

Medication-related claims

Insights to reduce risk

Key messages

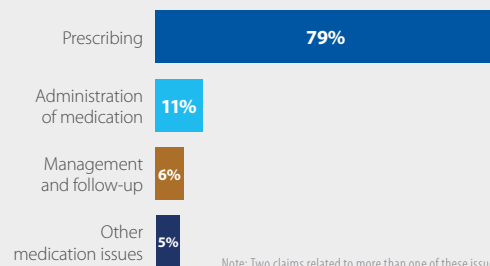
- Medication is commonly the main issue in a claim, particularly the prescription of restricted or controlled substances.
- It is important to keep up-to-date with the latest prescribing guidelines and relevant legislative requirements, particularly for restricted or controlled substances.
- Ideally, record your clinical decision-making and rationale for prescribing a medication, as well as the explanations you provide a patient about the need for the medication, risks and benefits and plan for follow-up.

1 in 7 claims were primarily about medication

Prescribing was the main issue in these claims

- Prescribing was the most common issue (e.g. inappropriate prescribing, inappropriately refusing/reducing/ceasing medication).
- Less common issues included administration of medication (e.g. poor technique, administering the wrong medication) and management and follow-up (e.g. inadequately monitoring a patient or ignoring their medication concerns).

Medication-related claims: main issue



Issues with prescribing mostly related to restricted or controlled substances

- Claims about prescribing restricted or controlled substances commonly involved benzodiazepines and opioids.
- A wide range of medications were referred to in other prescribing-related claims, including antibiotics, antidepressants, antipsychotics and steroids.

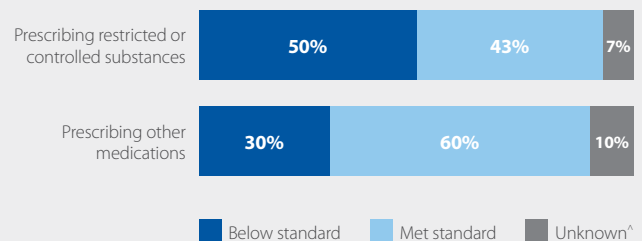
Prescribing-related claims: medication type



Care was often assessed as below standard for prescribing restricted or controlled substances

- Following a claim, a medico-legal evaluation is undertaken to assess whether expected standards of care were met.
- Claims primarily about an issue with prescribing restricted or controlled substances received a less favourable assessment than those about other medications.

Prescribing-related claims: assessment of care



See back page for more about this analysis.

About this analysis

- This report is based on our analysis of the underlying themes in 9,274 complaints to regulators and compensation claims for Avant member doctors from all specialties, finalised between July 2017 and June 2020.
- There were 1,350 claims primarily about medication. These were classified as those claims for which an issue with medication was identified as the main factor.
- Medications were classified as restricted or controlled substances according to the listings in Schedule 4D or Schedule 8 of the Australian Government Department of Health's *Poisons Standard*.

For any queries please contact us at research@avant.org.au

More resources

For articles, factsheets, case studies and other resources on a range of topics, including medication and prescribing, visit the Avant Learning Centre at avant.org.au/avant-learning-centre

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