

Top five classes of drugs prescribed for adults

\$181 billion spent on all drugs for adults in an outpatient setting in 2004.

\$17.9 billion spent on anti-depressants and other psychotherapeutic drugs

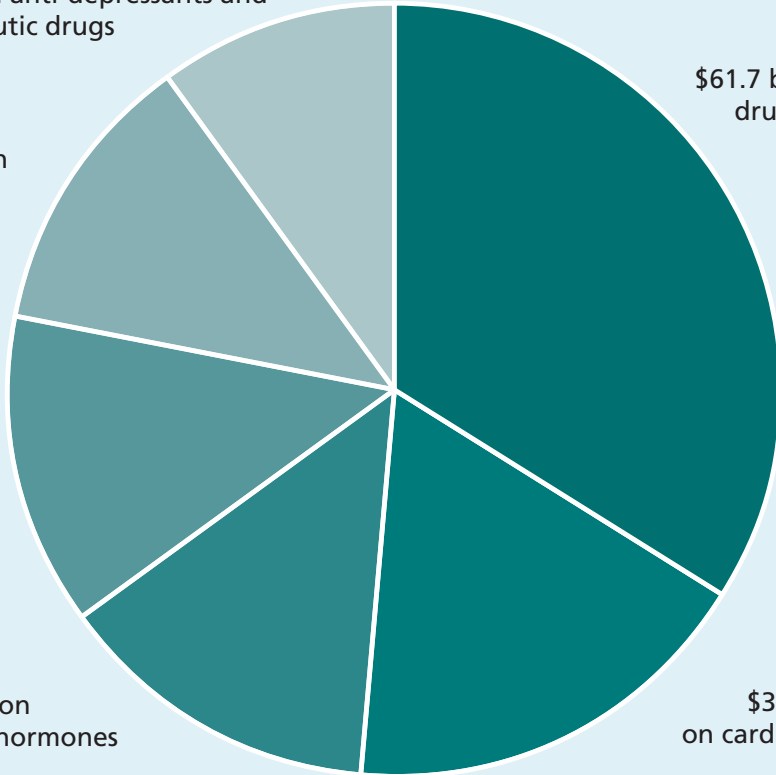
\$21.5 billion spent on cholesterol-lowering drugs

\$23.7 billion spent on central nervous system drugs

\$24.5 billion spent on hormones

\$61.7 billion spent on drug classes not in the top five

\$31.7 billion spent on cardiovascular drugs



Fast Facts

The five top classes of drugs combined accounted for 65.9%, or \$119.3 billion, of all prescriptions.

44.2% of all prescriptions were for central nervous system drugs.

Cholesterol-lowering drugs had the highest average expense per prescription (\$100.44), more than double that of cardiovascular drugs (\$47.55).

Among Medicare beneficiaries, the top five drug classes were cardiovascular (\$17 billion), cholesterol-lowering (\$10 billion), hormones (\$8 billion), central nervous system (\$7 billion) and gastrointestinal (\$6 billion). Spending totaled nearly \$48 billion.

Source: Stagnitti, MN. *The Top Five Therapeutic Classes of Outpatient Prescription Drugs Ranked by Total Expense for Adults Age 18 and Older in the U.S. Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population, 2004*. Statistical Brief #154. December 2006. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.