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# Fewer hospital stays in 2023 again than before the pandemic

## Almost one in six hospital stays does not require an overnight stay

Vienna, 2024-10-22 – According to Statistics Austria, around 2.3 million hospital discharges were documented for 2023, 2.5% more than in the previous year, but still significantly fewer than before the pandemic. At 2.1 million, the majority of discharges in 2023 were from acute-care hospitals. The number of day cases rose by 7.0%, while inpatient stays increased by 1.3%.

“The number of hospital stays rose again in 2023, but remains well below the pre-pandemic level of 2019. Compared to 2022, hospital stays increased by 2.5% to 2.3 million, or 246.8 per 1 000 inhabitants. Before the pandemic, there were 282.6 hospitalisations per 1 000 inhabitants, 14.5% more than in 2023,” says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

Of the total of 2.3 million hospital stays in 2023, 2.1 million took place in acute-care hospitals (+2.3% compared to 2022), with a large part of the increase being due to the expansion of day-care treatments. The number of rehabilitation stays rose by 5.8% from 2022 to 2023 to 157 756.

Nevertheless, as in previous years, the number of hospital stays in 2023 was once again significantly lower than before the pandemic: Compared to 2019, when there were around 2.6 million, hospital stays fell by 10.3%; if population growth since 2019 is taken into account, the decline amounts to 12.7%. In acute-care hospitals, inpatient stays (with at least one overnight stay) fell by 11.7% compared to 2019, or by 14.2% when taking population growth into account, and day cases fell by 6.5%, or by 8.8% when taking population growth into account (2019: 399 480 zero-night stays, 16.7% of hospital discharges from acute-care hospitals). In contrast, the number of rehabilitation stays increased by 0.5% during this period, although taking population growth into account, this results in a decrease of 2.2% (see table 1).

In all federal provinces, fewer acute-care hospital stays were recorded in 2023 than in 2019. This decrease was most pronounced in Vienna and Styria, where the number of discharges fell by 12.3% in both cases. The decrease was also above average in Lower Austria and Vorarlberg (–11.4% and –11.3%, respectively); it was comparatively low in Burgenland (–5.2%, see table 2).

### More day cases than in 2022

Of the 2 295 796 hospital stays documented in 2023, 92.8% or 2 130 787 were in acute-care hospitals. Of these, 82.5% or 1 757 398 were inpatient stays (with at least one overnight stay; +1.3% compared to 2022) and 17.5% or 373 389 were so-called zero-night stays, i.e. the treatments and examinations were provided on a day-case basis and the patients were discharged on the day of admission. Compared to the previous year, zero-night stays increased by 7.0%, or 6.1% if population growth is taken into account.

### Most stays in acute care due to circulatory diseases

The most common diseases treated in Austrian hospitals in 2023 were diseases of the circulatory system (11.5% of cases), injuries and poisonings (11.1%), cancer (10.3%) or diseases of the musculoskeletal system (9.3%). Patients with circulatory diseases (+1.5% compared to the previous year and –10.8% compared to 2019) were treated for 28 521 strokes and 15 424 heart attacks. The most commonly treated malignant tumours were breast cancer (24 272 stays), colorectal cancer (22 831) and lung cancer (21 829). The total

number of cancer cases treated in hospital increased by 2.0% compared with the previous year, but was 9.1% lower than in 2019. In 2023, 18 858 hospital stays were related to COVID-19 (table 3).

### Almost a third of rehabilitations due to musculoskeletal disorders

Nearly 7% of hospital discharges in 2023 or 157 756 were for rehabilitation, 5.8% more than in 2022 and 0.5% more than five years previously. Rehabilitation was most common for musculoskeletal disorders (32.6%), circulatory disorders (19.9%) and after injuries (11.7%). 22 706 rehabilitations were for advanced osteoarthritis of the knee or hip, usually following the implantation of an artificial joint. In 20 924 cases, the reason for rehabilitation was ischaemic heart disease (angina pectoris, heart attack, coronary heart disease) or stroke. A further 18 195 rehabilitations were for treatment of the back (see table 3).

Detailed results and further information can be found on our website on [hospital discharges](#) and inpatient [medical procedures](#). Statistics Austria also reports the data on hospital discharges annually to the OECD, Eurostat and the WHO and publishes them in their databases and publications.

**Table 1: Hospital discharges 2019 to 2023**

Key data on hospital stays	2019	2020 <sup>2</sup>	2021	2022	2023
<b>All hospital stays absolute<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2 558 049</b>	<b>2 107 780</b>	<b>2 210 373</b>	<b>2 239 801</b>	<b>2 295 796</b>
Stays with discharge type "deceased"	41 941	44 570	45 296	45 473	44 523
Acute-care	2 390 825	1 980 489	2 066 414	2 083 663	2 130 787
Full inpatient stays <sup>3</sup>	1 991 345	1 672 369	1 726 174	1 734 659	1 757 398
Day cases <sup>4</sup>	399 480	308 120	340 240	349 004	373 389
Rehabilitation	156 995	119 541	137 531	149 077	157 756
Long-term care, convalescence/prevention	10 229	7 750	6 428	7 061	7 253
<b>All hospital stays per 1 000 of population<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>282.6</b>	<b>232.7</b>	<b>244.0</b>	<b>242.9</b>	<b>246.8</b>
Stays with discharge type "deceased"	4.7	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.8
Acute-care	263.9	218.5	227.9	225.8	228.8
Full inpatient stays <sup>3</sup>	219.6	184.4	190.3	187.7	188.4
Day cases <sup>4</sup>	44.3	34.1	37.6	38.0	40.4
Rehabilitation	17.6	13.3	15.3	16.4	17.2
Long-term care, convalescence/prevention	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.8
<b>All medical procedures</b>	<b>4 524 477</b>	<b>3 996 670</b>	<b>4 256 465</b>	<b>4 224 090</b>	<b>4 377 899</b>
Full inpatient services <sup>3</sup>	4 079 479	3 641 581	3 862 371	3 817 868	3 932 645
Surgical services	998 565	868 178	904 600	911 738	939 601
Non-operative services	3 080 914	2 773 403	2 957 771	2 906 130	2 993 044
Day-care services <sup>4</sup>	444 998	355 089	394 094	406 222	445 254
Surgical services	283 493	229 454	257 187	261 172	284 461
Non-operative services	161 505	125 635	136 907	145 050	160 793

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Hospital Discharge Statistics; Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Reports on Diagnoses and Services.

1) Hospital discharges of persons resident in Austria and abroad; including deaths and including day cases. – 2) There were breaks in the time series in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. – 3) Refers to stays with at least one overnight stay in hospital. – 4) Refers to zero-night stays (day cases) with admission and discharge on the same calendar day. – 5) Hospital discharges of persons resident in Austria as a percentage of the annual average population; including deaths and day cases.

**Table 2: Inpatient stays in acute-care hospitals 2019 to 2023 by federal provinces (site of the hospital)**

Hospital stays <sup>1</sup> by federal provinces (site of the hospital)	2019	2020 <sup>2</sup>	2021	2022	2023
<b>Austria</b>	<b>2 390 825</b>	<b>1 980 489</b>	<b>2 066 414</b>	<b>2 083 663</b>	<b>2 130 787</b>
Burgenland	57 945	47 441	51 375	52 159	54 935
Carinthia	159 069	137 305	143 017	142 565	145 141
Lower Austria	343 831	279 721	287 304	294 586	304 780
Upper Austria	432 481	362 634	383 451	387 023	386 204

Hospital stays <sup>1</sup> by federal provinces (site of the hospital)	2019	2020 <sup>2</sup>	2021	2022	2023
Salzburg	172 464	146 589	151 789	154 219	155 489
Styria	329 399	268 648	285 020	285 138	288 771
Tyrol	228 762	195 204	201 000	207 998	209 552
Vorarlberg	108 082	89 186	92 832	93 585	95 897
Vienna	558 792	453 761	470 626	466 390	490 018

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Hospital Discharge Statistics; Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Reports on Diagnoses and Services.

1) There were breaks in the time series in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. – 2) Hospital discharges of persons resident in Austria and abroad; including deaths and including day cases.

**Table 3: Common reasons for acute-care hospitalisation and rehabilitation since 2019**

Hospital stays for selected diagnoses	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021	2022	2023
<b>Acute care<sup>2</sup> (all diagnoses)</b>	<b>2 390 825</b>	<b>1 980 489</b>	<b>2 066 414</b>	<b>2 083 663</b>	<b>2 130 787</b>
Colorectal cancer (C18–C21)	25 223	22 626	22 892	22 306	22 831
Lung cancer (C33–C34)	24 473	22 048	22 590	21 404	21 829
Skin cancer (C43–C44)	18 928	16 460	16 369	15 847	16 420
Breast cancer (C50)	27 124	22 566	23 235	22 904	24 272
Depression (F32–F33)	18 579	15 375	16 551	16 738	16 536
Sleep apnoea (G47.3)	31 422	23 503	27 793	28 099	30 266
Cataracts (H25–H26, H28)	118 455	92 483	105 072	100 470	106 065
Heart attack (I21–I22)	17 588	15 557	16 080	15 540	15 424
Heart failure (I50)	24 851	21 644	23 117	22 936	21 379
Stroke (cerebral infarction/haemorrhage; I60–I64, I69)	29 432	27 131	27 368	28 275	28 521
Pneumonia (J12–J18)	36 336	25 264	21 231	24 736	32 452
Hernia (K40)	21 316	17 435	18 555	20 359	21 687
Gallstones (K80)	21 953	18 918	19 325	19 899	20 128
Osteoarthritis of the hip joint (coxarthrosis; M16)	20 256	17 282	19 357	20 336	21 277
Osteoarthritis of the knee (gonarthrosis; M17)	24 897	19 630	21 203	22 848	25 207
Back disorders (M40–M49, M50–M51, M54)	68 333	52 826	54 743	52 520	54 158
Renal insufficiency (N17–N19)	21 251	18 235	18 019	18 628	19 972
Injury (S00–S99, T00–T14, T79)	221 467	185 327	184 411	197 099	199 053
Complications from medical treatment (T80–T88)	25 894	21 435	22 901	23 541	25 476
COVID-19 (U07–U10, G93.3 <sup>3</sup> )	73	26 569	39 884	40 509	18 858
<b>Rehabilitation<sup>2</sup> (all diagnoses)</b>	<b>156 995</b>	<b>119 541</b>	<b>137 531</b>	<b>149 077</b>	<b>157 756</b>
Breast cancer (C50)	3 252	2 544	2 823	2 960	3 271
Diabetes mellitus (E10–E14)	5 537	3 642	4 334	4 610	4 958
Obesity (E66)	2 850	2 018	2 851	3 254	2 986
Depression (F32–F33)	4 415	4 184	5 092	5 750	6 093
Reactive stress disorder (F43)	1 473	1 252	1 695	1 871	2 038
Multiple sclerosis (G35)	2 386	1 704	1 762	2 020	2 106
Parkinson's disease (primary; G20)	1 845	1 376	1 569	1 795	1 996
Ischaemic heart disease <sup>4</sup> (I20–I25)	13 319	9 771	10 963	11 925	12 450
Stroke (cerebral infarction/ haemorrhage; I60–I64, I69)	8 787	7 085	7 717	7 990	8 474
Valvular heart disease (I34–I39)	2 621	1 964	2 072	2 382	2 469
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (J44)	4 273	2 683	2 230	3 016	3 976
Asthma (J45–J46)	1 910	1 251	1 016	1 326	1 664
Osteoarthritis of the hip (coxarthrosis; M16)	11 513	9 052	10 281	10 353	9 864
Osteoarthritis of the knee (gonarthrosis; M17)	14 887	11 279	12 140	12 231	12 842
Back disorders (M40–M49, M50–M51, M54)	18 860	14 542	15 789	16 840	18 195

Hospital stays for selected diagnoses	2019	2020 <sup>1</sup>	2021	2022	2023
Shoulder injury (soft tissue; M75)	3 568	2 661	2 990	2 877	3 007
Consequences of injury (T90–T94)	13 467	9 254	10 050	12 750	14 271
COVID-19 (U07–U10, G93.3 <sup>3</sup> )	5	292	3 545	3 677	2 796

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Hospital Discharge Statistics; Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Reports on Diagnoses and Services.

1) There were breaks in the time series in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. – 2) Hospital discharges of persons resident in Austria and abroad; including deaths and including day cases. – 3) Chronic fatigue syndrome. – 4) Angina pectoris, myocardial infarction, coronary heart disease.

#### Information on methodology, definitions:

Hospital discharge statistics are **secondary statistics** based on administrative data derived from the diagnosis and service documentation of Austrian hospitals and from the hospital statistics of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Nursing and Consumer Protection.

Hospital discharge statistics have been kept in electronic form by Statistics Austria since the reference year 1989. The STATcube statistical database brings together data from the diagnosis and procedure reports and from hospital statistics. The main diagnoses of hospital discharges are recorded according to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) in the version adapted for Austria, and the individual medical services are recorded according to the service catalogue of the procedure-oriented hospital financing (on the basis of diagnosis-related groups (DRG)).

For each inpatient hospitalisation, a **principal diagnosis** is recorded at the time of discharge; this is the diagnosis that proved to be the main reason for the inpatient hospitalisation. Accordingly, the principal diagnosis may not be the admission diagnosis, nor may it always be the diagnosis with which a patient is discharged for further treatment. A new disease or complication acquired during the hospital stay cannot be the principal diagnosis. In the case of deaths, the principal diagnosis is not always the same as the cause of death.

The number of inpatient stays corresponds to the number of discharges from Austrian **hospitals** according to the KAKuG. Each hospital is assigned to one of four **care sectors**: acute care, rehabilitation, long-term care and convalescence/prevention.

Hospital discharge statistics are case-based rather than person-based, i.e. multiple discharges of the same person during a reference year are counted several times.

**Zero-night stays (day cases)**, where admission and discharge occur on the same day, are not included in the calculation of the average **length of stay**.

**Full inpatient stays** are hospital stays of at least one night. Midnight stays are counted here.

**Statistics Austria** is the central organisation for official data and statistics on society, the economy, the state and the environment. As a national statistical institute, it is committed to the statutory principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity. Statistics Austria is headed by Tobias Thomas, Director General Statistics, and Franz Haslauer, Director General Finance.

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