

# Infectious diseases bring millions of elderly to emergency departments each year

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Investigators estimate that during 2012, there were more than 3.1 million emergency department visits for infectious diseases among elderly US adults.

This accounted for 13.5% of all emergency department visits of elderly [adults](#), which was higher than visits for heart attacks and congestive heart failure combined. The rate of infectious disease-related emergency department visits was 7,231 per 100,000 elderly adults. The most common diagnoses were lower respiratory infections, urinary tract infections, and septicemia.

Of all infectious disease-related emergency department visits, 57.2% resulted in hospitalization. Overall, 4.0% of patients died during their emergency department visit or hospitalization.

"With the rapid growth of the elderly population in the U.S., [infectious diseases](#) continue to be an important social problem. Our findings call for strategies to reduce infectious disease-related morbidity and healthcare utilization as a national priority for research, health policy, and community action," said Dr. Tadahiro Goto, lead author of the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* study.

**More information:** Tadahiro Goto et al. Infectious Disease-Related Emergency Department Visits of Elderly Adults in the United States, 2011-2012, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2015). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.13836](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.13836)

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