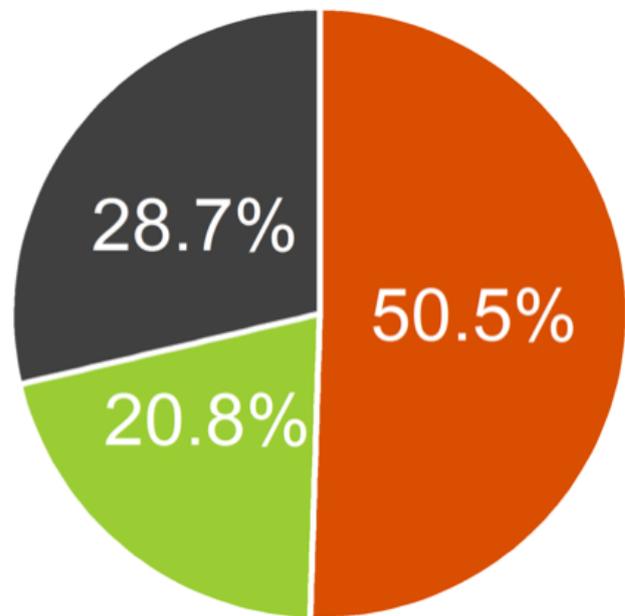
One major theme was that many people want medication to be prescribed at the same time as other treatment services or only after all other options have been tried and haven't worked.

NSW data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Mental Health Services-Census Data Integration project* shows that consumers in NSW are using and combining medication and other treatment options, such as seeing a doctor, psychologist or other health professional regularly.

Of people who access government-subsidised forms of mental health care, half access medications only. Around one in five access both services and medications, with the remainder accessing services only.

The Commission believes that while medications can play an important role in recovery, the best approach is one that includes a variety of social and psychological supports as well. Medication does not necessarily have to be the first-line treatment. Or, in the words of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, in their submission to the Commission, medication "should be provided in conjunction with appropriate, evidence-based psychosocial treatments to ensure holistic consumer care."

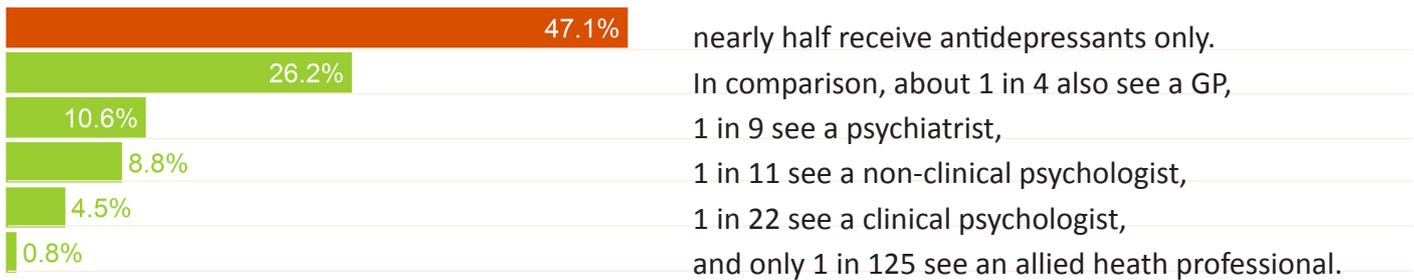
Please see the next page for more detailed data about types of medication and their use.



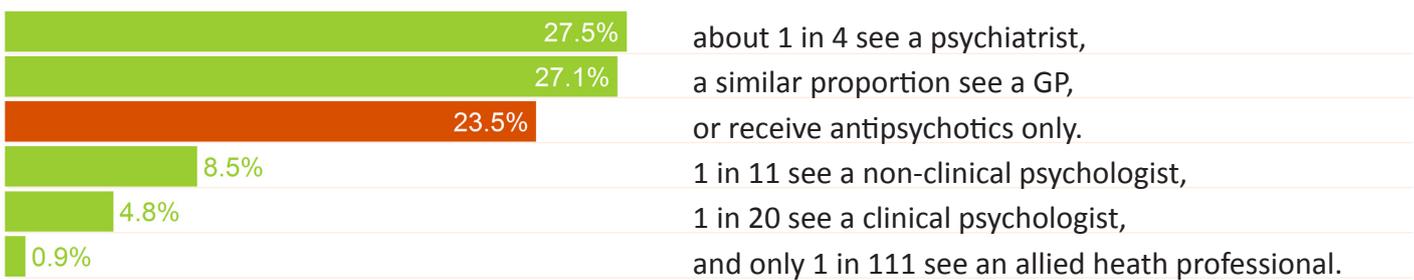
DATA SNAPSHOT

The data integration project also shows that individuals taking some kinds of medication were more likely to use other services as well. Around half of people receiving antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, or psychostimulants used other mental health services, compared to three quarters of people taking antipsychotics.

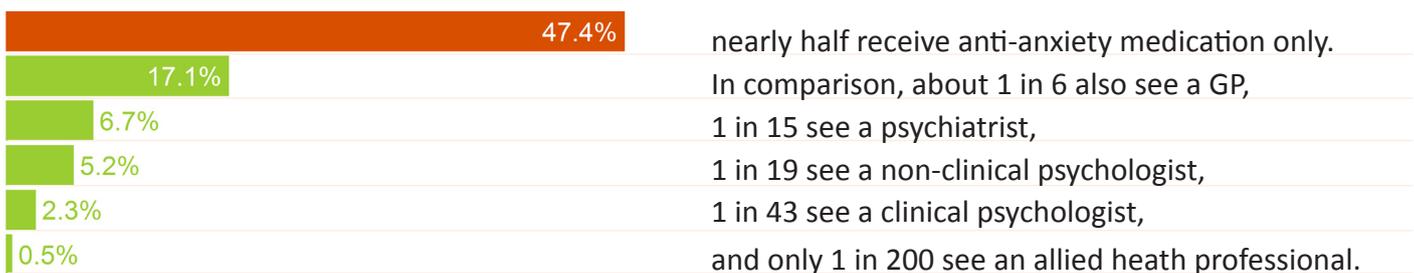
Among people receiving antidepressants:



Among people receiving antipsychotics:



Among people receiving anti-anxiety medications:



Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Data were produced using the 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Medicare Benefits Schedule Data, and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme Data. The data excludes persons not counted in the Census, services accessed outside of the MBS, and prescriptions accessed outside of the PBS. For a full description of data and exclusions please see ABS Explanatory Notes.

For more information visit the [Commission website](#).

December 2016