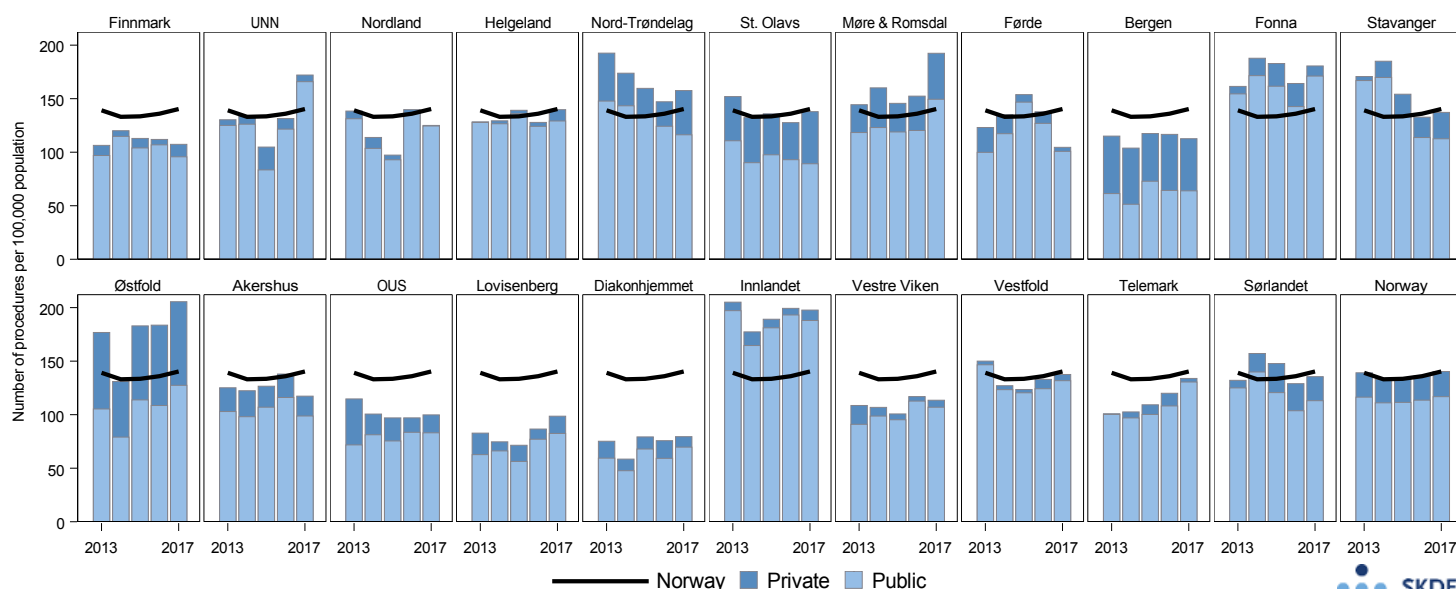


Carpal tunnel syndrome is due to pressure on the main nerve to the hand (nervus medianus). The condition is usually caused by processes that result in swelling around the tendons running through the carpal tunnel. Typical symptoms include pain, numbness and tingling in the thumb, index finger, middle finger and the thumb side of the ring finger. The condition can heal spontaneously, and conservative treatment is usually the preferred option. Surgery is the best treatment option for patients with serious symptoms and/or problems. Surgery consists of partly or completely cutting the ligament that arches over the carpal tunnel to release pressure on the nerve.



Source: NPR/SSB

Carpal tunnel syndrome, development in the number of procedures per 100,000 population during the period 2013–2017, adjusted for gender and age. Broken down by hospital referral areas and public or private treatment providers.

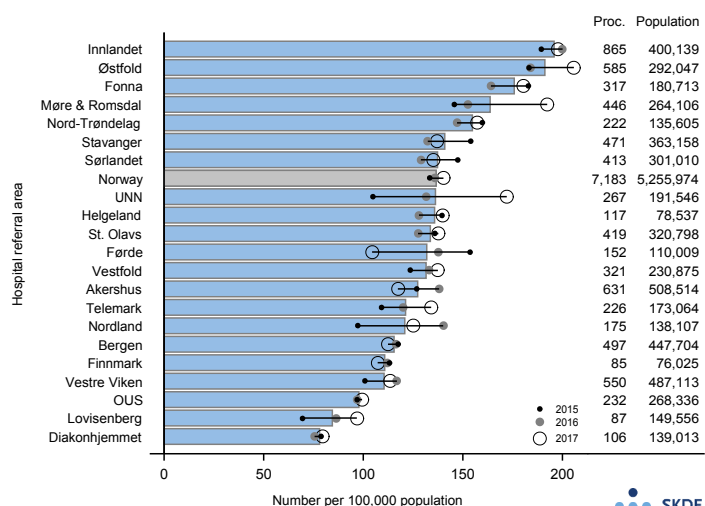
### Development since 2013

The 2015 day surgery atlas showed moderate geographical variation in the use of surgical procedures for carpal tunnel syndrome. Residents in the hospital referral areas Innlandet, Stavanger, Nord-Trøndelag and Fonna had nearly twice as many procedures per 100,000 population during the period 2011–2013 as those resident in Bergen and Oslo hospital referral areas. In Norway as a whole, just under 7,000 procedures (adjusted rate: 139 per 100,000) were performed in 2013.

There was still moderate geographical variation in surgical procedures for carpal tunnel syndrome during the period 2015–2017, when 2.5 times as many procedures per 100,000 population were performed on people living in Innlandet, Østfold and Fonna hospital referral areas as on those resident in the areas of OUS, Lovisenberg and Diakonhjemmet.

The number of procedures per 100,000 population remained stable for Norway as a whole from 2013 to 2017. Around 17% of the procedures were performed by publicly funded private hospitals or specialists in private practice under public funding contracts. In 2017, about 7,500 procedures (adjusted rate: 140 per 100,000) were performed.

In the hospital referral areas of Nord-Trøndelag and Stavanger, the number of procedures per 100,000 population gradually decreased from well above the national average in 2013 to around the national level in 2017. Telemark hospital referral area saw a gradual increase from below the national average in 2013 to the national level in 2017. Some other areas experienced considerable variation from one year to the next.



Source: NPR/SSB

Number of procedures for carpal tunnel syndrome per 100,000 population, adjusted for gender and age. Average per year for the period 2015–2017.

### Comments

During 2015–2017, the variation in the number of surgical procedures for carpal tunnel syndrome per 100,000 population between the health trusts' hospital referral areas had increased. This suggests that the indications for these procedures may be unclear and that their use is to a certain extent governed by supply. The medical need for surgical procedures for carpal tunnel syndrome is assumed to be similar regardless of where one lives. The observed variation is therefore deemed to be unwarranted.