



Ministry of Defence

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Ref: FOI 2021/06342

9 July 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 15 June 2021 requesting the following information:

“Under the FOI Act, can you provide details of the number of service personnel who have been prescribed antidepressants since 2018 by year, service and officer/rank status.

Separately, could you also provide details of the number of service personnel who have been prescribed sleeping pills since 2016 by year, service and officer/rank status.”

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held.

Table 1 presents the number of UK armed forces personnel with a prescription for an antidepressant drug in their electronic medical record between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2021. This information is split by service and officer/rank status.

Table 1: UK armed forces personnel¹ prescribed antidepressants by financial year, service and officer/rank status, numbers

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021

Financial Year ²	All ³	Service			Officer/Rank Status	
		Royal Navy ⁴	Army	RAF	Officer	Rank
All	14,557	2,778	8,597	3,183	1,775	12,800
2018/19	7,559	1,369	4,570	1,620	867	6,695
2019/20	7,602	1,507	4,336	1,759	943	6,668
2020/21	6,645	1,366	3,643	1,637	912	5,736

Source DMICP and JPA

¹ Includes trained and untrained Regular and Reservist personnel.

² Personnel may have been prescribed drugs in multiple years and will be counted in each year they were prescribed but only once in the overall total. Therefore, the sum of each financial year does not equal the total.

³ For each year, personnel were counted once per service and rank but only once in the total for the year. Therefore, the sum of the services and the officer/rank status may not equal the total number of personnel prescribed antidepressants in a year. E.g. if personnel had a prescription in 2018/19 whilst they were a rank and another prescription in the same year whilst they were an officer, they would be counted once in 2018/19 rank and once in 2018/19 officer but only once in the total for the year.

⁴ Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel.

Table 2 presents the number of UK armed forces personnel with a prescription for a sleeping pill drug in their medical record each year between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2021. This information is split by service and officer/rank status.

Table 2: UK armed forces personnel¹ prescribed sleeping pills² by financial year, service and officer/rank status, numbers

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2021

Financial Year ³	All ⁴	Service			Officer/Rank Status	
		Royal Navy ⁵	Army	RAF	Officer	Rank
All	15,955	2,792	8,825	4,388	2,313	13,701
2016/17	4,811	831	2,688	1,292	624	4,187
2017/18	4,537	801	2,448	1,288	645	3,892
2018/19	4,648	757	2,527	1,364	735	3,914
2019/20	4,340	741	2,253	1,346	732	3,608
2020/21	3,055	549	1,522	986	634	2,424

Source DMICP and JPA

¹ Includes trained and untrained Regular and Reservist personnel.

² Sleeping pills includes sleeping medication in tablet or capsule form.

³ Personnel may have been prescribed drugs in multiple years and will be counted in each year they were prescribed but only once in the overall total. Therefore, the sum of each financial year does not equal the sum of the total.

⁴ For each year, personnel were counted once per service and rank but only once in the total for the year. Therefore, the sum of the services and of the officer/rank status may not equal the total number of personnel prescribed sleeping pills in a year. E.g. if personnel had a prescription in 2016/17 as a rank and another prescription in the same year as an officer, they would be counted once in 2016/17 rank and once in 2016/17 officer but only once in the total for the year.

⁵ Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it useful to note:

Personnel include all UK armed forces Regular and Reserve trained and untrained personnel. This response relates to all personnel who had a DMICP record and served between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2021 and is not limited to the currently serving population.

Some medications used to treat depression are used to treat other conditions. Amitriptyline, nortriptyline and duloxetine are used much more frequently in the management of neuropathic pain than in depression. Furthermore, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as fluoxetine, paroxetine, citalopram, escitalopram and sertraline can be used to treat other medical conditions. It is not possible to determine the reason for prescription from centrally held data therefore the numbers provided will contain prescriptions for medical conditions other than depression. To determine the reason for the prescriptions would require a clinician to manually review the medical records of personnel prescribed these drugs which would exceed the cost limit associated with FOI requests.

The information shown for sleeping pills relates to sleeping medications in tablet and capsule form only.

Information has been derived from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP). DMICP has a centralised data warehouse of Read coded information. It is the source of electronic, integrated healthcare records for primary healthcare and some MOD specialist care providers from which searches can be run.

Please note, it is not possible to determine from the centrally held database whether the medicine was taken as prescribed.

The following drug names and brands were used to identify prescriptions for antidepressants in DMICP:

Agomelatine	Edronax	Optimax	Tonpular XL
Allegron	Efexor	Optimax Wv	Tranlycypromine
Alventa XL	Efexor XL	Oxactin	Trazodone Hydrochloride
Amitriptyline Hydrochloride	Escitalopram	Pacitron	Trimipramine
Amitriptyline Sr	Faverin	Paroxetine Hydrochloride	Triptafen
Amitriptyline with Perphenazine	Felicium	Paxoran	Trixat XL
Amoxapine	Feprapax	Phenelzine	Tryptophan
Amphero XL	Fluoxetine Hydrochloride	Politid XL	Valdoxan
Aremis	Fluvoxamine Maleate	Prepadine	Vaxalin
Asendin	Gamanil	Prothiaden	Venaxx XL
Besitran	Imipramine	Protriptyline	Vencarm
Bolvidon	Imipramine Hydrochloride	Protriptyline Hydrochloride	Venlablue XL
Bonilux XL	Isocarboxazid	Prozac	Venladex XL
Brintellix	Lofepamine	Prozep	Venlafaxine
Cipralax	Lomont	Prozit	Venlafaxine Hydrochloride
Cipramil	L-Tryptophan	Ranfaxine XL	Venlalic XL
Citalopram Hydrobromide	Ludiomil	Ranflutin	Venlaneo
Citalopram Hydrochloride	Lustral	Reboxetine	Venlasov XL
Clomipramine Hydrochloride	Majoven XL	Rodomel XL	Vensir XL
Concordin	Manerix	Seroxat	Venzip XL
Cymbalta	Mentaven XL	Seroxat Cr	Vexarin
Defanyl	Mianserin Hydrochloride	Sertraline Hydrochloride	Viepax
Depefex XL	Mirtazapine	Serzone	Viepax XL
Dosulepin Hydrochloride	Moclobemide	Sinepin	Vivactil
Dothapax 25/75	Molipaxin	Sinequan	Vortioxetine
Doxepin	Nardil	Sunveniz XL	Winflex XL
Doxepin XL	Nefazodone Hydrochloride	Tardcaps XL	Yentreve
Duciltia	Nortriptyline	Thaden	Zispin
Duloxetine	Olena	Tifaxin XL	Zispin Soltab

The following drug names and brands were used to identify prescriptions for sleeping pills in DMICP:

Bio-Melatonin	Loprazolam	Stilnoct
Chloral Betaine	Lorazepam	Syncrocin
Chloral Hydrate	Lormerazepam	Temapzepam
Chloral Hydrate (Special Order)	Melatonin	Vytalonin
Circadin	Mogadon	Welldorm
Clomethiazole	Nitrados	Zileze 3.75
Dalmane	Nitrazepam	Zileze 7.5
Dormonoc	Noctec	Zimovane
Flurazepam	Remnos	Zimovane Ls
Heminevrin	Slenyto	Zolpidem Tartrate
Icenia Melatonin	Somnite	Zopiclone

Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) is the most accurate source for demographic information for UK Armed Forces personnel and was used to gather information on a person's service and officer/rank status at the point of prescription.

DMICP is a live data source and is subject to change. Date of extract 1 July 2021.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics Health