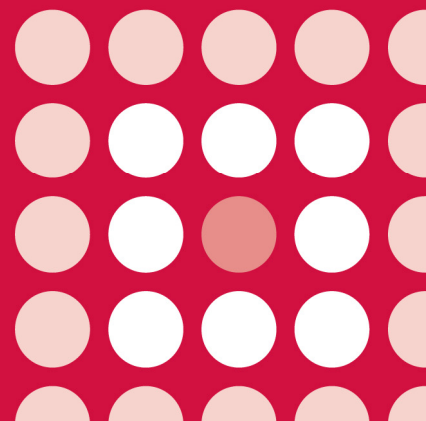




All Wales Therapeutics  
and Toxicology Centre  
Canolfan Therapiwteg a  
Thocsicoleg Cymru Gyfan

## NHS WALES PRIMARY CARE PRESCRIBING ANALYSIS: TRAMADOL

April 2013



This report has been prepared by the Welsh Analytical Prescribing Support Unit (WAPSU), part of the All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre (AWTTC).

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## NHS WALES PRIMARY CARE COMPARATIVE PRESCRIBING ANALYSIS TRAMADOL PRESCRIBING (2007–2012)

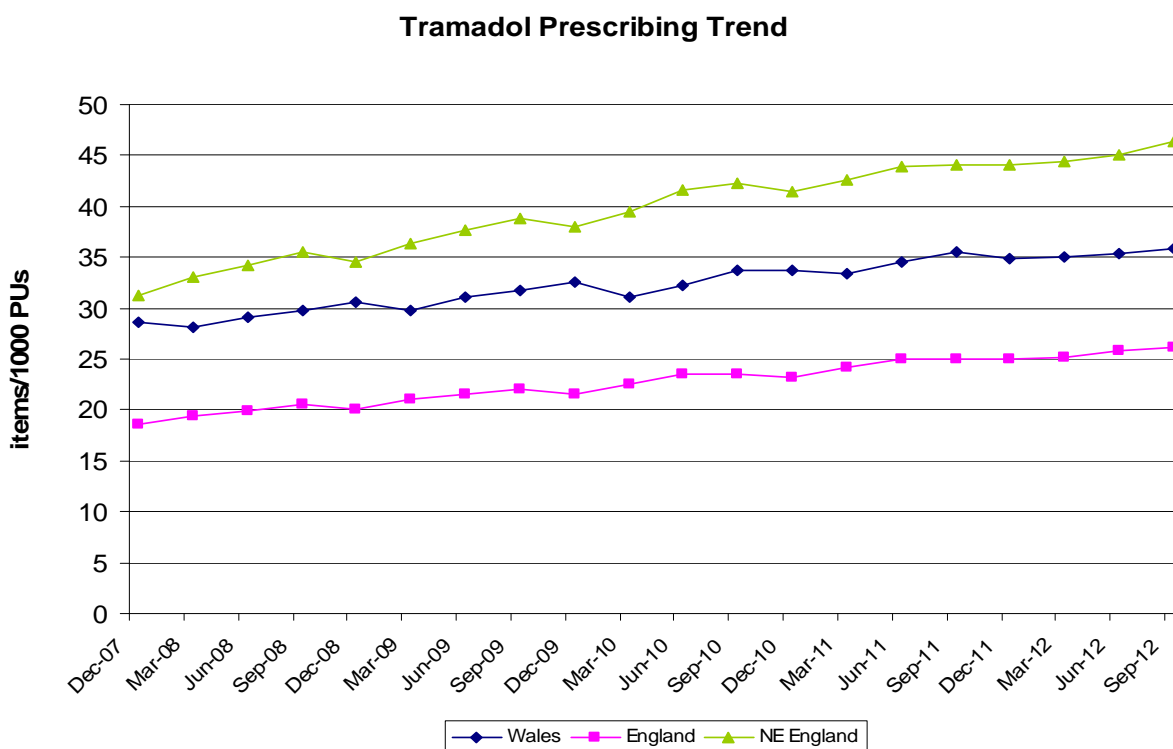
- Tramadol prescribing (items per 1,000 PUs) rose by 21% in Wales between 2007 and 2012, compared to 29% in England and 32% in NE England.
- Within NHS Wales, primary care prescribing of tramadol accounted for 46% of the total opioid analgesics prescribed in December 2007 and 43% of those prescribed in December 2012.
- In 2012, Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Health Boards were the highest prescribers of tramadol, with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Hywel Dda Health Boards also higher than the national average for Wales.

The prescribing data within this analysis are taken from CASPA.net<sup>1</sup> (Wales) and ePACT<sup>2</sup> (England). Items per 1,000 prescribing units (PUs) is used as the measure from a purely quantitative perspective.

For the purposes of benchmarking, the North East (NE) of England was used as a comparator for Wales due to its similar regional demographics<sup>3</sup>.

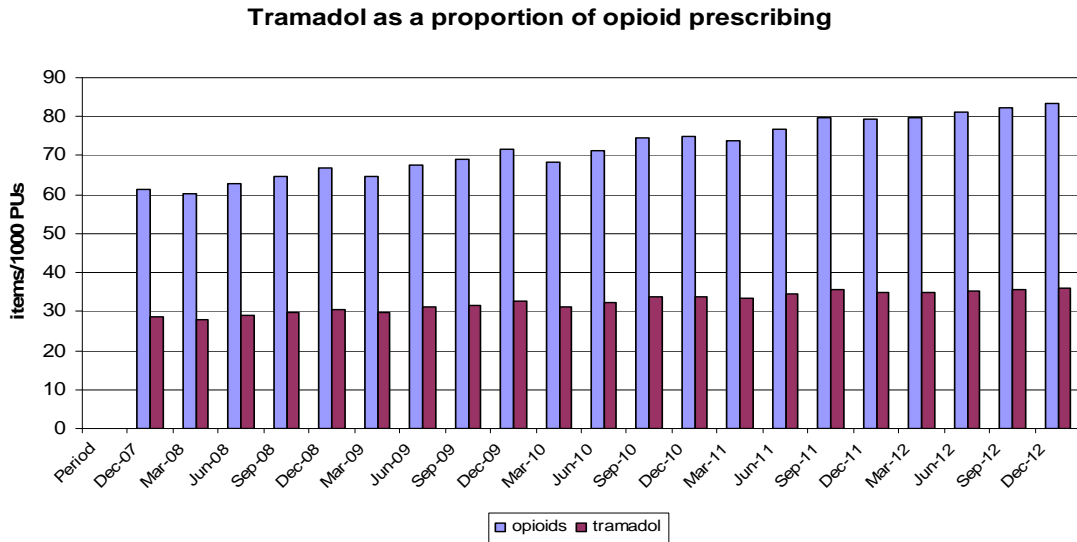
Figure 1 shows the tramadol prescribing trends (items per 1,000 PUs) for England, Wales and NE England from the quarter ending December 2007 to the quarter ending September 2012.

**Figure 1. Tramadol prescribing trend**



Since 2007, tramadol prescribing (items per 1,000 PUs) has risen by 21% in Wales, compared to 29% in England and 32% in NE England. Prescribing data for the quarter ending December 2012 show that tramadol currently accounts for 44% of total opioid prescribing in Wales (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Tramadol as a proportion of opioid prescribing in Wales**



Figures 3 and 4 show comparative tramadol prescribing in Wales between health boards and between localities, respectively, for the year January to December 2012.

**Figure 3. Tramadol prescribing by Health Board January – December 2012**

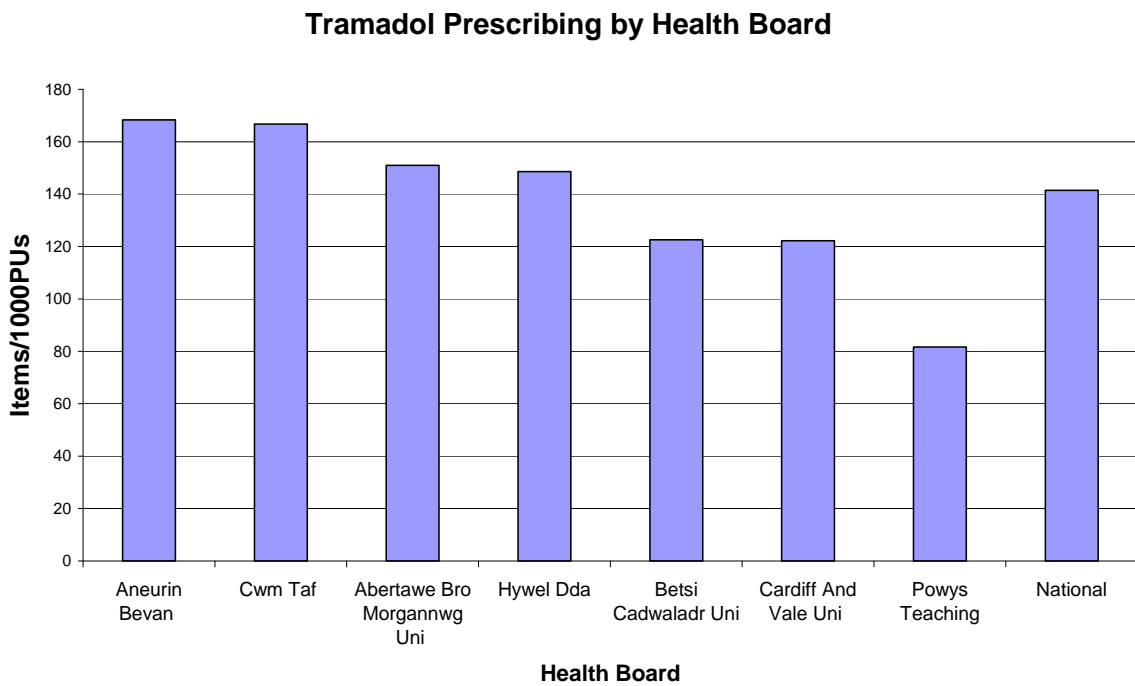
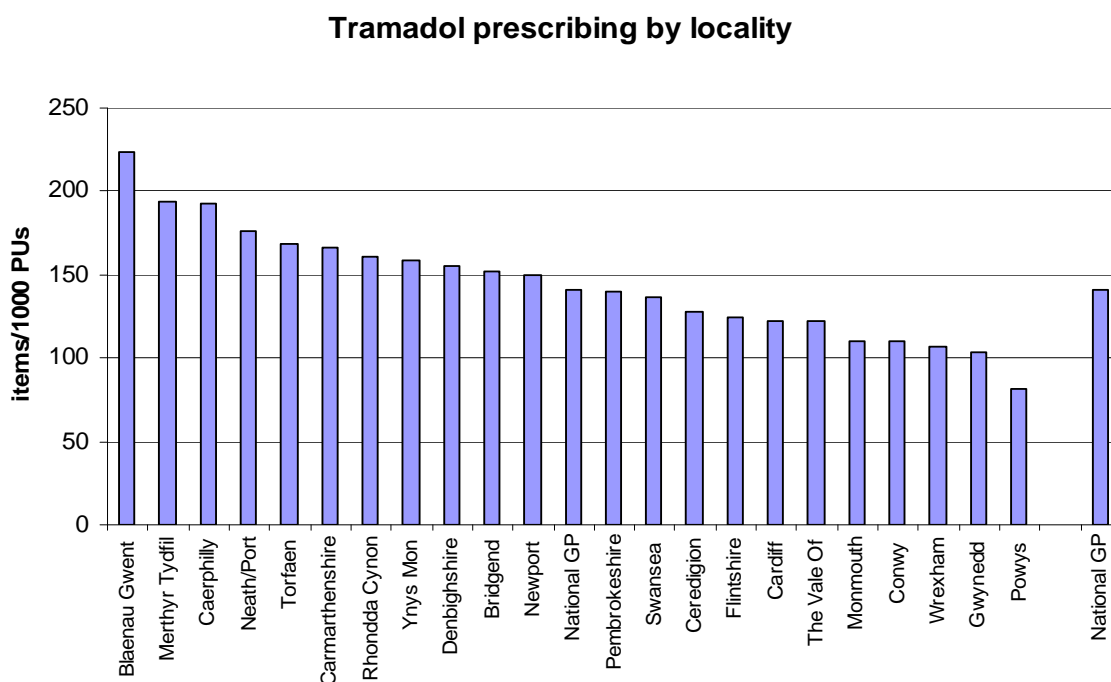


Figure 4. Tramadol prescribing by locality January – December 2012



#### Points to note

- As part of the NHS Wales Clinical Effectiveness Prescribing Programme, local comparators are produced to allow benchmarking across a range of prescribing indicators and are available for both local and national comparative measurement as necessary in accordance with local prioritisation. Prescribing of tramadol and tramadol-containing combination products as a percentage of all opioid prescribing has been a local comparator since April 2011. A slower NHS Wales growth in tramadol prescribing compared to England and NE England may be attributed to this factor.
- Analysis of 2012 prescribing data shows that Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Health Boards are the highest prescribers of tramadol, with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Hywel Dda Health Boards also higher than the national average.

#### References

1. Comparative Analysis System for Prescribing Audit (CASPA). NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership. March 2013.
2. ePACT.net. NHS Prescription Services. March 2013.
3. 2011 Census: Population and household estimates for England and Wales. Office for National Statistics. March 2011.