

In 1985, physicians prescribed 1.09 drugs for every office visit. Fourteen years later, the figure reached 1.46 per office visit.

The increased volume of prescriptions accounted for 39 percent of the 2000-2001 rise in retail spending, while price hikes accounted for 37 percent. A shift toward the use of higher priced drugs from pharma's larder accounted for the rest.

Half the increase in prescription revenues in 2001 is explained by sales of just 27 drugs,

with Lipitor, Imitrex, Fluoxetine, Zocor, Vioxx, Nexium, Advair, Protonix, OxyContin, Zyprexa, Celexa, Actos, Celebrex and Prevacid leading the pack.

Generics topped sales in four of the 30 therapeutic categories in 2001: atenolol (blood pressure), albuterol (asthma), alprazolam (anxiety) and tamoxifen (breast cancer).

TOP 25 DRUGS IN THE UNITED STATES, 2001

RANK	NAME OF DRUG	TYPE OF DRUG	2001 SALES (MILLIONS)	2001 AVERAGE PRICE PER PRESCRIPTION	PERCENT CHANGE IN SALES	PERCENT CHANGE IN AVERAGE PRICE	PERCENT CHANGE IN UTILIZATION
1	Lipitor	Cholesterol Reducer	\$4,517.5	\$84.96	22.3%	2.9%	18.9%
2	Prilosec	Antilulcerant	\$3,999.0	\$143.68	-2.5%	3.7%	-6.0%
3	Prevacid	Antilulcerant	\$3,195.8	\$133.20	12.8%	5.7%	6.7%
4	Zocor	Cholesterol Reducer	\$2,739.2	\$120.82	24.1%	7.5%	15.4%
5	Celebrex	Antiarthritic	\$2,387.2	\$97.32	18.4%	9.4%	8.2%
6	Zoloft	Antidepressant	\$2,152.5	\$83.34	13.9%	3.5%	10.0%
7	Paxil	Antidepressant	\$2,124.1	\$84.91	17.5%	8.0%	8.8%
8	Vioxx	Antiarthritic	\$2,026.2	\$85.44	33.5%	7.9%	23.7%
9	Prozac	Antidepressant	\$1,993.8	\$121.52	-22.3%	10.6%	-29.8%
10	Augmentin	Enhanced Antibiotic	\$1,873.1	\$81.54	18.2%	9.0%	8.5%
11	Claritin	Oral Antihistamine	\$1,869.7	\$73.80	12.1%	8.4%	3.4%
12	Zyprexa	Antipsychotic	\$1,823.4	\$284.07	28.6%	5.9%	21.3%
13	Norvasc	Calcium Blocker	\$1,766.5	\$58.38	10.6%	1.7%	8.8%
14	Glucophage	Oral Diabetes	\$1,734.4	\$72.06	6.5%	14.4%	-6.9%
15	Oxycontin	Narcotic Painkiller	\$1,486.0	\$218.08	41.1%	15.4%	22.3%
16	Neurontin	Antiseizure	\$1,485.7	\$112.03	31.3%	4.4%	25.8%
17	Pravachol	Cholesterol Reducer	\$1,420.1	\$104.28	18.0%	7.5%	9.7%
18	Premarin Tabs	Estrogen Therapy	\$1,240.4	\$30.41	8.2%	11.1%	-2.6%
19	Hydrocodone/ Apap*	Narcotic Painkiller	\$1,196.5	\$15.45	28.0%	13.9%	12.3%
20	Risperdal	Antipsychotic	\$1,188.3	\$163.97	23.8%	6.7%	16.0%
21	Wellbutrin SR	Antidepressant	\$1,185.9	\$91.55	39.4%	6.6%	30.7%
22	Allegra	Oral Antihistamine	\$1,164.7	\$60.10	43.8%	10.9%	29.6%
23	Effexor XR	Antidepressant	\$1,151.4	\$103.12	41.1%	7.3%	31.5%
24	Celexa	Antidepressant	\$1,139.7	\$71.70	54.5%	3.8%	48.8%
25	Zithromax Z-Pak	Broad Antibiotic	\$1,074.7	\$42.21	11.8%	2.9%	8.6%

*Generic drug

SOURCE: American Institutes for Research