



# DRUG TREATMENT OF ATTENTION-DEFICIT / HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD) IN AUSTRIA

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vertragspartner analyse

## BACKGROUND / OBJECTIVES

The therapy of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) with methylphenidate or atomoxetine, formerly only related to children and adolescents, is now extended to the adult population. In Austria the health insurance funds cover the costs of methylphenidate or atomoxetine only if the diagnosis of ADHD is verified by a pediatrician or a neurologist. Since little is known about treatment patterns in Austria, the aim of this study was to evaluate the medication patterns of ADHD in 2012 in Austria, stratified by age and sex.

## DATA / METHODS

The data analysis refers to the accounting data of the 13 major Austrian health insurance funds, covering more than 97% of the Austrian population. Provided in a pseudonymised manner, with availability of the individual patient parameters age and sex, all dispensed medication of methylphenidate or atomoxetine is included in the descriptive analysis. The prevalence of ADHD medication is evaluated regarding age and sex. Furthermore the prescribed daily dose in relation to the defined daily dose is pointed out.

## RESULTS

9,120 patients with ADHD medication in 2012 are included in the analysis (22% female). 0.5% (50 children) of all patients with ADHD medication is in the age cohort of under 6 years, 47.4% (4,320 children) are between 6 and 13, 21.9% (4,000 adolescents) are between 14 and 17, and 30.2% (2,750 patients) are adults (18+). With regard to 1,572,333 insured children and adolescents in 2012 the prevalence of ADHD drug use in non-adult patients is 0.6%. While 84.9% of all treated children and adolescents are male, only 63.5% of treated adults are male.

The relation between the defined daily dose (ddd) to the prescribed daily dose (pdd) shows that 86% of children and adolescents have less than 366 pdd over the period of one year and only 1% has more than 732 pdd. 81% of the adults have less than 366 pdd and 6% have more than 732 pdd.

Figure 1: Prevalence of ADHD drug use

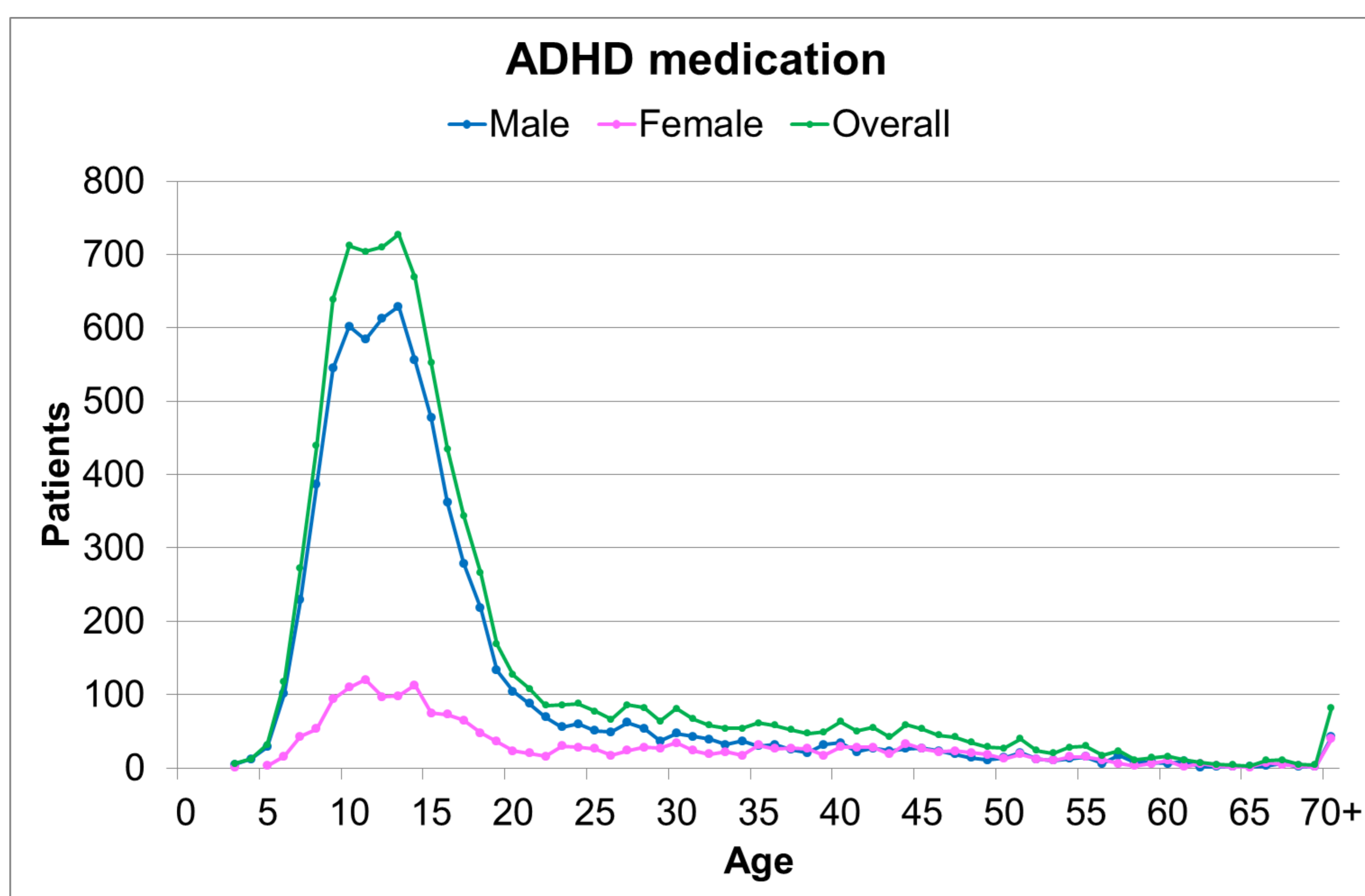
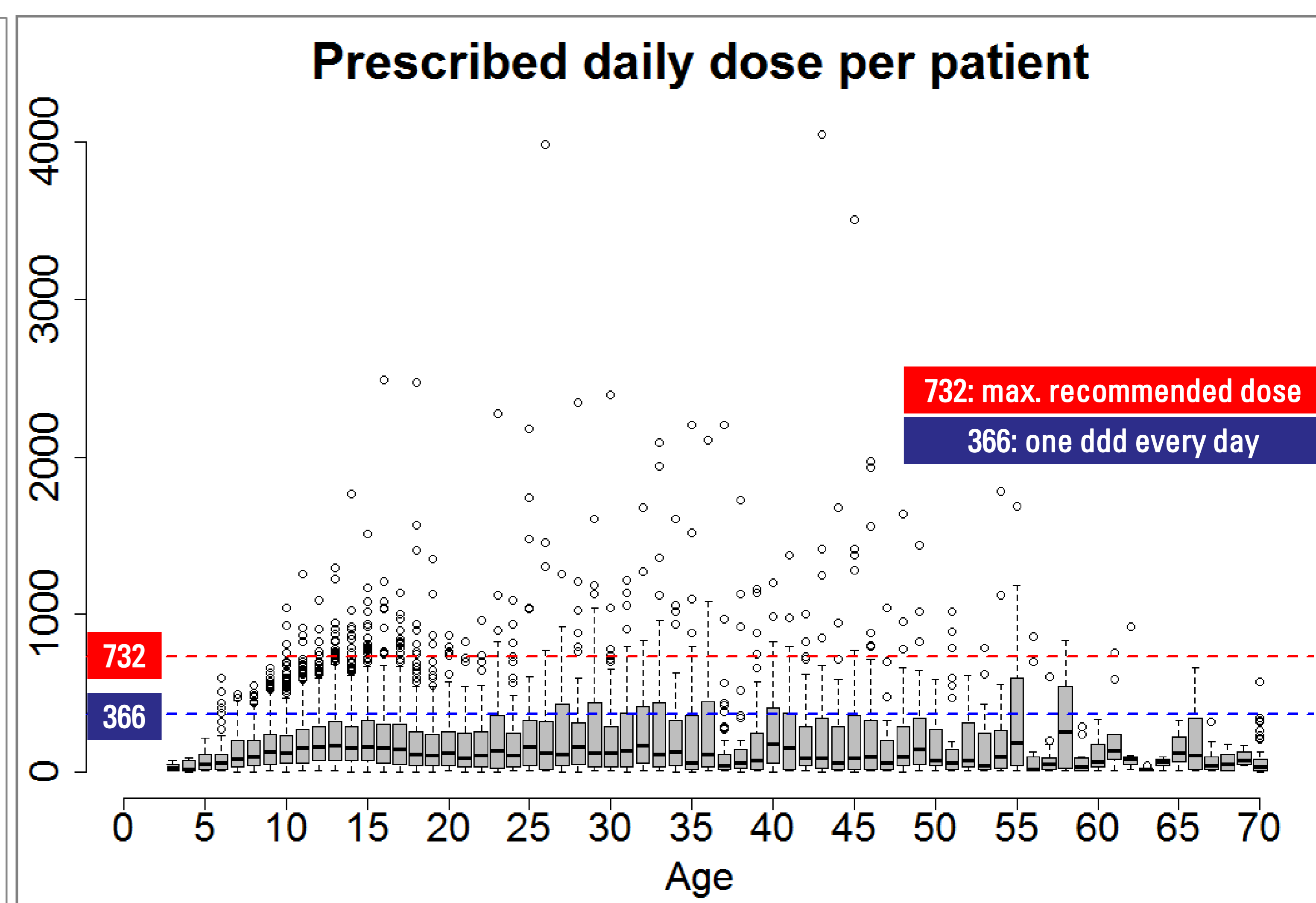


Figure 2: Prescribed daily dose



## CONCLUSIONS

While in the age cohort of 10-14 years approximately 700 children are diagnosed with ADHD, a steep decrease in the following age-groups is worth mentioning. Regarding the adult patients on ADHD drug therapy the patient numbers are slightly decreasing from approximately 100 in the decade of 20–29, with stable patient numbers of about 50 in the age cohort of 35-45 years and still a few patients at the age of 70+.

The variety of prescribed daily dose per patient is quite homogeneous during childhood and adolescence, but this parameter spreads widely in adults. This could be an indicator of overuse or misuse. In some age cohorts the interquartile range overlap the defined daily dose line (366) and some patients have an available dosage which exceeds the recommended maximum dose (732).

Since the results reflect the prescription reality they can be used as a solid basis for further discussions, future evaluations and interventions concerning ADHD medication in Austria. Furthermore prevalence data are important for the allocation of health resources.

Competing interests: None

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