

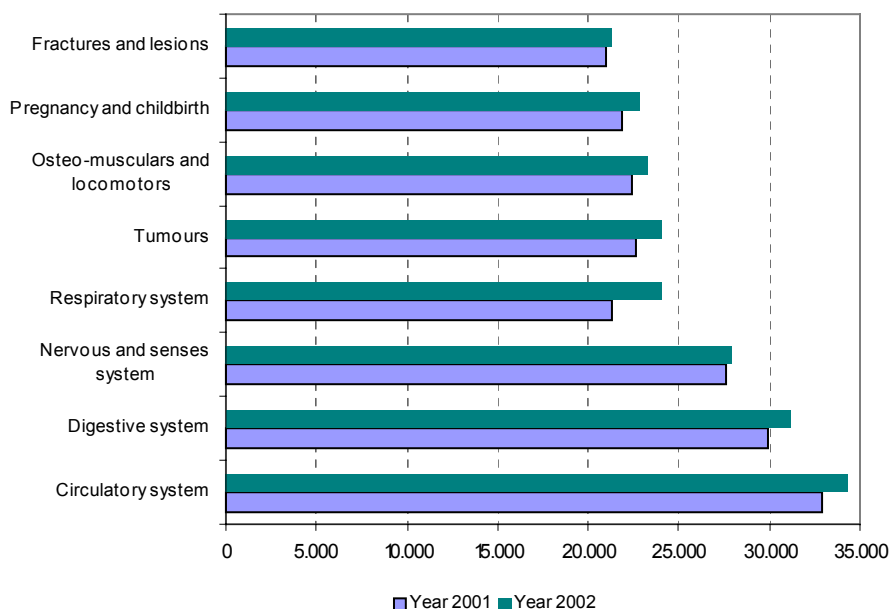
Over 270,000 people were admitted to hospitals in the A.C. of the Basque Country in 2002

Hospital admissions increased 13.4% as a result of respiratory diseases in 2002.

271,170 people were discharged over the year 2002 after having been admitted to acute hospitals in the A.C. of the Basque Country, according to Eustat data. With a 2.1% increase with regard to the year before, this figure represents 13 inhabitants out of every 100 were admitted to a hospital to receive treatment. Of the total number of persons hospitalized, 76% were treated in public hospitals and 24% in private hospitals.

The average stay by patients admitted to acute hospitals in the A.C. of the Basque Country came to 5.5 days in 2002, which represents a 0.1 day reduction with regard to 2001, continuing the downward trend in the average length of hospital stay per patient. Altogether 1,480,483 days stay were spent in hospitals, 0.7% less than in 2001.

Discharges from acute hospitals by most frequent diagnosis groups 2001-2002



Source: EUSTAT

The highest percentage of hospital admissions corresponded to the group of 65 year-olds and over.

41% of hospital discharges (110,434) corresponded to the population of 65 year-olds and over, which shows that 29 of every 100 persons in this age group were admitted to hospital, more than double the average for the population (13 in every 100 inhabitants). In addition, this age group registered the most prolonged average hospital stay (6.9 days compared with 4.5 days stay for the population aged under 65 years).

By sex, 51% of hospitalized patients were female.

49% of hospital discharges corresponded to males and 51% to females; although if we exclude discharges due to pregnancy or birth, the percentage of males rises to 53.6% of those hospitalized in the year 2002.

Although diseases of the circulatory system led to the highest number of admissions, admissions due to respiratory diseases increased most with regard to 2001.

Diseases of the circulatory system, with 12.6% of total hospital admissions in the year 2002, were the main cause of admission and hospital stay. The most frequent pathologies were those affecting the heart: cardiac arrest (11.2%), alterations in cardiac rhythm (9.3%) and acute myocardial infarcts (7.7%); followed by varicose veins (11.4%) and embolus and cerebral infarcts (6.8%).

Diseases of the digestive system, with 11.5% of total hospital admissions, were the second cause of admission; among them, the most common problems were inguinal hernia (16.8%), vesicular disorders (15.2%) and acute appendicitis (7.4%).

Among the diseases of the nervous system and organs of the senses that took third place (10.3% of total admissions), the most common were cataracts, representing 62.4% of admissions for this group.

In comparison with 2001, there was a substantial increase in hospital admissions due to respiratory diseases (13.4%) and, especially, cases of chronic bronchitis, which grew 19.5%. This fact means that respiratory diseases move up from seventh to fourth position in the ranking of diseases which lead to hospital admission, ahead of the group of tumour diseases, osteo-muscular and complications in pregnancy and birth. Of the rest of the most frequent diseases, there was a 6.1% increase in admissions with regard to the previous year.

The pathological profiles treated show some differences according to sex; although for both sexes cataracts are the main cause of admission, in males there was a higher incidence of cases of inguinal hernias, chronic bronchitis, internal knee disorders (meniscus) and cardiac problems (angina of the chest and infarct); on the other hand, women present a higher number of cases of varicose veins, arthrosis and vesicular disorders.

By age groups, the diagnosis that led to more hospital admissions among the population aged under 14 years was chronic tonsillitis, unlike the group of 15 – 44 year-olds (without considering pregnancy and birth) and the group of 45 – 64 year-olds,

where internal knee disorders were the most frequent admissions, while among the over 65s cataracts were most common.

The pathologies which registered a higher average stay were mental diseases (14.3 days), followed by the group of perinatal diseases (13.3 days) and tumours (8.7 days).

60% of patients underwent surgical procedures.

A total of 162,057 surgical operations were carried out in acute hospitals. The most common surgical procedures carried out in the year 2002 were cataract operations (10.8%), procedures for the induction or assistance to birth (6.8%) and operations on joints (5.3%), among which the most common operations were on the meniscus and hip.

Distribution of discharges and average stay (a.s. in days) by diagnostic groups according to sex

	Male		Female	
	discharges	days	discharges	days
TOTAL	133.006	5,9	138.164	5,0
Infectious diseases	2.179	8,0	1.533	7,6
Tumours	12.668	9,7	11.400	7,6
Endocrine and metabolic diseases	1.800	6,9	2.105	6,4
Mental illnesses	2.733	13,5	2.196	15,2
Diseases affecting the nervous system and organs of the senses	11.705	1,5	16.274	1,0
Cardiocirculatory system diseases	19.875	6,9	14.417	6,4
Respiratory diseases	14.936	6,1	9.182	6,0
Digestive system diseases	18.545	5,6	12.549	6,3
Genital-urinary system diseases	6.793	5,1	10.104	3,4
Skin and subcutaneous diseases	2.204	4,0	1.390	5,1
Pregnancy and childbirth	-	-	22.860	3,0
Osteo-muscular and locomotor diseases	11.496	4,0	11.851	4,8
Fractures and lesions	12.711	6,7	8.650	8,7
Others	15.361	4,8	13.653	4,7

Source: EUSTAT

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