

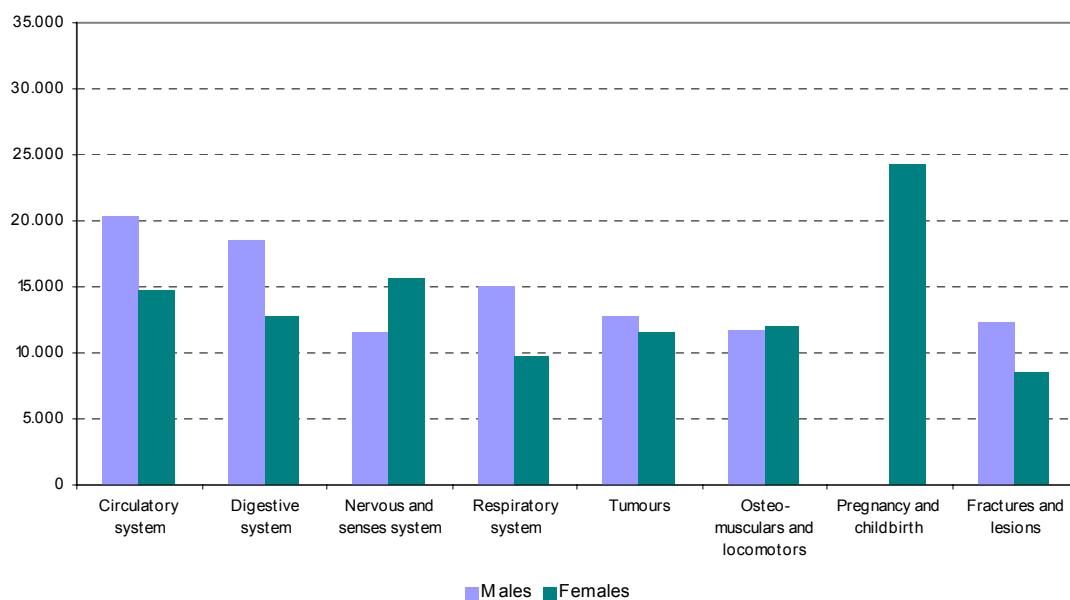
The highest number of hospital admissions in the A.C. of the Basque Country in 2003 were due to circulatory system diseases

13 out of every 100 inhabitants were admitted to hospital for treatment

In 2003 273,723 people were discharged after having been admitted to or treated in the surgical day unit of hospitals for serious cases in the A.C. of the Basque Country, 0.9% more than the previous year, according to Eustat data. This meant that 13 out of every 100 inhabitants were admitted to a hospital centre for treatment. 76.6% of admissions were treated in public hospitals and 23.4% in private hospitals.

Circulatory system diseases remained the main cause of hospitalisation with 12.8% of the total number of admissions, as was the case in the rest of the State, where they accounted for 12.9% in 2002.

Graph 1.- Patients discharged from hospitals for serious cases by most frequent diagnosis group and sex



Source: EUSTAT

Among the most frequent diseases within this group we can identify those that affect the heart: heart failure (10.7%), chronic ischaemia (10.7%), cardiac arrhythmia (9.2%) and severe myocardial infarction (7.7%); also vein diseases: varicose veins (11.2%) and cerebrovascular illness, occlusion of cerebral arteries (6.6%).

Digestive system diseases, with 11.4% of the total number of hospital admissions, represented the second cause of admission, especially inguinal hernia problems (17.4%).

Of nervous system and sensory organ diseases, which came third in the list (9.9% of the total number of admissions), the most frequent were cataracts, representing 59.7% of the admissions in this group.

Among the other most frequent groups of diseases, and with similar percentages, were respiratory diseases (9%), followed closely by neoplasms (tumours) (8.9%) and complications in pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium (8.8%). It should be pointed out that, despite the fact that circulatory diseases give rise to the greatest number of hospital admissions, it is in the group of neoplasms (tumours) where most deaths occur.

In comparison with 2002, the group of pathologies connected with complications in pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium experienced the largest proportional growth among the major diagnostic groups with 5.8% more cases treated. This fact confirms the increase in the number of births identified by the Eustat Birth Statistics for the same period. Among the most frequent pathologies in this diagnostic group, there was a significant increase in cases of hospitalisation for prolonged pregnancy, in 33% of cases, and illness of the mother, complicating the pregnancy (mainly anaemia), in 31.4%.

While for men, circulatory system diseases were the main cause of admission to hospital, for women it was complications in pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium.

Of the total number of people who were discharged in 2003, 48.7% were men and 51.3% were women. However, if we exclude discharges due to pregnancy and childbirth, the percentage of men rises to 53.4%.

By groups of diseases, those related to the circulatory system caused the most hospital admissions among men, followed by ones related to the digestive system and respiratory diseases, while for women, the most frequent were illness related to complications in pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium, followed by nervous system and sensory organ illness and thirdly, those that affected the circulatory system.

By age group, the highest percentage of people admitted to hospital corresponded to those aged 65 or more (40.5%); they were followed by the 15-44 year-olds (29%) and the 45-64 year-olds (25%) and, at some distance, those aged 0-14 (5.5%).

The diagnosis that gave rise to most hospital admissions among the population aged 0-14 was chronic tonsillitis and adenoids, whereas for both the 15-44 and 45-64 age brackets, the most frequent admissions, if we omit pregnancy and childbirth, were due to internal knee disorders, while for those aged over 65, the most common were cataracts.

The average stay per patient was 5.4 days (5.5 days in 2002); by sex, the average stay for men was 5.8 days compared to 5 for women. The diagnoses that gave rise to a longer average stay were mental illnesses (14.4 days), followed by the group of perinatal diseases (13.7 days) and tumours (8.4 days); on the other hand, the shortest

stays corresponded to nervous system and sensory organ diseases (1.2 days) and complications in pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium (3 days).

Cataracts were the most frequent surgical operations

56% of the people who were discharged in 2003 had undergone surgery. Among the most common were cataracts (10.6%), obstetrics (induction or aid to childbirth) (7.9%) and operations on the joints (5.5%), especially knees.

By age group, operations on tonsils and adenoids, followed by ones on the appendix were the most frequent among 0-14 year-olds; obstetrics (induction or aid to childbirth) and knee operations predominated among the 15-44 age group; in the 45-64 age group, knee operations were also the most common together with hernia problems, while for those aged 65 or more the most common were cataracts.

Table 1.- Patients discharged and average stay (a.s.) in days by diagnostic group according to sex

	Male		Female	
	discharges	a.s.	discharges	a.s.
TOTAL	133.365	5,8	140.358	5,0
Infectious diseases	2.218	7,9	1.493	8,1
Tumours	12.658	9,3	11.573	7,3
Endocrine and metabolic diseases	1.847	6,0	2.185	6,2
Mental illnesses	2.744	13,5	2.104	15,5
Diseases affecting the nervous system and organs of the	11.498	1,6	15.651	1,0
Cardiocirculatory system diseases	20.369	6,6	14.685	6,2
Respiratory diseases	14.945	6,0	9.629	5,8
Digestive system diseases	18.543	5,5	12.719	6,3
Genital-urinary system diseases	6.820	4,9	9.700	3,5
Skin and subcutaneous diseases	2.255	3,9	1.438	5,1
Pregnancy and childbirth	-	-	24.175	3,0
Osteo-muscular and locomotor diseases	11.596	3,9	11.932	4,7
Fractures and lesions	12.315	6,7	8.441	8,8
Others	15.557	5,0	14.633	4,6

Source: EUSTAT

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