

Incident prescribing patterns for hypercholesterolaemia and hypertension in Scotland – recovery from the impact of COVID-19 to inform healthcare improvement

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Background

Evidence from the literature indicated that approximately 500,000 diagnoses of hypertension were missed in Great Britain due to the COVID-19 pandemic, over April 2018–July 2021. However, it remains unclear if this trend of misdiagnosis/undiagnosed cases persisted beyond July 2021 or if the healthcare system successfully caught up with these missed diagnoses. This insight is crucial, as ongoing issues would require urgent attention.

Method

A retrospective cohort study was conducted using prescriptions prescribed in the community setting from January 2020 to December 2022. We evaluated the number of newly initiated patients on treatments for hypercholesterolaemia and hypertension, stratified by deprivation index and health regions. This approach allowed us to assess the long-term impact of COVID-19 beyond the last reported data point in July 2021.

Figure 1: Number of patients starting a new treatment course for selected lipid-lowering drugs in Scotland, January 2020 to December 2022

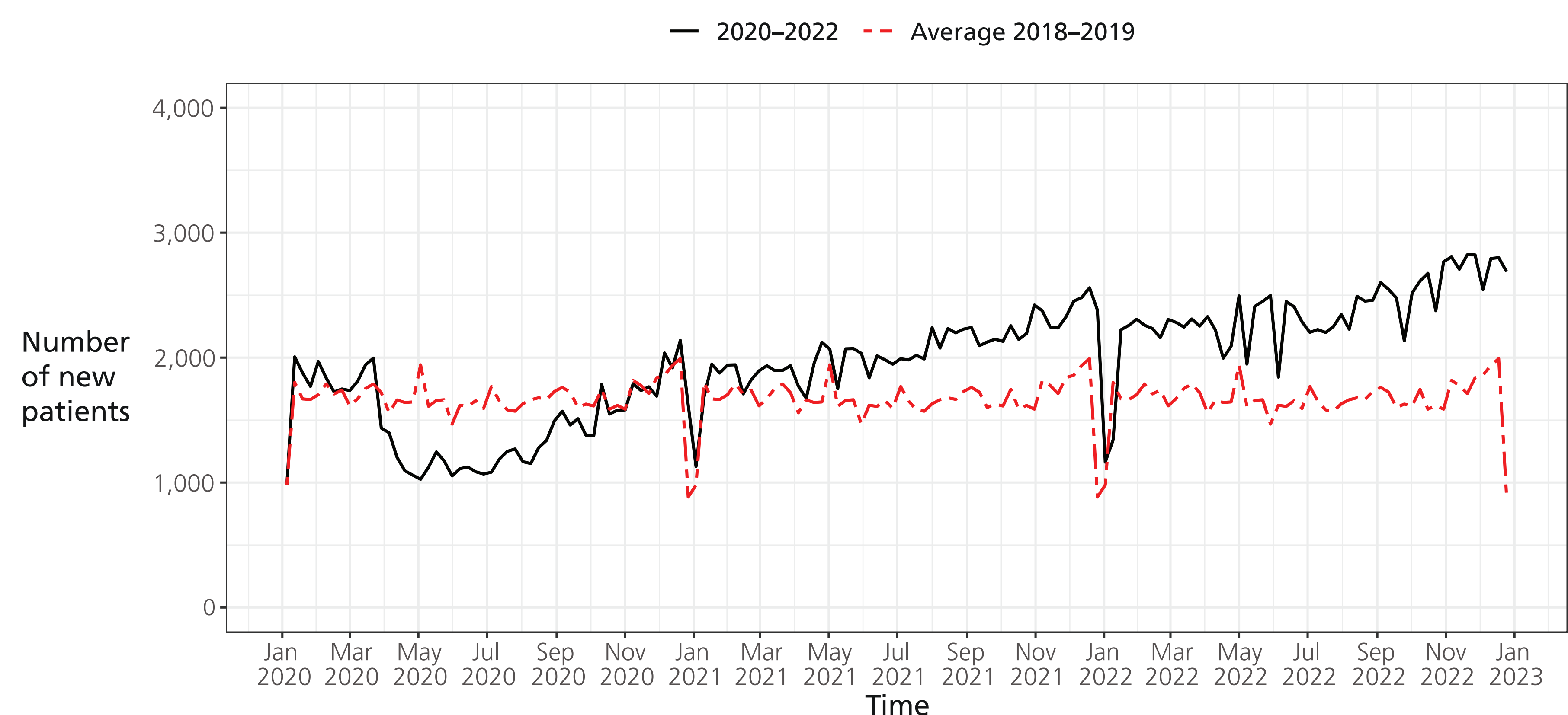


Figure 2: Number of patients starting a new treatment course for selected antihypertensive drugs in Scotland, January 2020 to December 2022

