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| NSW Health |  |
| Controlled Drugs Data Collection (CoDDaC) |  |
| Data Dictionary | March 2025 |
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## Background

## The NSW Controlled Drugs Data Collection (CoDDaC) records details of approvals to prescribe Schedule 8 (S8) medicines (e.g. opioids, psychostimulants, benzodiazepines, cannabis medicines) in circumstances where an approval from the NSW Ministry of Health is required. Historical data relating to prescriptions for S8 psychostimulant medicines for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) notified under retired approval schemes are included in the CoDDaC.

## Approval data are drawn from the SafeScript NSW system, a ‘live’ operational system used to manage approvals, which replaced the Electronic Recording and Reporting of Controlled Drugs (ERRCD) system in May 2023.

## CoDDaC Subcollections

CoDDaC consists of three subcollections:

### Subcollection 1: Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)

Relates to opioid substitution pharmacotherapy provided under the NSW OTP. Records are sourced from SafeScript NSW.

Subcollection 2: Other Schedule 8 (S8) medicines

Relates to approvals for the prescribing of S8 medicines to individual patients other than those prescribed under the NSW OTP. These include: opioids for the ongoing management of pain; psychostimulants for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and hypersomnolence disorders such as narcolepsy; the benzodiazepines alprazolam and flunitrazepam for anxiety and insomnia respectively; and cannabis medicines. An approval is required in only some circumstances, so the data do not reflect all prescribing. Records are sourced from SafeScript NSW.

### **Subcollection 3: Notified Psychostimulant Prescriptions**

Relates to prescriptions for psychostimulant medicines for the treatment for ADHD in children and adults that were notified as a condition of general authorisation to prescribe psychostimulants for ADHD. The subcollection spans the period June 1996 to May 2016. Records were maintained in the (decommissioned) ERRCD system and have otherwise been archived.

## Changes to CoDDaC

On 22 May 2023, SafeScript NSW was adopted as the management system for applications and approvals to prescribe S8 medicines, replacing the ERRCD system which was subsequently decommissioned. The switch to SafeScript NSW resulted in changes to some data in the subcollections. In addition, the term ‘approval’ was adopted, replacing the previously used term ‘authority’ (or ‘authorisation’).

The changes included transformation of some data to align with new classifications adopted in SafeScript NSW and to support implementation of new approval management procedures. The collection of some information was discontinued, and some information was not migrated from ERRCD and is no longer part of the CoDDaC. Details of changes are provided in the variable list below for variables retained in the CoDDaC.

## Data Custodian

Chief Pharmacist

Pharmaceutical Services Unit

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### Overview of NSW CoDDaC Subcollections

|  | **Subcollection 1:**  **OTP** | **Subcollection 2:**  **Other S8 Medicines** | **Subcollection 3:**  **Notified Psychostimulant Prescriptions** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose** | Contains data relating to opioid substitution pharmacotherapy provided under the NSW OTP | Contains data relating to approvals to prescribe S8 medicines other than those prescribed under the NSW OTP. These include opioids, psychostimulants and the benzodiazepines alprazolam and flunitrazepam, and cannabis medicines, in circumstances where an approval is required. | Contains data relating to prescriptions for psychostimulants for the treatment of ADHD in children and adults.  Use in conjunction with Other Subcollection 2 to obtain complete records (up to May 2016) relating to psychostimulant treatment for persons with ADHD. |
| **Population** | Approvals, patients, and prescribers and administration (or dosing) points participating in the OTP | Approvals, patients and prescribers relating to approval to prescribe S8 medicines other than those used in the OTP. | Notifications, patients and prescribers relating to prescriptions of psychostimulants for the treatment of ADHD. |
| **Data collection** | Since 1985. Most data items are complete from 1999.  Changes over time:   * Some new classifications adopted in SafeScript NSW in May 2023 resulted in changes to records migrated from ERRCD, including variables ‘other drugs of concern’, ‘exit reason’, ‘sector’, and ‘organisation type’. The variables ‘transfer jurisdiction’, ‘start dose’ and ‘last dose’ were dropped from the subcollection in May 2023. * Collection of ‘country of birth’ and ‘preferred language’ were discontinued in September 2023. * In the migration of data to ERRCD (from the previous PHDAS system) in September 2016, some data transformation likely resulted in a minor loss in data quality, particularly for treatment dates, but a detailed assessment was not conducted. | Since 1985.  Individual patient approval requirements have changed over time. Key changes are described below.  General approval schemes for specialist prescribers (psychiatrists, paediatricians, neurologists) introduced between 1996 and 2003 significantly reduced the number of approvals to prescribe psychostimulants for the treatment of ADHD. Changes in November 2023 reduced circumstances where specialist prescribers required an approval to prescribe psychostimulants for ADHD, and co-management arrangements between specialists and GPs became recognised.  In 2006, circumstances where an approval was required were reduced, with some medicines no longer requiring an approval (e.g. oral morphine and oxycodone preparations) but only where the patient was not drug dependent. | June 1996 to May 2016.  Medical practitioners granted a general approval (known as ‘CNS’ or ‘S28c’ approval) were required to notify to the Ministry details of their psychostimulant prescribing on a monthly basis.  The CNS approval, introduced in 1996, was for paediatricians, child psychiatrists and neurologists prescribing for the treatment of ADHD in child patients.  The S28c approval, introduced in 2003, was for psychiatrists and neurologists prescribing for the treatment of ADHD in adult patients.  The notification requirements were discontinued in 2018, and data are complete up to May 2016. |
| **Size of collection** | As of 1 March 2025, there are 733,186 approvals relating to 76,680 persons. | As of 1 March 2025, there are 438,374 approvals relating to 161,296 persons. | There are 848,301 records relating to 133,794 persons. |
| **External Reporting** | Annual figures (as at 30 June) are published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in the National Opioid Pharmacotherapy Statistics Annual Data (NOPSAD) Collection report. | Nil | Nil |
| **Strengths** | Most data items are reliable and complete. | Approval records for psychostimulant medicines together with the records in the Notified Psychostimulant Prescriptions subcollection provide a reasonably complete representation of psychostimulant treatment in the community until May 2016. | Psychostimulant records up to May 2016 provide a reasonably complete representation of prescribing for the treatment of ADHD by generally approved prescribers. See ‘Data collection’ notes for more details. |
| **Limitations** | Provision of certain updates from prescribers are not always conducted in a timely manner. For example, the quality of data on dosing point episodes has varied over time. It is recommended that data analysis is limited to records no closer than six months from the date of extraction to allow for data to be stabilised.  Since November 2023, prescribers have been able to manage their applications and approvals using SafeScript NSW which is expected to lead to more timely updates to records. | This subcollection only includes details of granted approvals. Because approval is required in a narrow set of circumstances, approvals represent a very small proportion of prescribing of S8 opioids, benzodiazepines and cannabis medicines in the community.  An approval provides an intention to treat but it does not necessarily mean a patient receives the treatment or that the treatment occurs for the full duration of the approval. A prescription for an S8 medicine is valid for six months and may be issued up to the last day of a valid approval. | A prescription provides an intention to treat but it does not necessarily mean a patient receives the treatment or that the treatment occurs for the full period over which the prescription is valid. The prescription may not be dispensed, or the medicine dispensed may be taken by the patient for a period less than or longer than the validity period. |

## Variable list

**Subcollection 1: Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)**

| **Variable** | | **Description** | **Name in dataset** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Patient’s residential postcode** | | Patient’s residential postcode | Patient Postcode |
| **Patient’s birth date** | | Patient’s birth date (month and year) | Patient Birth Month and Year |
| **Patient’s sex** | | Patient’s sex. The classification was expanded to include ‘Another term’ in May 2023. | Patient’s sex |
| **Patient’s indigenous status** | | Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status. Data collection commenced in 1999. | Patient’s indigenous status |
| **Patient’s country of birth** | | Patient’s country of birth based on ABS Standard Classification of Countries (SACC). Data collection was discontinued in September 2023. | Patient’s country of birth |
| **Patient’s preferred language** | | Patient’s preferred language based on ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL). Data collection commenced in March 2013 and was discontinued in September 2023. | Patient’s preferred language |
| **Approval type** | | Two types of OTP approval: ‘OTP’ for ongoing treatment in NSW; ‘OTP - Interstate Transfer’ for patients enrolled in treatment outside of NSW who are to be dosed in NSW temporarily for a short period. | Approval type |
| **Patient’s primary opioid drug of dependence** | | Patient’s primary opioid drug of dependence, as indicated on the approval application form. Data collection commenced in January 2012. Previous variable value is not carried over to a new (but continuing) approval issued for a patient, such as in a transfer of care from one prescriber to another.  Replaces the former variable *Patient’s primary opioid drug of dependence*, which comprised 12 separate variables. | Patient’s primary opioid drug of dependence |
| **Other drug(s) of concerns** | Patient’s other drug(s) of concern, as indicated on the approval application form. Data collection commenced in January 1999.  Replaces the former variable *Patient’s other drugs of concern*, which comprised 19 separate variables, and used a different classification. | Patient’s other drug(s) of concern |
| **Approval start date** | Date from which the approval is active (i.e. valid). An approval is issued when treatment is first started, re-started after a period of absence, or when there is a change in prescriber, medicine, or maximum dose. | Approval start date |
| **Approval end date** | Date on which an approval ends. This may be the date on which the patient is exited from the NSW OTP, the patient changes treatment (e.g. from methadone or buprenorphine), the patient is transferred to another prescriber, the approval is cancelled.  Replaces the former variables *Authority expiry date* and *Authority cancellation date*. | Approval end date |
| **Approved medicine** | Medicine(s) approved to be prescribed for treatment.  Data collection was expanded in May 2023 to include ‘Other ODT medicine’. An ‘Other ODT medicine’ is a short-acting opioid used to facilitate change of treatment from methadone to buprenorphine, or may be used as an alternative to methadone or buprenorphine where neither are suitable (for example, where they are contraindicated). | Approved medicine |
| **Type of buprenorphine** | The type of buprenorphine intended for treatment, as indicated on the approval application form. Data collection commenced in May 2023. May be missing in some circumstances, for example, where the patient is transferred from one prescriber to another. | Buprenorphine category |
| **Maximum dose approved** | Maximum daily dose authorised for the approved medicine | Maximum dose authorised |
| **Unit of measure for maximum dose** | Unit of measure for the maximum dose | Unit of measure |
| **Prescriber ID** | Unique prescriber identifier | Prescriber ID |
| **Prescriber practice ID** | Unique prescriber practice identifier | Prescriber practice (organisation) ID |
| **Practice subtype** | Type of practice of the prescriber (e.g. general practice/specialist medical service, community health facility). Unknown for a high proportion of older records.  Replaces the former variable *Practice type*, which had a different classification. | Practice (organisation) subtype |
| **Practice sector** | Sector of the practice of the prescriber. Unknown for a high proportion of older records.  Replaces the former variable *Prescriber sector*. New classification commenced May 2023, with ‘Justice Health’ coded to ‘Other’. | Practice (organisation) sector |
| **Practice postcode** | Refers to street address generally but may refer to postal address | Practice (organisation) postcode |
| **Reason patient ended program** | Indicates why the patient ended treatment (or an approval was ended) but also helps with determining if the treatment was discrete or part of a sequence of treatment periods. | Exit reason |
| **Start date at administration point** | Date on which patient commenced being dosed at a particular administration (dosing) point. There is a high degree of unreliability for details of a patient's administration point prior to 2000, and otherwise reliability is low to moderate.  In February 2024, an unexpected administrative update in the SafeScript NSW system led to the loss of information for people dosed in correctional facilities at that time, and it is likely there were impacts to data quality in the subsequent months for people dosed in these facilities. | Dosing start date |
| **End date at administration point** | Date on which patient finished being dosed at a particular administration (dosing) point.  See *Start date at administration point* for more details. | Dosing end date |
| **Administration point ID** | Unique administration (dosing) point identifier | Dosing point (organisation) ID |
| **Administration point sector** | Sector of the administration (dosing) point.  New classification commenced May 2023, with ‘Justice Health’ coded to ‘Other’. | Dosing point (organisation) sector |
| **Administration point type** | Type of administration (dosing) point.  Replaces the former variable *Administration point type*, which had a different classification. | Dosing point (organisation) subtype |
| **Administration point postcode** | Postcode of administration (dosing) point | Dosing point (organisation) postcode |

**Subcollection 2: Other Schedule 8 (S8) Medicines**

| **Variable** | | **Description** | **Variable name** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Patient’s residential postcode** | | Patient’s residential postcode | Patient Postcode |
| **Patient’s birth date** | | Patient’s birth date (month and year) | Patient Birth Month and Year |
| **Patient’s sex** | | Patient’s sex. The classification was expanded to include ‘Another term’ in May 2023. | Patient’s sex |
| **Indication for treatment** | | Patient’s medical condition for which the medicine is to be used as treatment.  Replaces the former variable *Patient diagnosed health problem(s)*. | Indication |
| **Approval start date** | | Date from which the approval is active (i.e. valid) | Approval start date |
| **Approval end date** | | Date on which an approval ends, which may be the date it expires or the date it is cancelled.  Replaces the former variables *Authority expiry date* and *Authority cancellation date*. | Approval end date |
| **Approved medicine** | Medicine approved to be prescribed.  For medicines used in pain management, the route of administration is included, e.g. Morphine oral, Oxycodone rectal.  See *Directions for approved medicine(s)* for more details relating to records created in systems predating SafeScript NSW. | Approved medicine |
| **Maximum dose approved** | Maximum dose approved for use. Data collection commenced in September 2016. Prior to this, *Directions for approved drugs(s)* were typically used to convey the maximum approved daily dose. Some approvals may have both maximum dose approved and directions. | Maximum dose authorised |
| **Unit of measure for maximum dose** | Unit of measure for the maximum approved dose | Unit of Measure |
| **Route of administration of approved medicine** | Route of administration of the approved medicine.  Also see *Directions for approved medicine(s)*. | Route of administration |
| **Directions for approved medicine(s)** | Details of the approved medicine, route of administration, and directions for the approved medicine (conveying the maximum authorised dose), as recorded in systems predating SafeScript NSW. The directions were entered in free text format and therefore the content has wide variability in style and format. | Directions for authorised drug(s) |
| **Prescriber ID** | Unique prescriber identifier | Prescriber ID |
| **Prescriber practice ID** | Unique prescriber practice identifier | Prescriber practice (organisation) ID |
| **Practice subtype** | Type of practice of the prescriber (e.g. general practice/specialist medical service, community health facility). Unknown for a high proportion of records.  Replaces the former variable *Practice type*, which had a different classification. | Practice (organisation) subtype |
| **Practice sector** | Sector of the practice of the prescriber. Unknown for a high proportion of records. | Practice (organisation) sector |
| **Practice postcode** | Refers to street address generally but may refer to postal address | Practice (organisation) postcode |

**Subcollection 3: Notified Psychostimulant Prescriptions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Description** | **Variable name** |
| **Patient’s residential postcode** | Patient’s residential postcode | Postcode |
| **Patient’s birth date** | Patient’s birth date (year only; year and month only; year, month  and day of week only; or date) | DateOfBirth |
| **Patient’s sex** | Patient’s sex (gender) | Gender |
| **Date of prescription** | Date drug was prescribed | DatePrescribed |
| **Drug prescribed** | Drug prescribed | DrugName |
| **Dose prescribed** | Measured in mg | DailyDose |
| **Prescriber specialty** | Only one Ahpra specialty is recorded for a prescriber, which was the last updated in the ERRCD system | SpecialtyRole |

# Appendix – Code List

**Subcollection 1: Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)**

| **Variable** | **Values** |
| --- | --- |
| **Patient’s sex** | M |
| F |
| O (other, representing ‘another term’) |
| U (unspecified) |
| **Patient’s indigenous status** | Aboriginal |
| Torres Strait Islander |
| Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander |
| Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander |
| **Patient’s country of birth** | Refer to ABS Standard Classification of Countries (SACC) |
| **Patient’s preferred language** | Refer to ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) |
| **Approval type** | OTP |
| OTP - Interstate Transfer |
| **Approved medicine** | Methadone |
| Buprenorphine |
| Other ODT medicine |
| **Type of buprenorphine** | Buprenorphine sublingual |
| Buprenorphine-naloxone sublingual |
| Depot buprenorphine including sublingual |
| **Patient’s primary opioid drug of dependence** | Heroin |
| Oxycodone |
| Methadone |
| Morphine |
| Fentanyl |
| Hydromorphone |
| Pethidine |
| Tapentadol |
| Tramadol |
| Codeine |
| Buprenorphine |
| Other |
| **Other drug(s) of concerns** | No other drugs of concern |
| Alcohol |
| Benzodiazepines |
| Cocaine |
| Cannabinoids |
| Pregabalin |
| MDMA (e.g. ecstasy) |
| Methamphetamine |
| Nicotine |
| Non-opioid analgesics |
| Other |
| **Practice sector** | Public |
| Private |
| Other |
| Unknown |
| **Practice subtype** | Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service |
| Community health facility |
| Correctional facility |
| General practice/specialist medical service |
| Hospital – inpatients only |
| Hospital – n.e.c. |
| Non-Government Organisation |
| Opioid pharmacotherapy clinic |
| Residential health care facility |
| Other |
| Unknown/inadequately described/not stated |
| **Administration point sector** | Public |
| Private |
| Other |
| Unknown |
| **Administration point type** | Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service |
| Community health facility |
| Community pharmacy |
| Correctional facility |
| General practice/specialist medical service |
| Hospital – inpatients only |
| Hospital – n.e.c. |
| Non-Government Organisation |
| Opioid pharmacotherapy clinic |
| Residential health care facility |
| Other |
| Unknown/inadequately described/not stated |
| **Reason patient ended program** | Patient did not commence treatment |
| Patient successfully completed treatment |
| Treatment incomplete (by mutual agreement between prescriber and patient) |
| Patient ceased to pick up methadone/buprenorphine |
| Change of pharmacotherapy drug |
| Treatment terminated involuntarily |
| Patient deceased |
| Patient transferred to another prescriber |
| Patient transferred to Justice Health System |
| Other |
| Unknown |

**Subcollection 2: Other Schedule 8 (S8) Medicines**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Values** |
| **Patient’s sex** | M |
| F |
| O (other, representing ‘another term’) |
| U (unspecified) |
| **Route of administration** | oral |
|  | oromucosal |
|  | intranasal |
|  | transdermal |
|  | injection |
| **Practice subtype** | Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service |
| Community health facility |
| Correctional facility |
| General practice/specialist medical service |
| Hospital – inpatients only |
| Hospital – n.e.c. |
| Non-Government Organisation |
| Opioid pharmacotherapy clinic |
| Residential health care facility |
| Other |
| Unknown/inadequately described/not stated |
| **Practice sector** | Public |
| Private |
| Other |
| Unknown |

**Subcollection 3: Notified Psychostimulant Prescriptions**

| **Variable** | **Values** |
| --- | --- |
| **Patient’s sex** | Male |
| Female |
| **Drug prescribed** | Dexamfetamine |
| Lisdexamfetamine |
| Methylphenidate |
| **Prescriber specialty** | Approved Other Prescriber |
| General Practice |
| General Practitioner (non specialist) |
| Paediatrics and Child Health |
| Paediatrics and Child Health - Neurology |
| Pain Medicine |
| Psychiatry |
| Psychiatry - Child and Adolescent |
| (Blank) |