

More patients with ulcerative colitis but fewer surgeries

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Carl Eriksson. Credit: Örebro Universitet

Today, a higher number of patients with ulcerative colitis are able to keep their bowel and steer clear of surgery, as shown in a study from Örebro University. Carl Eriksson, doctoral student at Örebro University,

has also shown that the number of people suffering from the disease is 10 times higher today than in the 60s.

Carl Eriksson has examined the outcome for people developing the inflammatory bowel [disease](#) ulcerative colitis in Örebro between 1963 and 2010. Over 1,000 patients are part of the study.

More than 1 in 5 patients diagnosed before 1975 had to undergo surgery. This can be compared to 12 per cent of the patients developing the disease between 1991 and 2005.

"The risk of having to undergo surgery is clearly reduced now. I would like to think that this has to do with improved treatments," says Carl Eriksson.

Today, patients receive stronger treatments that reduce inflammation and symptoms. At the same [time](#), his study shows that the number of people developing the disease is significantly higher today than in the 60s.

"There are 10 times as many sufferers from ulcerative colitis today as in the 60s. Why there has been such an increase is an interesting question. One reason could be the fact that we do not smoke as much."

Research has shown that smoking protects against [ulcerative colitis](#). Another reason, says Carl Eriksson, may be that healthcare has got better at identifying [patients](#) with inflammatory bowel conditions:

"More people are diagnosed since the examination methods are better today. But even if we account for that, there has been a significant increase," says Carl Eriksson.

More information: C. Eriksson et al. Changes in medical management and colectomy rates: a population-based cohort study on the

epidemiology and natural history of ulcerative colitis in Örebro, Sweden, 1963-2010, *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics* (2017). DOI: [10.1111/apt.14268](https://doi.org/10.1111/apt.14268)

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