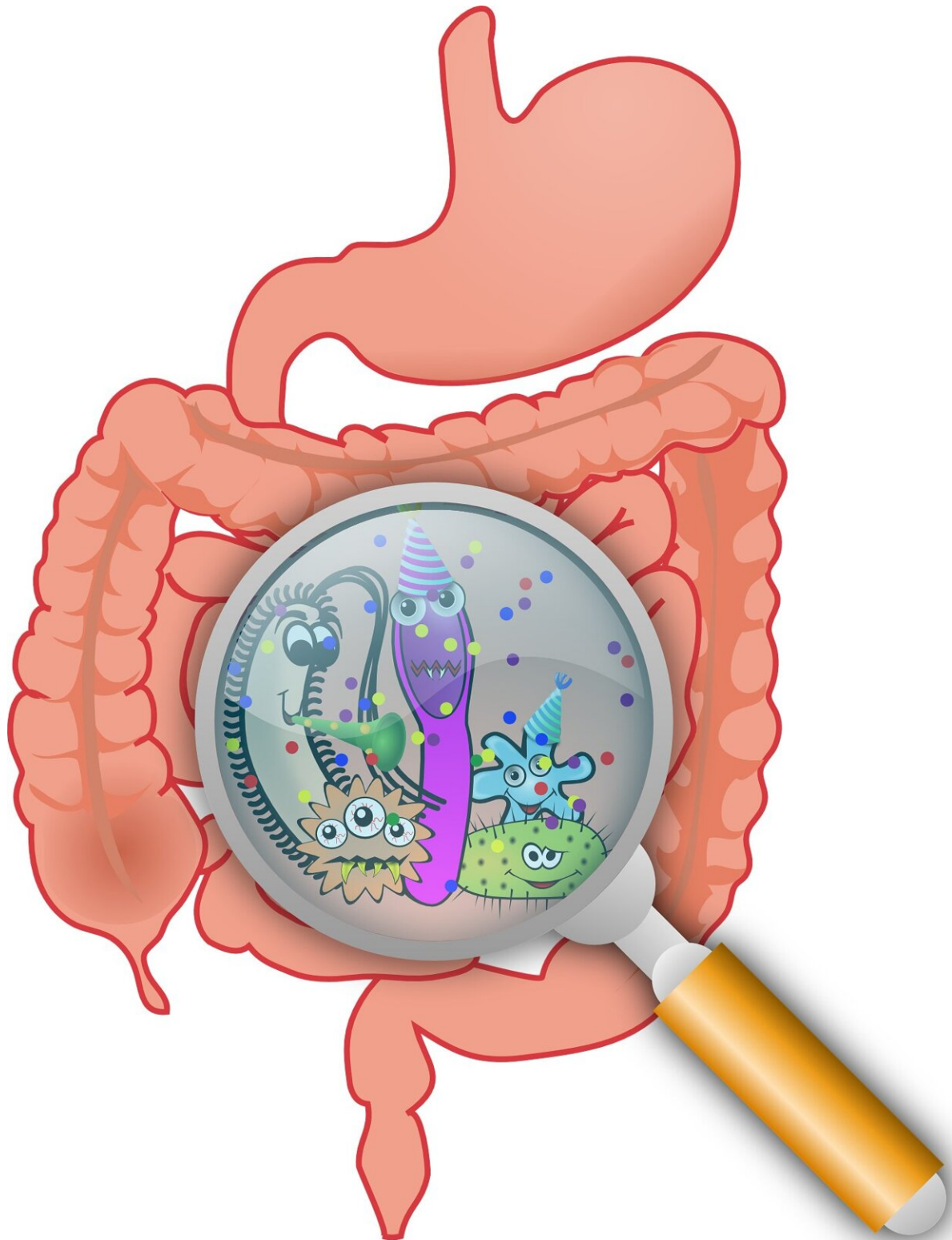


More investment needed to cut bowel disorder hospital cases

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Extra resources are needed so more patients with bowel disorders can be treated without being admitted to hospital, experts plea.

The plea comes as a study reveals that more than half (57 percent) of people with Crohn's disease or [ulcerative colitis](#)—collectively known as [inflammatory bowel disease](#) (IBD)—were admitted to hospital between 2010 and 2019.

The rate of hospitalizations has fallen three percent every year, which researchers suggest is down to more readily accessible treatments and better public awareness of the disease.

However, experts say now is the time to invest even more to improve the lives of people with the condition, and to ease the burden on the NHS.

Support needed

Statistics from a database of 4,500 IBD patients across NHS Lothian reveal they were in hospital for a combined total of 160,000 days.

Just three percent of patients accounted for almost 50 percent of those days. These patients have often run out of treatment options and have to deal with a significant impact on their quality of life, researchers say.

The study team from the University of Edinburgh believe greater access to psychological and dietary support should be a priority for this most vulnerable group.

Infections

The study also showed that a small number of patients with IBD get severe infections each year, resulting in death or admission to intensive care.

Researchers say these rates have not changed over time and do not appear to be related to treatment.

IBD is a lifelong, debilitating condition with no known cure. It can cause pain, cramps and swelling in the tummy as well as daily symptoms such as diarrhea, [weight loss](#) and extreme fatigue. It can have a significant impact on work, family and personal relationships.

The cause is unknown, but it is thought to result from an overactive gut [immune response](#) in people who are genetically predisposed to the condition. The makeup of gut bacteria and diet may also play an important role.

The study was published in the journal *Alimentary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*.

"Our findings show that IBD is very disruptive to the lives of patients, with 57 percent of them having to contend with at least one [hospital stay](#) in a 10-year period. Data-driven research like this is essential for us to quantify the burden of this disease on patients and the NHS so we can focus research on keeping patients well," says Dr. Mathew Lyons, Honorary Clinical Fellow at the University of Edinburgh.

"There are many unanswered questions and an urgent unmet clinical need for our patients living with IBD. However, we have available increasingly targeted and effective therapies. We are deploying these earlier in the disease course and starting to improve outcomes for patients. These data on hospitalizations provide further evidence of this, with admissions for IBD flares falling year after year," says Charlie

Lees, Professor of Gastroenterology at the University of Edinburgh and consultant in the Edinburgh IBD unit.

More information: Mathew Lyons et al, Patterns of emergency admission for IBD patients over the last 10 years in Lothian, Scotland: A retrospective prevalent cohort analysis, *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/apt.16867](https://doi.org/10.1111/apt.16867)

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