

# 4000 Australian children under 10 prescribed antidepressants

By Julie-Anne Davies

The Australian

December 03, 2008 12:01am



Mood drugs ... nearly 4000 children under 10 were prescribed antidepressants last financial year, including 48 babies.

- 4000 kids on antidepressants, 48 babies
- Experts appalled
- Numbers "beyond comprehension"

UNPUBLISHED figures show nearly 4000 children under 10 were prescribed antidepressants last financial year, including 553 children under five and 48 babies.

[The Australian reports](#) the [Commonwealth Department](#) of Health statistics give an alarming, although most likely conservative, age-by-age breakdown of the national use of antidepressants.

However, leading pediatricians and psychiatrists can offer no reason why infants would be given the drugs. Depression expert Gordon Parker said the numbers were "beyond comprehension" and urged the [Federal Government](#) to ask doctors responsible for supplying scripts for young children to justify their actions.

Professor Parker, the executive director of the Black Dog Institute, said: "At first pass it is beyond comprehension that more than 500 Australian children - aged one to five years - have received an antidepressant drug.

[Read more on this story at The Australian](#)