

Decreasing number of prescriptions after they became mandatory and their valid period was extended to two years: case Finland since 2017

Conclusions

All (100%) prescription in Finland are recorded into the national **Prescription Centre** since January 2017.

Number of **e-prescriptions (ePs)** recorded decreased whereas dispensations at community pharmacies increased from 2017 to 2019.

We estimate that in 2019 decreasing trend of **ePs** would continue.

It is possible to monitor effects of health policy interventions by using national e-health systems, especially at occurrence of a natural experiment.

Objectives

The implementation and adoption of the national **Kanta services** has been carried out step by step in Finland since 2010.

The **eP** is mandatory and its valid period was extended from 12 months to 2 years starting January 2017.

The large-scale nationwide administrative changes (policy interventions) were introduced 1 January 2017 as a 'big bang' approach.

The changes provided us with a natural experiment opportunity to assess the prescription volumes the first time in Finland.

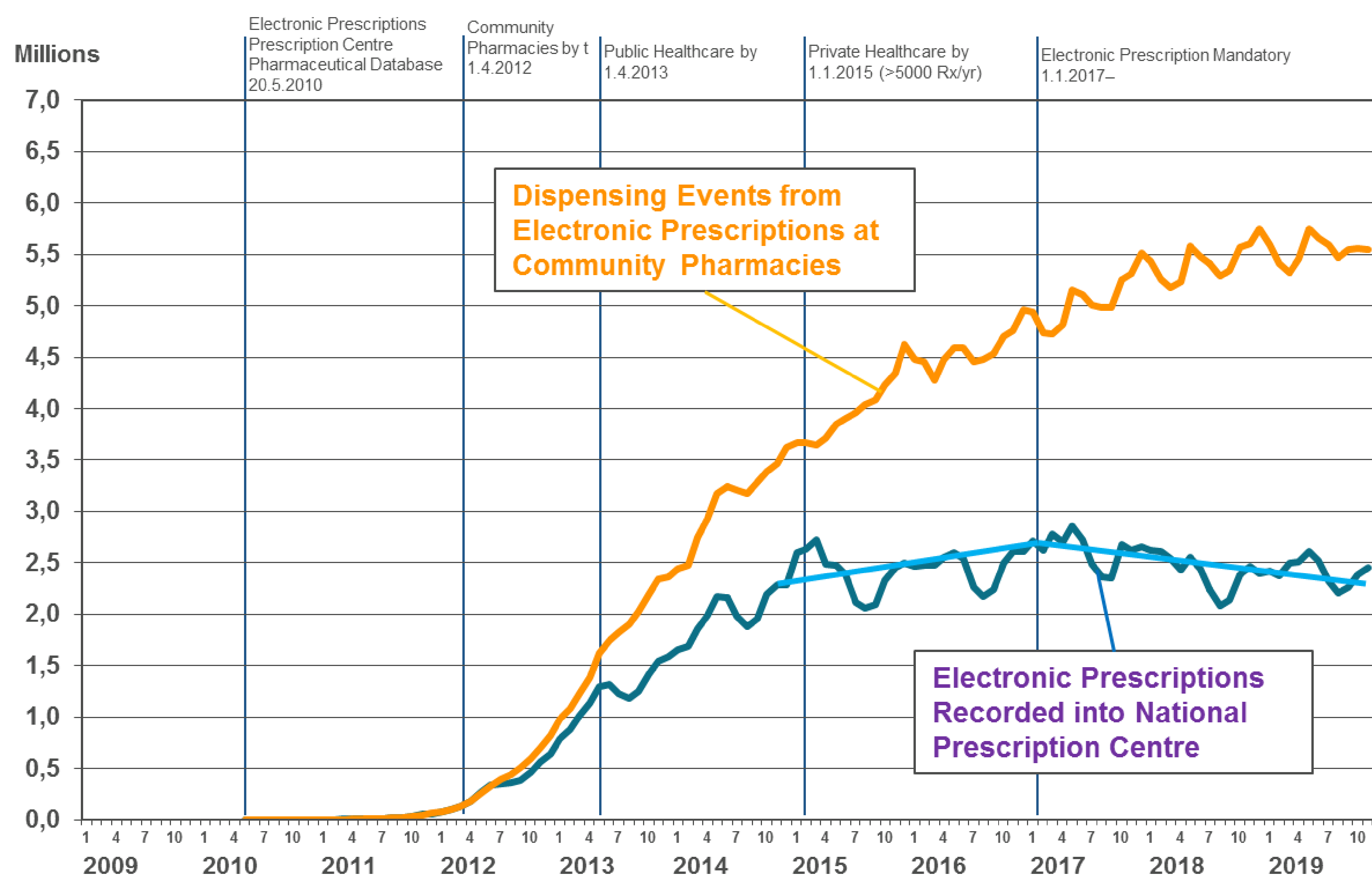


Figure 1. Monthly numbers of electronic prescriptions recorded into the national Prescription Centre and their dispensing events at community pharmacies in Finland since May 2010, time series smoothed by using 3-month time window.

Kanta

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Results

- 5.57 million (M) persons had 162.26M **ePs** by end-2018
- Number of persons who received **ePs** was 4.34M in 2017 and 4.36M in 2018
- Of the 31.91M **ePs** in 2017, only 1.26% were recorded at community pharmacies, whereas 28.29M and 1.23% in 2018
- Number of **ePs** in 2018 was 11% lower than in 2017
- Basing on recorded **ePs** from January to May 2019, we estimate that there would be 28.86M **ePs** in 2019
- Cumulatively 322.30M dispensations from **ePs** at pharmacies were recorded by end-2018
- Dispensations were 61.39M and 64.42M in 2017 and 2018
- Dispensations in 2018 were 5% higher than in 2017
- Altogether, 2.30M **eP** renewal requests were sent to healthcare via **My Kanta Pages** in 2017 and 2.07M in 2018
- 4,842 dispensations in Estonia were based on the Finnish **ePs** by end-September 2019