

stance in adults. The ATC-Classification with defined daily doses serves as an easing of comparisons between drugs and guarantees a standardized reference for the specification of daily treatment expenses. The purpose of the ATC/DDD system is to serve as a tool for drug utilization research in order to improve quality of drug use.

- Number of entries: 4067 Codes (2006)
- Structure: In the Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification system, the drugs are divided into different groups according to the organ or system on which they act and their chemical, pharmacological and therapeutic properties. Drugs are classified in groups at five different levels. The drugs are divided into fourteen main groups (1st level), with one pharmacological/therapeutic subgroup (2nd level). The 3rd and 4th levels are chemical/pharmacological/therapeutic subgroups and the 5th level is the chemical substance. The 2nd, 3rd and 4th levels are often used to identify pharmacological subgroups when that is considered more appropriate than therapeutic or chemical subgroups.

ATC assures the unified coding of active components registered. This feature, coupled with strength (dosage) and pharmaceutical form) assures the possibility to transfer the full information on a medication from Country to Country, regardless the brand name of the medication. A medicinal product can be given more than one ATC code if it is available in two or more strengths or formulations with clearly different therapeutic uses. The existence of multiple codes reduces the risk of mistakes in the specification of strength and prescription / dispensation of different medication for the two pathologies.