

# Older people with bowel disease receive older medicines

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Inflammatory bowel disease is common amongst older people and there are big differences in the choice of treatment for different age groups. Patients over the age of 60 often receive cortisone drugs instead of more modern medicines that target the immune system. This according to a large registry study from Karolinska Institutet in Sweden published in *Gastroenterology*.

Inflammatory bowel disease includes Crohn's disease, which can affect the whole intestine, and [ulcerative colitis](#), which affects the colon and rectum. Symptoms include blood in the stool, diarrhoea and [stomach pain](#). Treatment consists of [anti-inflammatory drugs](#) and surgery to remove the damaged part of the intestines. The most common age of onset is 20-30, and previous studies have claimed that it is uncommon for the disease to debut over the age of 60 and when it does, it is less severe.

"We therefore sought to ascertain the incidence of [inflammatory bowel disease](#) in older age groups and if there is any difference in how they are treated and how they use the healthcare services," says Åsa Hallqvist Everhov, researcher at Karolinska Institutet's Department of Clinical Research and Education, Stockholm South General (Söder) Hospital (KI SÖS) and [colorectal surgeon](#) at the same hospital.

The study included all new cases of inflammatory bowel disease in Sweden between 2006 and 2014. The resulting group of just under 28,000 patients was split into three sub-groups depending on year of

onset: childhood (

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