Objectives: The aim of the present study was to analyse gender differences in self-reported nonadherence (NA) to prescribed medication in the Swedish general population. We aimed to study unintentional and intentional NA as well as the reasons given for NA.

Methods: A questionnaire was mailed to a crosssectional, random, national sample of people aged 18-84 years in Sweden (n=7985). The response rate was 61.1% (n=4875). The questionnaire covered use of prescription drugs, NA behaviour and reasons for NA. Results: Use of prescription drugs was reported by 59.5% (n=2802) of the participants, and 66.4% (n=1860) of these participants did not adhere to the prescribed regimen. No overall gender differences in reporting NA were found. However, when analysing the various types of NA behaviour and the reasons for NA, different gender patterns emerged. Men were more likely to report forgetting [OR=0.77 (95%CI 0.65:0.92)], changing the dosage [OR=0.64 (95%CI 0.52:0.79)] and that they had recovered [14.3%, (OR=0.71 (95%CI 0.56:0.90))] as a reason. In contrast, more women than men reported filling the prescription but not taking the drug [OR=1.25 (95%CI 1.02:1.54)] and reported the development of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) [OR=1.89 (95%CI 1.37:2.59)] as a reason more commonly. The gender differences remained, in most cases, after controlling for confounders such as age, socioeconomic factors, medical problems and attitudes toward drugs. Conclusions: Women and men have different patterns of NA behaviour and different reasons for NA. Therefore, if adherence is to be improved, a wide knowledge of all the reasons for NA is required, along with an understanding of the impact of gender on the outcomes.

Keywords
Medication Adherence, Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice, Health Care Surveys, Sweden.