Between July 2007 and June 2013:
2159 reported serious adverse events
132 medication events
• 23 related to opioids
• 19 related to anticoagulants
• 7 related to insulin
822 medication incidents reported causing death and severe harm
• 91 related to anticoagulants
• 89 related to opioids
• 46 related to insulin

High-risk medicines

3/4 of New Zealanders are estimated to have had a prescription for one or more medicines in the year ended 30 June 2013.¹

Up to 60% of adverse drug events (ADEs) are thought to be preventable.² Medication errors and adverse drug reactions (ADRs) are the main causes of ADEs.


Frequency of ADEs

13% with two medicines
58% with five medicines
82% with seven or more³

Up to $158m is the estimated annual cost of preventable ADEs in New Zealand.¹⁰–¹²


The medicines that were most commonly implicated for causing an ADE were:¹³

33% opioids
10% anticoagulants

ADE collaborative
The medicines that were most commonly implicated for causing an ADE were:¹³