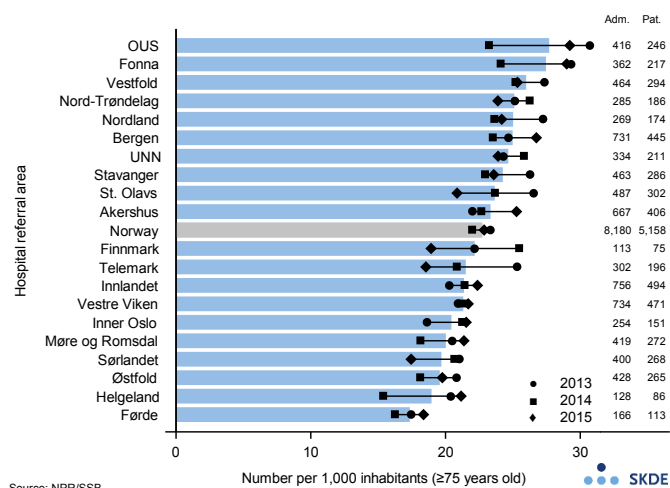


Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a collective term for diseases of the lungs and airways characterised by permanently reduced lung function and breathlessness when exercising, chronic coughing and increased phlegm production. The severity of COPD varies from the uncomplicated to more serious stages with significant functional impairment and disability. Patients with COPD often have other medical conditions that can increase the need for hospital admission, for example heart failure.

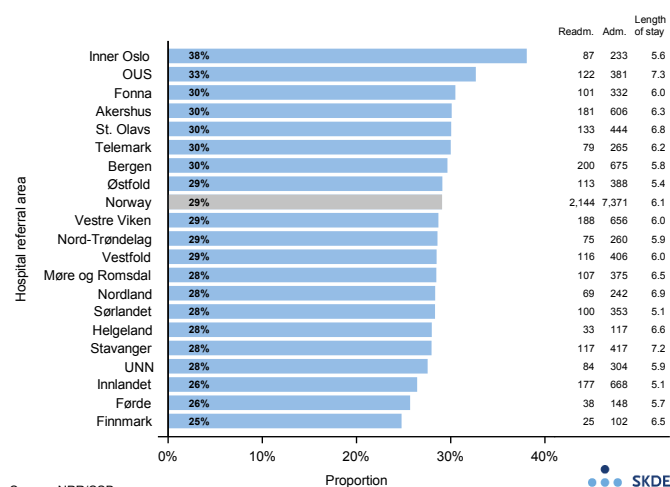
Background

A COPD exacerbation often comes in connection with viral and bacterial infections and requires treatment, which will often start outside hospital. Such measures can consist of adjusting the dosage of the medication that the patient is already on or starting other treatment with antibiotics or steroids in tablet form. Hospital admission will often be necessary during serious COPD exacerbations, since the patient will often experience respiratory failure and require breathing support. Many COPD patients die from heart disease, but mortality in connection with acute COPD exacerbations is also high.



Source: NPR/SSB

Emergency admissions per 1,000 population, adjusted for gender and age. Av. number of admissions and patients per year.



Source: NPR/SSB

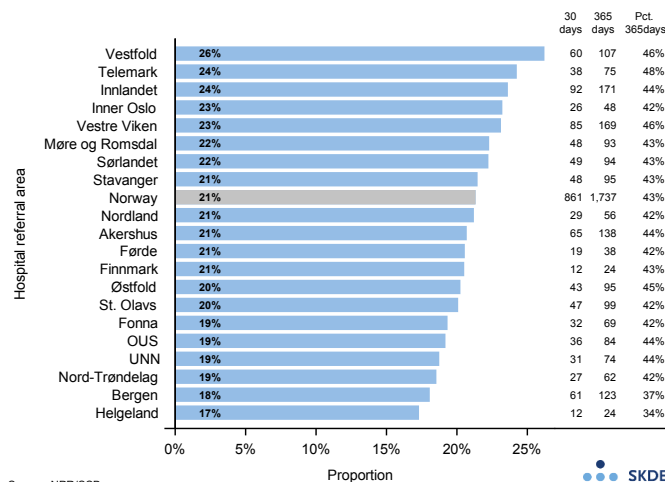
Readmissions as a proportion of primary admissions, adjusted for gender and age. Av. number of readmissions, primary admissions and length of stay for primary admissions.

Results

There are approx. 8,200 emergency admissions per year of elderly patients with COPD as the primary diagnosis. Emergency admissions of COPD patients are usually triggered by exacerbations. The average age of these patients is 82 years, and the gender distribution is more or less even. The average length of stay is just over six days. Residents of OUS hospital referral area are admitted 60% more often than residents in the Førde area.

The 30-day readmission rate after discharge following admission for COPD is 29%. The readmission rate in Inner Oslo hospital referral area (38%) is 50% higher than in the Finnmark area (25%), which has the lowest readmission rate. There is no clear correlation between the length of stay for primary admissions and the readmission rate.

Of elderly patients admitted to hospital with COPD, 21% die within 30 days of their last admission, and 43% die within one year. By comparison, 8% of all persons in Norway aged 75 years and older die each year.



Source: NPR/SSB

30-day mortality proportion following the last admission, adjusted for gender and age. Av. number of deaths within 30 days, number and proportion who die within one year.

Comments

Variation in admissions, readmission rates and the proportion who die within 30 days following admission for COPD is deemed to be relatively low.

The relatively long length of stay for primary admissions, the high readmission rate and high proportion who die both within 30 days and one year following admission all indicate that elderly patients who are admitted for COPD are a seriously ill