



**Monitoring of medicines use during the COVID-19 epidemic.  
Release of analysis by region and comprehensive update of the first two months of 2021**

The Italian Medicines Agency publishes the regional detail on the use of medicines during the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby it is possible to analyze the consumption trend of the medicines used for COVID-19, of injecting drugs and of medicines for hospital use, along with those purchased in local pharmacies. These data refer to 2020 and are comparable with the 2019 trend. For purchases by the NHS facilities, the data relating to the first two months of 2021 are already available. The accessibility of such data confirms AIFA's goal of fostering the appropriate and homogeneous use of medicines throughout the country.

The monthly and regional monitoring shows that:

- at a local level, the consumption of low molecular weight heparins, first-line medicines for the anti COVID-19 therapy, increased by more than 19% in almost all Italian regions in the quarter October-December 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019;
- although AIFA has never approved its use for COVID-19, azithromycin continues to record significant increases both at local and hospital level, especially in Campania (+ 250%) and Lazio (+ 300%);
- despite the heavy pressure on hospitals, hospital purchases of cancer drugs and immunosuppressants are stable in 2020 compared to the previous year in all regions, even in those most burdened by the emergency;
- among non-specific drugs for COVID-19, compared to 2019, a generalized increase was reported in injective cardiac stimulants used in intensive and subintensive care (+ 127%). In particular, the first two months of 2021 recorded a higher increase compared to 2020 for Molise, Basilicata, Piedmont and Emilia-Romagna regions;
- 2020 showed an increase in anxiolytic drugs (+12%), especially in the central Italy regions Marche (+68%) and Umbria (+73%). In general, the so-called phase 2 of the epidemic showed a higher increase in the purchase of anxiolytics than the increase already observed during the first phase.

The information shown in the graphs, from the NSIS (New Health Information System) flow of drug traceability, is expressed in terms of packages per 10,000 inhabitants per day, in order to allow regional comparison, as well as timely monitoring of medicines use in Italy.