

Pneumococcal disease, whooping cough, campylobacteriosis most common infectious diseases in older adults

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The population is ageing. Data of notifiable infectious diseases among those aged 65 years and older have been analysed by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health. The results show that invasive pneumococcal disease was the most common infectious disease, followed by whooping cough (pertussis) and campylobacteriosis.

Researchers at the Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology studied data from the Norwegian Surveillance System for Communicable Diseases (MSIS) over the period from 1993 to 2011. Note that less serious infections or infections with lower outbreak potential were excluded.

The data have also been analysed for younger age groups to compare the results of the population aged 65 years and older with the younger population.

Overall, fewer cases with notifiable [infectious diseases](#) were reported among the population aged 65 and older compared with the 20-64 year olds. Invasive [bacterial diseases](#) and infections with resistant microbes were more frequent in the older population, while food-, water- and blood-borne diseases, [sexually transmitted infections](#), and (non-systemic) vaccine-preventable diseases were more frequent in the younger population.

Most diseases did not change over time, although notification of symptomatic MRSA infections increased from 1 case per 100,000 persons in 1995 (the first year this was notifiable) to 14 per 100,000 in 2011.

The study emphasises the importance of preventing invasive bacterial infections in the population 65 years and older. This can be achieved by increasing the uptake of pneumococcal and influenza vaccine uptake among the over 65 age group, and encouraging them or their caregivers to consult a doctor about symptoms of systemic infection. Good compliance to [infection](#) control measures, screening of the at-risk population, and careful use of antibiotics can prevent further increase in antibiotic-resistant infections.

More information: Steens A, Eriksen HM, Blystad H. "What are the most important infectious diseases among those ≥ 65 years: a comprehensive analysis on notifiable diseases, Norway, 1993-2011." *BMC Infectious Diseases* [DOI: 10.1186/1471-2334-14-57](https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2334-14-57)

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