

Skin problems, joint disorders top list of reasons people visit doctors

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A new *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* study shows that people most often visit their health care providers because of skin issues, joint disorders and back pain. Findings may help researchers focus efforts to determine better ways to prevent and treat these conditions in large groups of people.

"Much research already has focused on chronic conditions, which account for the majority of health care utilization and costs in middle-aged and older adults," says Jennifer St. Sauver, Ph.D., primary author of the study and member of the Population Health Program within the Mayo Clinic Center for the Science of [Health Care Delivery](#). "We were interested in finding out about other types of conditions that may affect large segments of the population across all age groups."

The research team used the Rochester Epidemiology Project, a unique, comprehensive medical records linkage system, to track more than 140,000 Olmsted County, Minn., residents who visited Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center and other Olmsted County [health care providers](#) between Jan. 1, 2005, and Dec. 31, 2009. Researchers then systematically categorized patient diagnoses into disease groups. The top disease groups included:

- Skin disorders
- Osteoarthritis/joint disorders
- Back problems

- Cholesterol problems
- Upper respiratory conditions (not including asthma)
- Anxiety, depression and bipolar disorder
- Chronic [neurologic disorders](#)
- [High blood pressure](#)
- Headaches/migraine
- Diabetes

"Surprisingly, the most prevalent non-acute conditions in our community were not chronic conditions related to aging, such as diabetes and heart disease, but rather conditions that affect both genders and all age groups," says Dr. St. Sauver.

For example, almost half of the study population was diagnosed with "skin disorders"—acne, cysts, dermatitis—within the five-year period. Dr. St. Sauver says that this finding presents an opportunity to determine why these skin-related diagnoses result in so many visits and if alternative care delivery approaches that require fewer visits are possible.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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