IQVIA

IQVIA Snapshot

Prevalence and Treatment of Mental Health Disorders

Trends in the use of antipsychotics in Canada, 2019–2023

IQVIA's definition of the therapeutic class, psychotherapeutics (medication treatments for mental health), includes antidepressants, anxiolytics/hypnotics, antipsychotics, and psychostimulants. Antipsychotics, also known as neuroleptics, are a class of psychotropic medications used to manage psychosis, primarily for schizophrenia, but also for a range of other psychotic disorders. They can also be used with mood stabilizers to treat bipolar disorder, depression, Alzheimer's disease, anxiety disorders, and Tourette's syndrome.[1] Antipsychotic medications work by altering neurochemistry to help reduce psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, and thought disorders.

This Snapshot presents some highlights obtained from IQVIA's Dashboard on prescriptions dispensed for antipsychotics. The data used to produce this Snapshot includes the two existing generations of antipsychotics:

first-generation (typical) antipsychotics, which are used increasingly less and whose volumes in the data studied are the lowest; and second-generation (atypical) antipsychotics, which, in oral form, are by far the most widely used. This generation also includes long-lasting injections (depot form), which are dispensed between once a week and once a month. Prevalence and demographic characteristics of consumption in the general Canadian population are presented for 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Refer to page 7 for the limitations associated with using IQVIA data.

National antipsychotic utilization highlights

Nationally, the prevalence rate of combined use of first- and second-generation antipsychotics ranged from 3.9% to 4.3% over the five years observed, accompanied by a steady increase in the number of individuals, prescriptions and units (tablets, solutions).

General statistics on antipsychotic use in Canada and variations 2019 - 2023

	PREVALENCE	INDIVIDUALS	PRESCRIPTIONS DISPENSED	UNITS DISPENSED*
2019	3.9%	1,450,784	23,497,716	569,174,647
2020	4.1%	1,535,190	24,320,984	607,581,533
2021	4.3%	1,642,335	24,970,507	631,370,776
2022	4.1%	1,621,241	25,535,154	647,802,897
2023	**4.1%**	**1,682,816 ▲ 16.0%**	**26,083,645 ▲ 11.0%**	**663,648,176 ▲ 16.6%**

1. https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index/antipsychotic-medication
* Since prescription durations vary from province to province (e.g. 30 or 90 days), units represent a relevant comparative indicator.
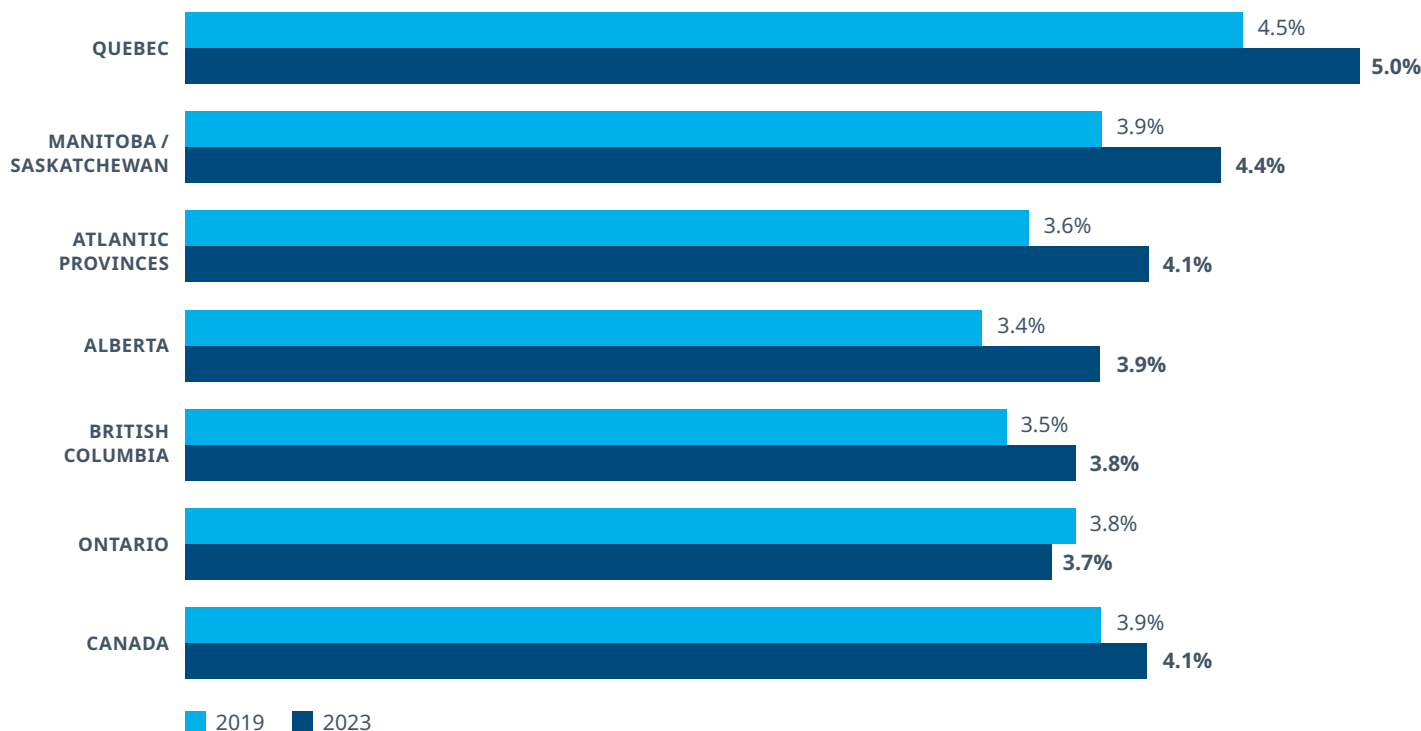
In Canada, over the five-year period studied, the number of prescriptions for first-generation antipsychotics decreased, while that of second-generation antipsychotics, particularly depot forms, increased steadily. Between 2019 and 2023, the latter experienced increases ranging from 5% to 9.1%.

NUMBER OF PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FIRST- AND SECOND-GENERATION ANTIPSYCHOTICS, CANADA, 2019–2023			
	1ST GENERATION	2ND GENERATION ORAL	2ND GENERATION DEPOT
2019	1,736,901	21,233,533	527,282
2020	1,743,351 ▲ 0.4%	22,002,169 ▲ 3.6%	575,464 ▲ 9.1%
2021	1,714,996 ▼ -1.6%	22,643,377 ▲ 2.9%	612,134 ▲ 6.4%
2022	1,684,432 ▼ -1.8%	23,210,982 ▲ 2.5%	642,740 ▲ 5.0%
2023	1,541,072 ▼ -8.5%	23,863,671 ▲ 2.8%	678,902 ▲ 5.6%

Provincial prevalence trends

The prevalence rate for antipsychotic use increased in all Canadian provinces over the five years studied, with the exception of Ontario. Quebec has the highest prevalence, at 4.5% in 2019 and 5% in 2023.

Prevalence of antipsychotic dispensing by province

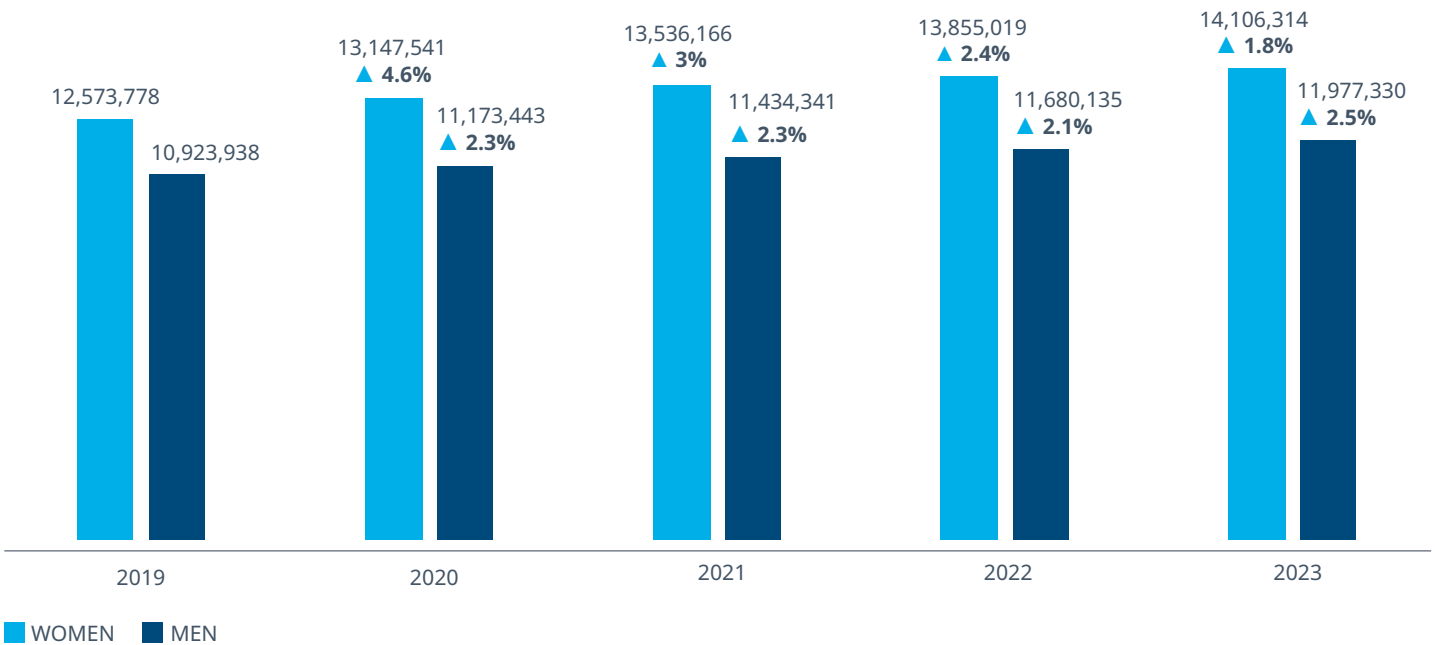| Province	2019	2023
QUEBEC	4.5%	5.0%
MANITOBA / SASKATCHEWAN	3.9%	4.4%
ATLANTIC PROVINCES	3.6%	4.1%
ALBERTA	3.4%	3.9%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	3.5%	3.8%
ONTARIO	3.8%	3.7%
CANADA	3.9%	4.1%

■ 2019   ■ 2023

IQVIA has recently developed new indicators to enrich the reports, by integrating data on health regions from various Canadian provinces. Among these, Ontario is subdivided into 26 regions and Quebec has 15. The following table presents some examples. For more information, do not hesitate to contact us.

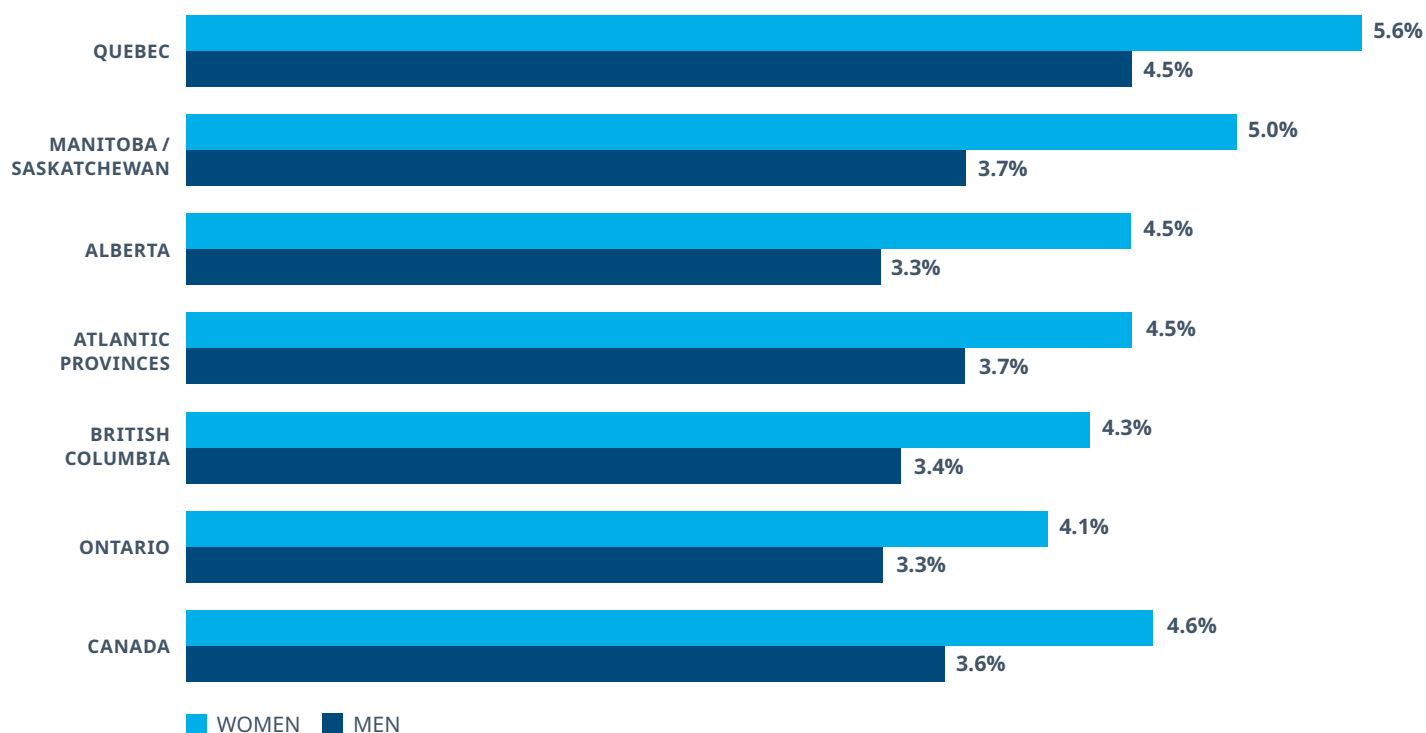| PREVALENCE OF ANTIPSYCHOTICS DISPENSED BY SELECTED PROVINCIAL HEALTH REGION		
	2019	**2023**
INTERIOR HEALTH (BC)	4.0%	4.3%
EDMONTON (AB)	5.0%	5.6%
NEW BRUNSWICK (ATL)	5.4%	5.9%
MIDDLESEX-LONDON (ON)	6.3%	6.3%
MAURICIE-CENTRE-DU-QUÉBEC	7.4%	8.2%

Demographic analysis

In Canada, the number of antipsychotic prescriptions has increased each year for both women and men. Between 2019 and 2023, the growth in the number of prescriptions for women has gradually decreased, from 4.6% to 1.8%. For men, this growth has remained stable, varying annually from 2.1% to 2.5%.

Number of prescriptions for antipsychotics dispensed by gender, Canada, 2019–2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
WOMEN	12,573,778	13,147,541 ▲ 4.6%	13,536,166 ▲ 3%	13,855,019 ▲ 2.4%	14,106,314 ▲ 1.8%
MEN	10,923,938	11,173,443 ▲ 2.3%	11,434,341 ▲ 2.3%	11,680,135 ▲ 2.1%	11,977,330 ▲ 2.5%

■ WOMEN ■ MEN

In 2023, the prevalence rate among women was higher than that of men in all provinces. The highest rate is observed among Quebec women at 5.6%.

Prevalence of antipsychotic dispensing by gender, by province – 2023

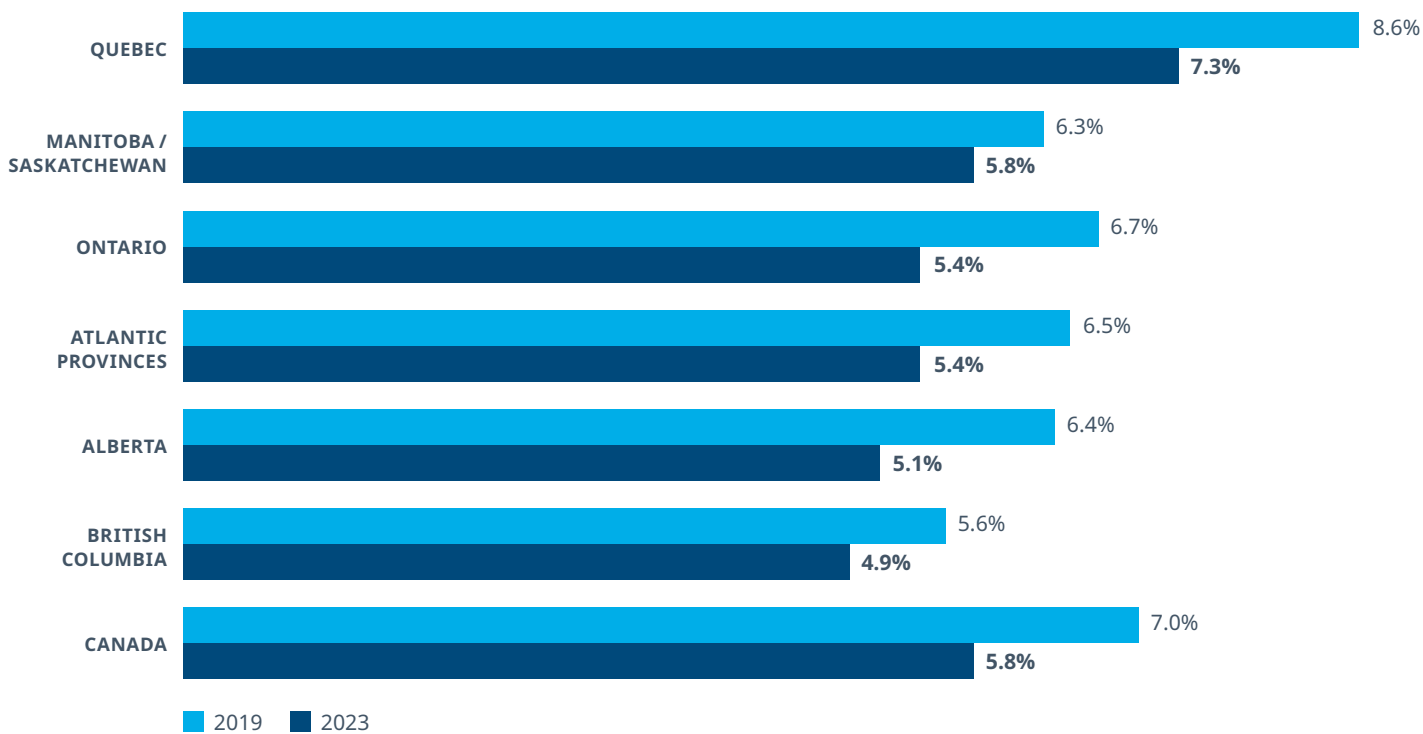| Province	Women	Men
QUEBEC	5.6%	4.5%
MANITOBA / SASKATCHEWAN	5.0%	3.7%
ALBERTA	4.5%	3.3%
ATLANTIC PROVINCES	4.5%	3.7%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	4.3%	3.4%
ONTARIO	4.1%	3.3%
CANADA	4.6%	3.6%

WOMEN   MEN

In all Canadian provinces, the prevalence rate for women in 2023 still exceeded that of men in all age groups. Quebec had the highest prevalence rates for women and men aged 65 and over, at 8% and 6.5%, respectively. It is also noted that prevalence generally increased with age for both genders.

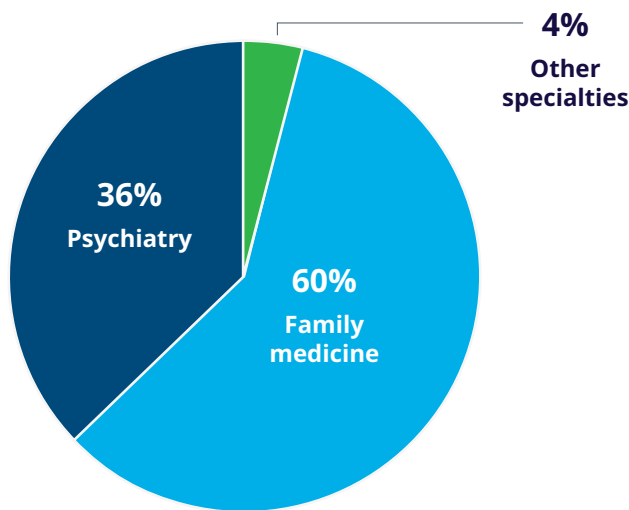|	PREVALENCE OF ANTIPSYCHOTIC DISPENSING BY GENDER, PROVINCE, AND AGE GROUP, 2023							
	MEN				WOMEN			
PROVINCE	18 - 24	25 - 44	45- 64	65+	18 - 24	25 - 44	45- 64	65+
QUEBEC	2.9%	5.2%	5.5%	**6.5%**	4.7%	6.3%	6.6%	**8.0%**
MANITOBA / SASKATCHEWAN	3.4%	4.6%	4.2%	5.2%	6.2%	6.3%	5.6%	6.4%
ATLANTIC PROVINCES	3.0%	4.7%	3.8%	4.8%	5.1%	5.4%	4.4%	6.0%
ONTARIO	2.7%	4.1%	3.6%	4.8%	4.8%	4.6%	4.4%	6.0%
ALBERTA	3.2%	4.1%	3.9%	4.4%	5.7%	5.4%	5.4%	5.8%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	2.6%	4.2%	3.9%	4.4%	5.0%	5.1%	4.5%	5.3%
CANADA	2.9%	4.4%	4.2%	5.1%	5.0%	5.3%	5.1%	6.4%

As shown in the previous table, the prevalence for antipsychotic use is highest in Canada among those aged 65 and over. This trend was also found in all Canadian provinces in both 2019 and 2023. However, a general decrease in prevalence was observed in each province between these two years. In 2023, Quebec had the highest prevalence rate in this age group, at 7.3%, down 1.3% from 2019.

Prevalence of antipsychotic dispensing by province 65+ years, 2019 - 2023

Province	2019	2023
QUEBEC	8.6%	7.3%
MANITOBA / SASKATCHEWAN	6.3%	5.8%
ONTARIO	6.7%	5.4%
ATLANTIC PROVINCES	6.5%	5.4%
ALBERTA	6.4%	5.1%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	5.6%	4.9%
CANADA	7.0%	5.8%

■ 2019 ■ 2023

In terms of prescriptions issued in Canada in 2023, 60% of all antipsychotic prescriptions were written by general practitioners, 36% by psychiatrists and 4% by other medical specialties.

Number of prescriptions dispensed for antipsychotics by medical specialty, 2023

- 4% Other specialties
- 36% Psychiatry
- 60% Family medicine

Data Sources and Methodology

The statistics are generated from [fully anonymized] prescriptions for psychotherapeutic medications dispensed by a panel of community pharmacies during 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, and correspond to approximately 80% of all prescriptions dispensed in Canada (new Rx and refills). Estimation algorithms were used to assess the missing 20%, thus obtaining a complete picture of the dispensing of these drugs and allowing a representative analysis. Population data from Statistics Canada[2] was used to calculate proportions and per capita rates.

This report is based on the following IQVIA data services : IQVIA Geographic Prescription Monitoring (GPM), IQVIA Longitudinal Prescription data, and IQVIA Prescriber-level data.

List of molecules included in each category of antipsychotic medications:

First generation
- Chlorpromazine
- Droperidol
- Flupentixol
- Fluphenazine
- Haloperidol
- Loxapine
- Mesoridazine
- Methotrimeprazine
- Periciazine
- Perphenazine
- Pimozide
- Pipotiazine
- Promethazine
- Thioridazine
- Thiothixene
- Trifluoperazine
- Zuclopenthixol

Second generation
- Aripiprazole
- Asenapine
- Brexpiprazole
- Clozapine

Injectable - Depot
- Lurasidone
- Olanzapine
- Paliperidone
- Quetiapine
- Risperidone
- Ziprasidone

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2. https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/dt-td/Index-eng.cfm?LANG=E&SUB=98P1001&SR=0&RPP=10&SORT=date

Limitations

There are limitations to the use of IQVIA data, which does not include information on:

• Prescriptions written but never dispensed

• Prescriptions dispensed in hospitals and prisons

• Medications not taken by patients

• Diagnoses for which prescriptions were dispensed

• Clinical indication or morbiditydes

This report was produced independently by IQVIA Canada as a public service, without industry or government funding. IQVIA complies with all legislation relating to the protection of personal health information, and IQVIA does not collect any data on prescription drugs that can identify a patient or that can be used for this purpose.

About IQVIA

IQVIA is a leading global provider of advanced analytics, technology solutions, and clinical research services to the life sciences industry. IQVIA creates intelligent connections across all aspects of healthcare through its analytics, transformative technology, metadata resources and extensive domain expertise. IQVIA Connected Intelligence™ delivers relevant insights with speed and agility—enabling its customers to accelerate the clinical development and commercialization of innovative medication treatments that improve healthcare outcomes for patients. With approximately 87,000 employees, IQVIA conducts operations in more than 100 countries.

Established in Canada since the 1960s with over 1,600 employees, IQVIA is a leading provider of evidence-based health information services to the Canadian medical and pharmaceutical industry. Its excellent reputation is based on its ability to forge partnerships with various stakeholders in the public and private sectors who share the same goal: to constantly improve the quality of health care in a more connected ecosystem.

Offering the world's largest source of healthcare data, IQVIA provides Canada-wide data for both the public and private sectors. IQVIA's insights and execution capabilities help biotech, medical device, and pharmaceutical companies, medical researchers, government agencies, payers, and other healthcare stakeholders tap into a deeper understanding of disease, human behaviour, and scientific advances to improve patient health.

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