

Incidence and prevalence of dementia in Denmark

The number of elderly people registered with dementia in the Danish national health registries differs markedly from the estimated number based on international epidemiological studies. An increase in the number of elderly people with dementia is expected in the coming decades.

In Denmark, all permanent residents are assigned a unique 10-digit personal identification number, enabling individual linkage between a wide range of registries. Dementia cases are registered in The Danish Health Data Authority's 'Register for Selected Chronic Diseases and Severe Mental Disorders', which is based on an algorithm including data from the 'The National Patient Register' and the 'The Register of Pharmaceutical Sales'.

Incidence and prevalence of dementia among people aged 65 and older in Denmark

References: *Calculations performed by Danish Dementia Research Centre based on data from Statistics Denmark (FOLK1A, extracted November 2024) and Alzheimer Europe, 2019. **Register for Selected Chronic Diseases and Severe Mental Disorders, Danish Health Data Authority (extracted November 2024).



According to the Danish Health Data Authority's 'Register for Selected Chronic Diseases and Severe Mental Disorders', 40,275 people aged 65 and older were living with dementia as of January 1, 2024. However, not everyone with dementia is registered in the national registers. Based on European studies on dementia prevalence and population statistics from Statistics Denmark, it is estimated that approximately 97,000 Danes aged 65 or older may have dementia.

Among people aged 65 and older, there have been between 8,000 to 8,750 new registered cases of dementia annually from 2010 to 2022. In 2023, the number increased to 9,675, corresponding to approximately 27 new cases per day.

Approximately 2,775 Danes younger than 65 are registered with dementia but the validity of the diagnosis in this age group is questionable (data is not shown in the figures).

Projected prevalence of dementia

Due to a steady increase in average life expectancy and longevity, the number of Danes with dementia are expected to increase over the next decades.

Projected prevalence of dementia among people aged 65 and older in Denmark.

References: Calculations performed by Danish Dementia Research Centre based on data from Statistics Denmark (FRDK124 extracted November 2024) and Alzheimer Europe; 2019.

According to our projection model, approximately 145,000 people will be living with dementia in 2040.

The estimates assume that the proportion of the elderly population who develop dementia will remain constant in the coming decades. This is, however, contradicted by the fact that nationwide Danish registry studies in 2019 and 2021 reported that incidence rates for dementia have declined by approx. 2% annually since 2003.

References

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