

Incidence and prevalence of dementia in Denmark

As a result of increasing average life expectancy, and an expanding elderly population, an increase in the number of elderly people with dementia is expected in the coming decades.

The exact incidence and prevalence of dementia in the elderly population (+65 years) is not known. In Denmark, we apply different methods in order to estimate the number of people in Denmark with dementia.

The incidence can be stated based on figures from the Danish national health registers or based on incidence rates from population surveys, where a selected sample of participants have been examined for dementia.

It is estimated that far from everyone with dementia is registered in the national registers. This is supported by the large difference in the figures from registers and population surveys, respectively. The difference indicates that we in Denmark have a significant dark figure for dementia.

The registered number is based on figures from the Danish register for selected chronic diseases and severe mental disorders, which applies an algorithm including data from both the National Patient Register and the Register of Pharmaceutical Sales. More information on the algorithm can be found at the Danish Health Data Authority's website.

The registered incidence of dementia is declining

Approx. 9,000 to 10,000 patients are examined in a memory clinic in the hospital sector per year. Of these, approx. two thirds are diagnosed with dementia. An additional approx. 2,000 patients were diagnosed with dementia at other types of hospital wards.

Among people aged 65 and above, there are approx. 8,400 registered new cases of dementia per year.

Since 2003, despite a growing elderly population, there has been a small decrease in the number of registered new dementia cases among +65-year-olds: from 8,925 in 2003 to 8,600 in 2022. According to a nationwide Danish registry study from 2021, the incidence of dementia have declined by 22.5% in men and 34.2% in women from 2005 to 2018. This corresponds to a decline in incidence rates of approx. 2 % annually.

The Danish Health Data Authority (Sundhedsdatastyrelsen)

eSundhed.dk

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[Alzheimer Europe](https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/)

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[Sundhed.dk](https://sundhed.dk)

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Statistics Denmark

[Statistikbanken.dk](https://statistikbanken.dk)

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