

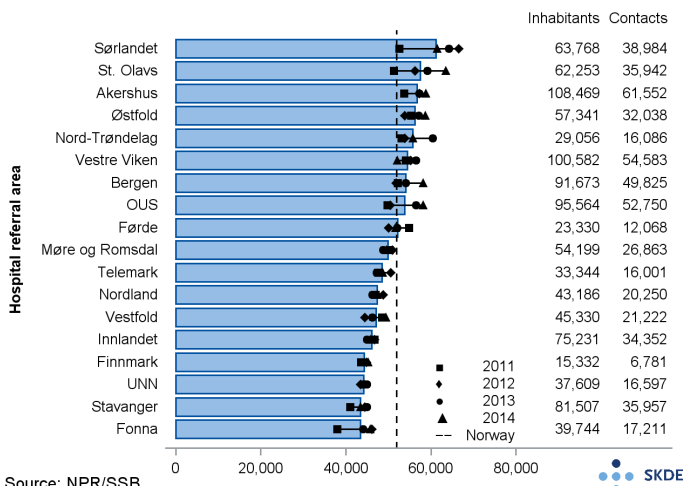
Most children with medical conditions are treated as outpatients in children's departments or by specialists in private practice under public funding contracts. Children's departments with big geographical catchment areas often provide a mobile service where paediatricians from the paediatric department travel to the more remote areas to provide as equitable specialist health services as possible regardless of where patients live.

### Sample

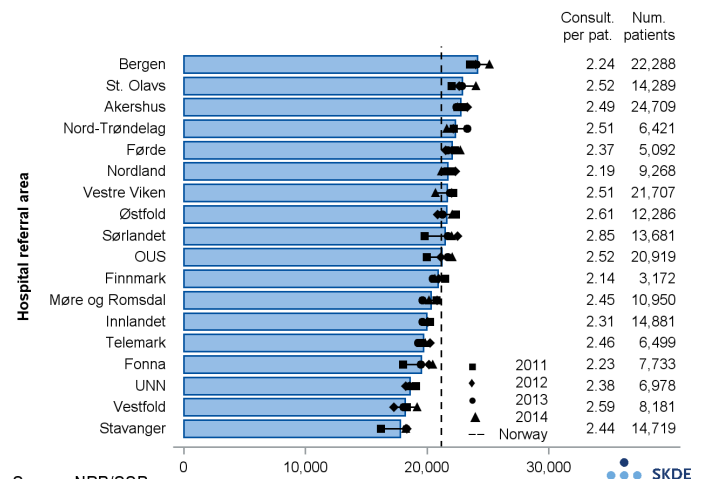
The sample consists of all medical contacts (outpatient and day patient services) for children in the somatic specialist health service, including specialists in private practice under public funding contracts. By medical consultations is meant consultations for conditions that are normally treated by an internal medicine department, see the report for a more detailed definition.

The usage rate is 40% higher in Sørlandet than in Fonna hospital referral area. The patient rate is 40% higher for Bergen hospital referral area than for Stavanger.

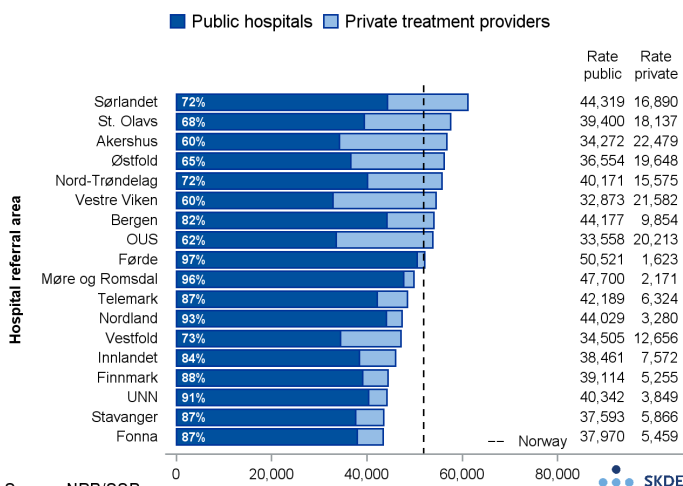
In the hospital referral areas of Førde and Møre og Romsdal, 3% and 4% of consultations, respectively, are provided by specialists in private practice under public funding contracts, while the corresponding figures for OUS and Akershus are 37% and 39%. Usage rates seem to be somewhat higher in areas with more specialists in private practice than in areas where fewer specialists are available outside hospitals.



Source: NPR/SSB  
Outpatient services, age-adjusted usage rates per 100,000 children 0-16 year, per hospital referral area, per year and as an average for the period 2011-2014.



Source: NPR/SSB  
Outpatient services, age-adjusted patient rates per 100,000 children 0-16 year, per hospital referral area, per year and as an average for the period 2011-2014. Average number of contacts per patient (contact frequency) and number of patients.



Source: NPR/SSB  
Outpatient services, broken down by public or private treatment providers, age-adjusted usage rates per 100,000 children 0-16 year, per hospital referral area and as an average for the period 2011-2014.

### Comments

Almost 550,000 outpatient and day patient consultations for medical conditions are provided to just under 225,000 children each year. Consultations concerning medical conditions account for 68% of all children's outpatient and day patient treatments.

Each year, 21% of all Norwegian children aged 0-16 years have one or more consultations at specialist outpatient clinics or day treatment units. The contact frequency varies from 2.14 in Finnmark to 2.85 for Sørlandet. This difference corresponds to 710 more consultations per 1,000 patients treated.

Some patient groups need frequent check-ups, for example cancer patients receiving active treatment or epilepsy patients with poor seizure control. These groups make up a small proportion of the total patient volume, and there is no known geographical variation in the prevalence of these conditions. There is good evidence from other areas that patient-controlled follow-up appointments based on need reduce the total number of follow-up appointments while improving satisfaction with the health services. In future, it may be possible to base follow-up appointments on changes in/deterioration of a patient's clinical condition rather than on the calendar.

Most symptoms in children are not caused by serious illness, and many will pass without treatment. There is reason to ask whether the total volume of children's outpatient consultations and day patient treatment for medical conditions represent an overuse with no accompanying health gain.