

# Burden of gastrointestinal disease in U.S. substantial

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(HealthDay)—Gastrointestinal diseases account for substantial morbidity, mortality, and cost in the United States, according to research published in the November issue of *Gastroenterology*.

Anne F. Peery, M.D., from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and colleagues reviewed data on the epidemiology of [gastrointestinal diseases](#) collected from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey; National Health and Wellness Survey; Nationwide Inpatient Sample; Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program; National Vital Statistics System; Thompson Reuters MarketScan; Medicare; Medicaid; and the Clinical Outcomes Research Initiative's National Endoscopic Database. Endoscopic use, costs, and trends were examined.

The researchers found that the most common gastrointestinal symptom prompting a clinic visit was abdominal pain (15.9 million visits) and the most common gastrointestinal diagnosis was gastroesophageal reflux (8.9 million visits). In the last 10 years, hospitalizations and mortality from *Clostridium difficile* infection doubled. The most common reason for hospitalization (274,119 discharges) was acute pancreatitis. Colorectal cancer was the leading cause of gastrointestinal-related mortality (52,394 deaths) and accounted for more than half of all [gastrointestinal cancers](#). In 2009 there were 6.9 million upper, 11.5 million lower, and 228,000 biliary endoscopies performed, with total costs of \$32.4 billion for outpatient gastrointestinal endoscopy examinations.

"In summary, we present a comprehensive and current estimate of the toll of gastrointestinal and [liver diseases](#) in the United States," the authors write. "Payers, policy makers, clinicians, and others interested in resource utilization may use these statistics to better understand evolving disease trends and the best way to meet the challenge of these diseases."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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