

Anti-depressant use soars in England, linked to recession

December 30 2011

The use of anti-depressant drugs in England has soared by 28 percent in the past three years, coinciding with the country's fall into recession and the global economic crisis, new figures showed Friday.

Prescriptions went up from just under 34 million to 43.4 million between 2007-08 and 2010-11, according to figures from the [National Health Service](#) (NHS) Information Centre.

The use of anti-anxiety drugs rose by eight percent over the period, from just over six million to 6.5 million, while prescriptions for [sleeping pills](#) rose three percent to 10.2 million.

Experts said the increase may be due to stress around the economic crisis, which began in 2008, as well as as greater awareness of mental illness.

"For some people depression just happens, but for others it is triggered by stressful events, for example [losing a job](#), property or bereavement," said Emer O'Neill, chief executive of campaign group Depression Alliance.

"These uncertain economic times are linked to an increase in the number of people with the illness."

According to The Independent newspaper, depression is costing the country almost £11 billion (13 billion euros, \$16 billion) a year in lost

earnings, demands on the state-run NHS and drug prescriptions.

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