

These four categories together represented about one-half of all prescriptions for products in the MDL, and 49 percent of the total cost to patients.

Antibiotics ranked fifth, including 13 million prescriptions at a retail cost of \$64.3 million.

Diagnostic Category. About 66.2 million, or 38 percent, of the total prescriptions, at a cost of \$244.3 million, or 36 percent, of the total retail cost, were used for the treatment of heart disease and hypertension.

An additional 17.3 million prescriptions, at a retail cost of \$65.4 million, were applied for the control of arthritis and rheumatism.

About 11.6 million prescriptions, at a cost of \$47.4 million, were dispensed for the treatment of mental and nervous conditions.

Together these groups accounted for 95.1 million, or 54 percent, of the total MDL prescriptions, and \$357 million, or 52 percent, of the total cost to consumers.

Maintenance Therapy. A sizeable proportion of out-of-hospital drugs prescribed for the elderly are so-called long-term maintenance drugs, used primarily for the control of chronic diseases. Few of these --