

Press release: 12.937-235/22

Number of inpatient hospital stays increased slightly in 2021

Again fewer inpatient stays than before the pandemic

Vienna, 2022-11-15 – According to Statistics Austria, a total of 2.2 million inpatient stays in Austrian hospitals were documented for 2021. Although that is almost 5 % more than in 2020, it is still almost 14 % less than in 2019. The number of patients who died in hospital, on the other hand, has increased further (+1.6 %).

Zero-night hospital stays increased more than inpatient stays

Compared to 2020, the 2 210 373 hospital discharges documented for 2021 represent a 4.9 % increase in hospitalisations. Thus, the decline in inpatient treatments relative to the 2019 level of care (before the start of the pandemic) has lowered from -17.6 % to -13.6 % (in acute care from -17.2 % to -13.6 %). In acute care, there was a further shift from inpatient to day cases: While the number of full inpatient treatments increased by 3.2 % from 1 672 369 (2020) to 1 726 174 (2021), the growth in zero-night stays was +10.4 % (rising from 308 120 to 340 240 cases).

The number of rehabilitations and those who died in hospital has also increased

Compared to the previous year, the number of rehabilitations increased from 119 541 to 137 531 (+15.0 %), but was still 12.4 % lower than in 2019. Mental illnesses required rehabilitation significantly more often than in 2019 (+21.6 % compared to 2019, +29.1 % compared to 2020). Rehabilitation following a severe COVID 19 condition expanded sharply from 288 cases in 2020 to 2 992 cases in 2021; this increase alone accounts for about 15 % of the growth in the overall care sector (see tables 3 and 4). The number of inpatient medical services provided rose by 6.5 % compared to 2020, but at just under 4.3 million in 2021, it remained about 268 000 lower than the procedures supplied in 2019 (see table 1). 45 296 patients died in hospital in 2021, that is 1.6 % more than in 2020 and 8 % more than in 2019 (see table 1).

Decrease in inpatient treatment of respiratory diseases

Treatment of cancer (10.7 %), injuries and poisonings (10.6 %), musculoskeletal conditions (9.4 %), and cardiac and pulmonary diseases (7.3 %) together accounted for 38.0 % of all hospitalisations in 2021. Although the number of hospital discharges with one of these diagnoses decreased from 902 142 (2019) to 785 376 (2021), their relative share of all hospitalisations grew slightly (the share was 37.7 % in 2019). The percentage of inpatient stays due to pregnancy and childbirth also increased (from 4.8 % in 2019 to 5.4 % in 2021), although here, too, the absolute numbers declined. Inpatient respiratory care, on the other hand, fell significantly (both in absolute and relative terms); these accounted for 6 % in 2019, 5.1 % in 2020 and 4.4 % in 2021 of all hospital discharges. While 17 051 acute upper respiratory tract infections (including influenza) were treated as inpatients in 2019, only 6 010 cases (-64.8 %) were reported in 2021; for pneumonia, this drop was 41.6 % (see table 2).

Cases of COVID 19 patients in inpatient acute care have increased by 50 % compared to 2020

In 2021, 39 759 cases of COVID-19 disease required acute hospitalisation – an increase of 13 259 against the previous year, representing 50 % growth. On average, an inpatient stay for this diagnosis lasted nearly twice as long as for all other diagnoses (12.3 days versus 6.2 days); the average length of stay also rose by

nearly two days from 2020 to 2021. Men were more likely to receive acute inpatient care than women, and for longer periods; nearly six in ten patients were at least 65 years old (see table 4).

Ten times as many inpatient stays for rehabilitation after COVID-19 as in 2020. In 2021, 2 992 rehabilitations were received for COVID-19 disease (1 563 males, 1 429 females), more than tenfold than in the year before. The ratio of rehabilitation to acute care is thus 1:13. Rehabilitation is most frequently approved for persons aged 45 to 64; in this age group, one rehabilitation is prescribed for every seven acute care stays (women: 1:6, men 1:8). Compared to the previous year, the average duration of rehabilitation increased from 16.4 to 21.5 days (see table 4).

Detailed results and further information on hospital discharge statistics can be found on our [website](#).

Table 1: Inpatient hospital stays since 1989

Key figures hospital stays ¹	1989	2016	2019	2020	2021	Change in percent	
						2020/21	2019/21
Hospital stays in total	1 721 799	2 863 721	2 558 049	2 107 780	2 210 373	4,9	-13,6
Hospital stays per 1 000 of the population ²	221,7	322,1	282,6	232,7	244,0	4,8	-13,7
Hospital stays with discharge type "deceased"	46 316	40 618	41 941	44 570	45 296	1,6	8,0
Hospital stays acute care	1 672 953	2 705 460	2 390 825	1 980 489	2 066 414	4,3	-13,6
Full inpatient stays ³	1 596 928	2 053 274	1 991 345	1 672 369	1 726 174	3,2	-13,3
Average length of stay ⁴ in days (mean)	11,1	6,4	6,3	6,4	6,3	-1,6	0,0
Median length of stay ^{4,5} in days	6,9	3,5	3,4	3,4	3,4	0,0	0,1
Zero-night stays ⁶	76 025	652 186	399 480	308 120	340 240	10,4	-14,8
Hospital stays non-acute care	48 846	158 261	167 224	127 291	143 959	13,1	-13,9
Rehabilitation	39 505	147 620	156 995	119 541	137 531	15,0	-12,4
Long-term care	5 474	7 534	7 509	6 694	6 001	-10,4	-20,1
Prevention/recovery	3 867	3 107	2 720	1 056	427	-59,6	-84,3
Medical procedures in total	.	4 834 221	4 524 477	3 996 670	4 256 465	6,5	-5,9
Services during inpatient stays ³	.	4 145 790	4 079 479	3 641 581	3 862 371	6,1	-5,3
Surgical services	.	993 455	998 565	868 178	904 600	4,2	-9,4
Non-surgical services	.	3 152 335	3 080 914	2 773 403	2 957 771	6,6	-4,0
Services during zero-night stays ⁶	.	688 431	444 998	355 089	394 094	11,0	-11,4
Surgical services	.	244 175	283 493	229 454	257 187	12,1	-9,3
Non-surgical services	.	444 256	161 505	125 635	136 907	9,0	-15,2

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, hospital discharge statistics based on data from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

1) Hospital discharges of persons residing in Austria and abroad; including deaths. – 2) Stays of persons with domestic residence in relation to the population as an annual average. – 3) Stays with at least one overnight stay in hospital. – 4) Length of stay refers to full inpatient stays with at least one overnight stay. – 5) Median for classified data. – 6) Zero-night stays (day cases): admission and discharge on the same calendar day.

Table 2: Diseases treated as inpatients in acute care hospitals in 2019, 2020 and 2021

Inpatient hospital stays ¹ by selected diagnoses (ICD-10)	2019	2020	2021	Changes in percent	
				2020/21	2019/21
Inpatient stays in acute care hospitals in total	2 390 825	1 980 489	2 066 414	4,3	-13,6
Infectious intestinal diseases (A00–A09)	21 643	13 140	14 628	11,3	-32,4
HIV disease (B20–B24)	825	336	322	-4,2	-61,0
Other infectious/parasitic diseases (A15–B19, B25–B99)	34 281	26 917	26 280	-2,4	-23,3
Malignant neoplasms (C00–C97)	242 556	216 034	220 684	2,2	-9,0
In situ and benign neoplasms ² (D00–D48)	51 484	42 885	45 100	5,2	-12,4
Diseases of the blood/blood-forming organs ³ (D50–D89)	17 569	15 256	16 256	6,6	-7,5

Inpatient hospital stays ¹ by selected diagnoses (ICD-10)	2019	2020	2021	Changes in percent	
				2020/21	2019/21
Endocrine, nutritional, metabolic diseases (E00–E90)	49 140	37 917	39 328	3,7	-20,0
Dementia (F00–F03)	6 616	5 198	5 129	-1,3	-22,5
Alcohol-related mental and behavioral disorders (F10)	17 506	14 147	14 694	3,9	-16,1
Other mental and behavioral disorders (F04–F09, F11–F99)	71 254	60 961	64 672	6,1	-9,2
Diseases of the nervous system (G00–G99)	105 793	84 066	90 933	8,2	-14,0
Cataract (H25–H26, H28)	118 455	92 483	105 072	13,6	-11,3
Other diseases of the eye ⁴ (H00–H24, H27, H28–H59)	57 099	40 005	46 173	15,4	-19,1
Diseases of the ear and mastoid process (H60–H95)	21 705	15 500	15 701	1,3	-27,7
Heart diseases, diseases of the pulmonary circulation (I05–I09, I20–I52)	163 702	141 373	150 116	6,2	-8,3
Hypertension (diseases of high blood pressure) (I10–I15)	19 163	14 724	14 437	-1,9	-24,7
Cerebrovascular diseases (I60–I69)	35 518	32 256	32 776	1,6	-7,7
Vascular diseases (I70–I87)	52 205	41 374	43 103	4,2	-17,4
Other diseases of the circulatory system (I00–I02, I88–I99)	4 604	3 401	3 673	8,0	-20,2
Acute upper respiratory tract infections, influenza (J00–J11)	17 051	11 956	6 010	-49,7	-64,8
Pneumonia (J12–J18)	36 336	25 264	21 231	-16,0	-41,6
Other acute lower respiratory tract infections (J20–J22)	12 326	7 024	7 768	10,6	-37,0
Bronchial asthma and status asthmaticus (J45–J46)	2 290	1 567	1 579	0,8	-31,0
Other diseases of the respiratory system (J30–J44, J47–99)	76 288	54 958	54 498	-0,8	-28,6
Diseases of stomach and intestines (K25–K38, K50–K64)	104 176	80 983	83 556	3,2	-19,8
Diseases of gall bladder, liver and pancreas (K70–K87)	45 104	40 122	41 632	3,8	-7,7
Hernias (K40–K46)	37 142	29 635	31 488	6,3	-15,2
Other diseases of digestive system (K00–K23, K65–K67, K90–K93)	32 031	25 861	27 330	5,7	-14,7
Diseases of the skin and subcutaneous tissue (L00–L99)	28 202	21 451	20 989	-2,2	-25,6
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system ⁵ (M00–M99)	233 817	182 622	195 179	6,9	-16,5
Diseases of the genitourinary system (N00–N99)	159 388	133 033	140 359	5,5	-11,9
Pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium (O00–O99)	115 953	108 554	110 941	2,2	-4,3
Injuries and poisonings ⁶ (S00–T98)	262 067	218 805	219 397	0,3	-16,3
COVID-19 (U07–U12)	-	26 500	39 759	50,0	.
Other diagnoses (rest of A00–Z99)	137 536	114 181	115 621	1,3	-15,9

Q: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, hospital discharge statistics based on data from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

1) Hospital discharges of persons residing in Austria and abroad; including zero-night stays and deaths. – 2) Including neoplasms of uncertain/unknown behavior. – 3) Including certain disorders involving the immune system. – 4) Including diseases of the ocular appendages. – 5) Including diseases of connective tissue. – 6) Including certain other consequences of external causes.

Table 3: Rehabilitations 2019, 2020 and 2021

Rehabilitations ¹ by selected diagnoses (ICD-10)	2019	2020	2021	Changes in percent	
				2020/21	2019/21
Rehabilitations in total	156 995	119 541	137 531	15,0	-12,4
Diseases of the musculoskeletal system ² (M00–M99)	56 531	43 508	47 823	9,9	-15,4
Diseases of the circulatory system (I00–I99)	32 504	24 563	27 256	11,0	-16,1
Injuries and poisonings ³ (S00–T98)	18 713	13 394	14 250	6,4	-23,8
Mental and behavioral disorders (F00–F99)	8 015	7 550	9 750	29,1	21,6
Diseases of the nervous system (G00–G99)	9 598	7 404	8 767	18,4	-8,7
Malignant neoplasms (C00–C97)	9 665	7 555	8 285	9,7	-14,3
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases (E00–E90)	9 110	6 188	7 732	25,0	-15,1
Diseases of the respiratory system (J00–J99)	7 665	5 068	5 716	12,8	-25,4

Rehabilitations ¹ by selected diagnoses (ICD-10)	2019	2020	2021	Changes in percent	
				2020/21	2019/21
COVID19 (U07–U12)	.	288	2 992	938,9	.
Diseases of the digestive system (K00–K93)	1 010	605	687	13,6	-32,0
Other diagnoses (rest of A00–Z99)	4 184	3 418	4 273	25,0	2,1

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, hospital discharge statistics based on data from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

1) Hospital discharges of persons residing in Austria and abroad; including zero-night stays and including deaths. – 2) Including diseases of the connective tissue – 3) Including certain other consequences of external causes.

Table 4: Inpatient COVID-19 diseases treated in 2020 and 2021 (acute care, rehabilitation)

Selected chapters of the DRG catalog and (single) procedures	Hospital stays ¹			Average length of stay ² in days		
	2020	2021	Change 2020/21 in percent	2020	2021	Change 2020/21 in percent
Acute care						
Males and females	26 500	39 759	50,0	10,1	12,0	18,8
Until 14 years	229	825	260,3	3,6	4,0	11,1
15 to 44 years	2 080	4 683	125,1	5,7	6,9	21,1
45 to 64 years	6 512	12 014	84,5	9,0	11,1	23,3
65 years and older	17 679	22 237	25,8	11,2	13,9	24,1
Males	14 635	21 422	46,4	10,2	12,4	21,6
Until 14 years	132	441	234,1	3,7	4,2	13,5
15 to 44 years	1 232	2 574	108,9	6,3	7,6	20,6
45 to 64 years	4 187	7 372	76,1	9,4	11,9	26,6
65 years and older	9 084	11 035	21,5	11,2	14,2	26,8
Females	11 865	18 337	54,5	10,0	11,7	17,0
Until 14 years	97	384	295,9	3,4	3,8	11,8
15 to 44 years	848	2 109	148,7	4,9	6,1	24,5
45 to 64 years	2 325	4 642	99,7	8,2	9,9	20,7
65 years and older	8 595	11 202	30,3	11,1	13,7	23,4
Rehabilitation						
Males and females	288	2 992	938,9	16,3	21,5	31,9
Until 14 years	-	6	.	-	21,8	.
15 to 44 years	11	421	3 727,3	14,5	21,9	51,0
45 to 64 years	109	1 651	1 414,7	16,3	21,6	32,5
65 years and older	168	914	444,0	16,4	21,1	28,7
Males	170	1 563	819,4	15,9	21,3	34,0
Until 14 years	-	2	.	-	25,0	.
15 to 44 years	7	176	2 414,3	14,4	21,6	50,0
45 to 64 years	76	886	1 065,8	16,0	21,4	33,8
65 years and older	87	499	473,6	15,8	21,1	33,5
Females	118	1 429	1 111,0	16,9	21,6	27,8
Until 14 years	-	4	.	-	20,3	.
15 to 44 years	4	245	6 025,0	14,8	22,1	49,3
45 to 64 years	33	765	2 218,2	17,0	21,8	28,2
65 years and older	81	415	412,3	16,9	21,0	24,3

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, hospital discharge statistics based on data from the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection.

1) Hospital discharges of persons residing in Austria and abroad with a COVID-19 discharge diagnosis (U07–U12); including zero-night stays and including deaths. – 2) Length of stay refers to full inpatient stays with at least one overnight stay.

Methodological information, definitions: Hospital discharge statistics have been collected since 1989. As a secondary statistic, it is based on the legally obligatory diagnosis and service documentation of all Austrian hospitals, since 1997 within the framework of performance-oriented hospital financing (DRG system, diagnosis related groups). Statistics Austria publish annual statistics on hospital discharges by main diagnosis at the time of discharge, as well as statistics on single medical procedures.

The hospital discharge statistics are not person-related, but case-related statistics, i.e. multiple admissions of a person within a reporting year are also included multiple times.

The calculation of the average **length of stay** does not include **zero-night stays**, where admission and discharge take place on the same day. This mode of calculation is in line with international guidelines.

Full inpatient stays are hospital stays with at least one overnight stay. Midnight stays are counted here.

The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection provides annual data on the resources available in hospitals in terms of staff, equipment and space, as well as key figures on hospital utilisation from the hospital statistics.

Data on hospital discharges, hospital beds and staff numbers are reported annually by Statistics Austria to the OECD, EUROSTAT and the WHO and published in their databases and publications.

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