

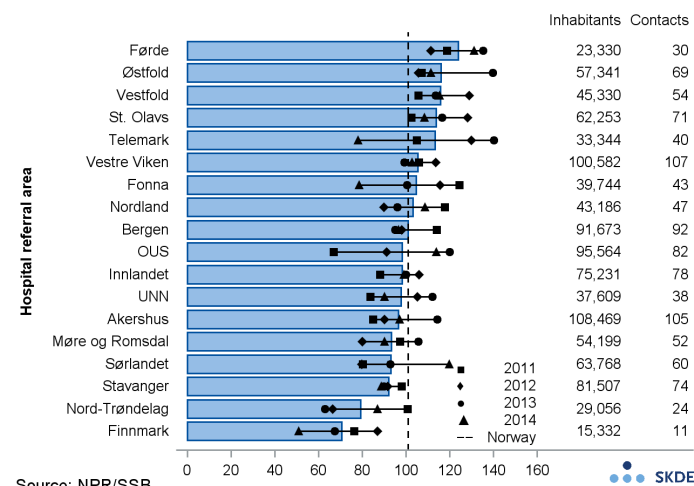
Appendectomy

Appendectomy on children is a procedure carried out at all Norwegian hospitals with a surgical department. Suspected acute appendicitis is the reason for most appendectomies. When patients are operated on for suspected acute appendicitis, the appendix is always removed during open surgery, and sometimes also during keyhole surgery if no other reason for the patient's condition is identified. It can be difficult to make the diagnosis, and all surgeons with some years' experience have experienced both waiting too long to operate, resulting in a burst appendix, and removing appendixes that were not infected.

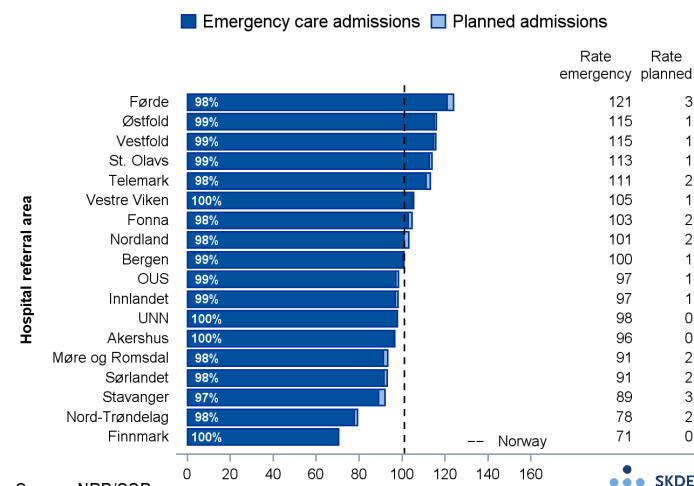
Sample

The sample consists of all contacts (admissions, outpatient consultations and day patient treatment) involving appendectomies for children in the somatic specialist health service.

Appendectomy is defined by the procedure codes (NCSP) JEA00, JEA01 or JEA10. Such procedures are only carried out by public hospitals.



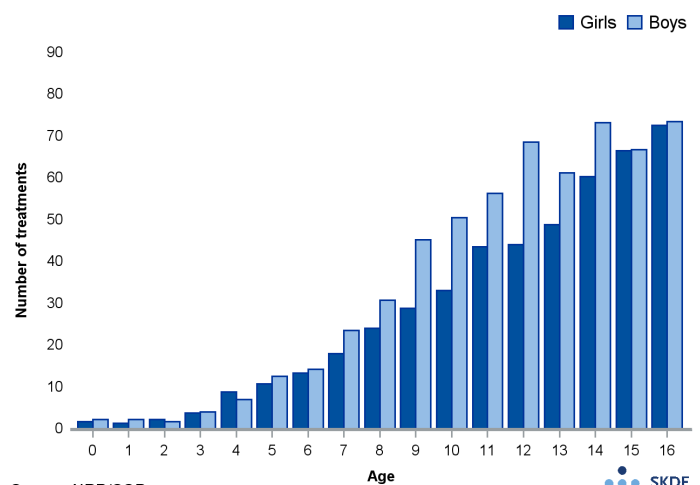
Source: NPR/SSB
Surgery, appendectomy, age-adjusted usage rates per 100,000 children 0-16 year, per hospital referral area, per year and as an average for the period 2011-2014.



Source: NPR/SSB
Surgery, appendectomy, by degree of urgency, age-adjusted usage rates per 100,000 children 0-16 year, per hospital referral area and as an average for the period 2011-2014.

Comments

Each year, just over 1,000 children under the age of 17 years (0.1% of children) have their appendixes removed, most as emergency care cases. The usage rate for the procedure increases steadily with increasing age. The procedure is performed 1.7 times more often on children in Førde hospital referral area than on children in Finnmark. The random variation in Finnmark hospital referral area may be high, since only a small number of procedures is carried out each year. The usage rate for Østfold hospital referral area (second highest rate) is 1.5 times higher than that of Nord-Trøndelag (second lowest rate).



Source: NPR/SSB
Surgery, appendectomy, number of treatments, age and gender, as an average for the period 2011-2014.

Appendectomy is a procedure that can only be performed once. The number of acutely infected appendixes that are not removed surgically is extremely small. There is therefore no reason to believe that too few patients are treated in the hospital referral areas that have the lowest usage rates. However, the usage rates will be higher than the actual number of appendicitis cases in all hospital referral areas because it is difficult to make an exact diagnosis and some appendixes are removed despite not being infected.

It must be noted that the number of procedures per year is low in some hospital referral areas, and that it varies from year to year. This indicates a relatively big element of random variation. At the same time, the variation in usage rates in Norway corresponds to similar studies from other countries with considerably bigger patient samples. It can therefore not be ruled out that there is a certain variation in medical practice and diagnostic precision between hospital referral areas. There may be reason to examine whether there are significant differences between the hospital referral areas in the proportion of uninfected removed appendixes.