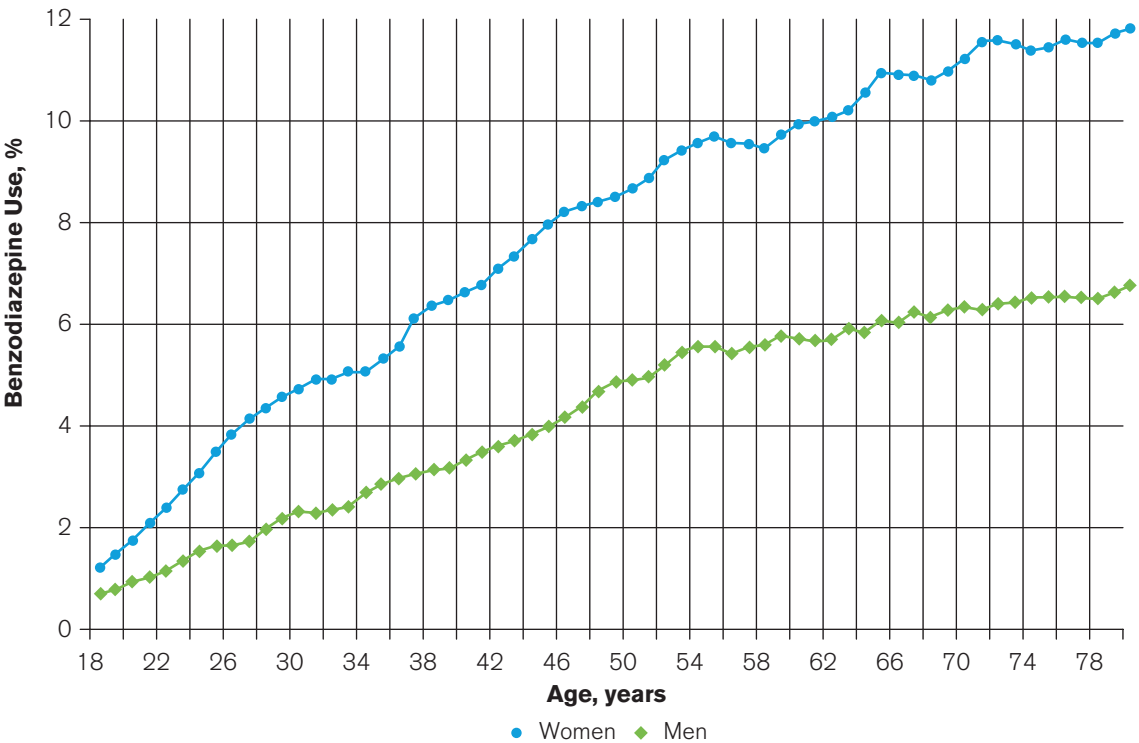


■ **FIGURE 8.5 Use by Age and Gender in the United States (2008 Data)**

Females use more benzodiazepines than men, and usage by both sexes increases with age.

Source: Olfson, M., King, M., & Schoenbaum, M. (2015). Benzodiazepine Use in the United States. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 72(2), 136. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2014.1763



The United States in 2008 had a population of around 304 million people. That same year, around 75 million benzodiazepine prescriptions were written. This includes multiple prescriptions to the same person in a year. Usually, these are prescribed by primary care physicians rather than psychiatrists. Typically, primary care physicians have not been trained in diagnosing specific anxiety disorders or in their non-drug-related treatments and may be overprescribing benzodiazepine.

Anxiety both protects us in that it alerts us to potential threat and impairs us as humans when it

interferes with functioning. However, not everyone who experiences anxiety, even though it may be unpleasant, has an anxiety disorder. As a society, we need to consider how we wish to educate the public and other non-mental health professionals about the nature of anxiety and its treatment, including the prescribing of benzodiazepines.

Thought Questions: How would you teach youth about the nature of anxiety? Should drug companies be allowed to market directly to the public?