Supplementary Appendix 1. Daily defined doses.

Using this system the amount of an individual drug can be expressed in daily defined doses (DDDs) and, since the DDD of one drug is assumed to be functionally equivalent to the DDD of any other drug used for a similar purpose, the number of DDDs for two or more such drugs can be added together. It is also possible to add together the DDDs of all the drugs in the same broad therapeutic class or of all the drugs given to one or more patients. By extension, cost per DDD across groups of drugs (a measure of economy) may be compared between practices, health authorities, and regions over time indicating where higher cost alternatives have been used, for example a GP prescribes 30 10 mg tablets of simvastatin. The DDD for simvastatin is 15 mg — therefore, the number of DDDs is (30x10)/15 = 20.

An example:

BNF name	DDD (mg)	Total quantity Rx (mg)	Number of DDDs Rx (total quantity/DDD)
Diclofenac	100	50 000	50 000/100 = 500
Ibuprofen	1200	216 000	216 000/1200 = 180
Naproxen	500	4800	4800/500 = 96
Indomethacin	100	2000	2000/100 = 20
Mefenamic acid	1000	10 000	10 000/1000 = 10
Etodolac	400	4000	4000/400 = 10
		Total NSAIDS Rx	816