

## Postmenopausal bleeding

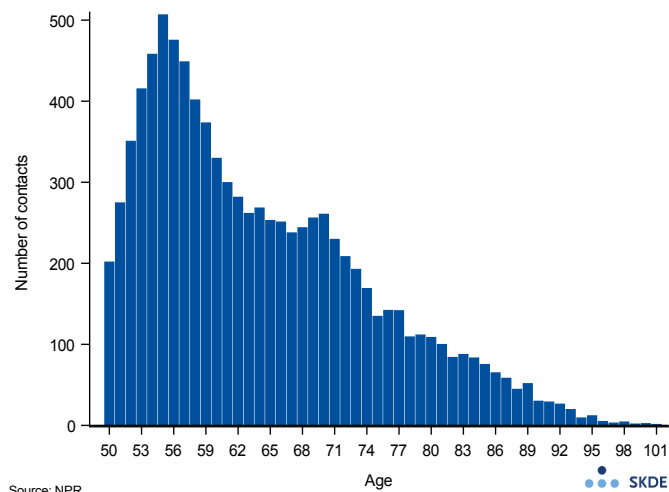
The menopause starts one year after a woman's last spontaneous menstruation. The average Norwegian woman reaches menopause at the age of 51 or 52. Bleeding that occurs more than one year after the last spontaneous menstruation is called postmenopausal bleeding and must be investigated, since it could be caused by cancer or cervical neoplasia. Women who experience postmenopausal bleeding are to be assessed within a few weeks by means of a pelvic examination, vaginal ultrasound, a Pap smear and an endometrial biopsy.

### Background

The most common cause of postmenopausal bleeding is fragile mucous membranes due to low oestrogen levels or benign changes such as polyps. Bleeding could also be related to hormone replacement therapy.

If the problem is caused by ongoing hormone replacement therapy, the therapy must be adjusted or discontinued. Polyps that cause bleeding should be removed completely in order to reduce bleeding and to make sure that the polyp is not malignant. If the cause of the bleeding is endometrial hyperplasia caused by oestrogens, hormonal IUDs or gestagens (a female sex hormone) in tablet form could counteract the stimulating effect of oestrogen.

If the bleeding is found to be caused by cervical neoplasia or cancer, the patient will be treated in accordance with the relevant treatment protocol.



Source: NPR

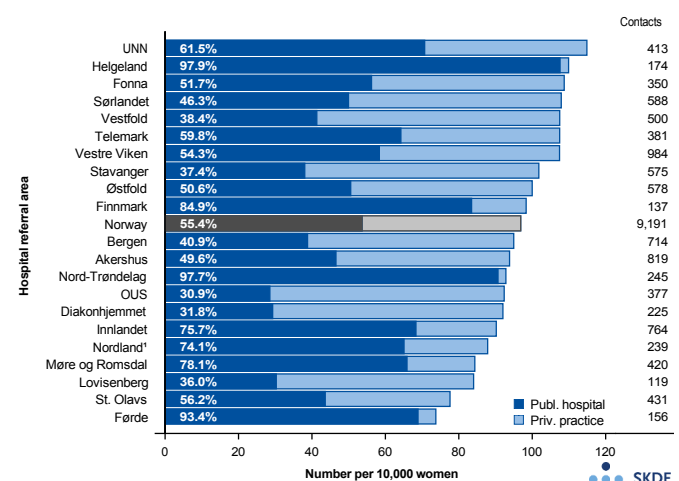


Number of outpatient contacts for postmenopausal bleeding broken down by age, average per year for the period 2015–2017.

### Results

During the period 2015–2017, just over 7,000 patients with the condition postmenopausal bleeding had a total of about 9,000 outpatient contacts. The sample is limited to women aged 50 years or older. The average age for the sample was 64 years, and the majority of the patients were between 50 and 75 years old.

There was little geographical variation in the number of outpatient contacts for postmenopausal bleeding per 10,000 women during the period 2015–2017. The number of contacts for postmenopausal bleeding varied from 115 per 10,000 women residing in UNN hospital referral area to 73 per 10,000 women in the Førde area.



Source: NPR/SSB



Number of outpatient contacts for postmenopausal bleeding per 10,000 women, adjusted for age, average per year 2015–2017 broken down by hospital referral area and by public or private service provider. Average number of contacts on the right. The sample is limited to women aged 50 years or older. <sup>1</sup>See the report.

For Norway as a whole, about half of these contacts took place at a public hospital and half with specialists in private practice under public funding contracts. There was considerable variation between hospital referral areas in the proportion of contacts with specialists in private practice under public funding contracts.

About half of the contacts involved endometrial biopsy or dilation and curettage (D&C). The proportion of contacts involving endometrial biopsy or D&C varied from 40% for women residing in Akershus hospital referral area to 63% for women in the Helgeland area.

### Comments

There is little geographical variation in the use of outpatient contacts for postmenopausal bleeding. This indicates that women in Norway who experience post-menopausal bleeding have equitable access to services and receive the assessment necessary to establish whether the cause of the bleeding is cancer (cervical neoplasia) or something else.