

# **To treat the fracture based on functional demands of patients – evaluation of the new national guideline for distal radius fracture treatment at Karolinska University Hospital**

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## Background:

In April 2021, Sweden implemented a national guideline for the treatment of distal radius fractures (DRF) with the aim of reducing regional variations and improving individual patient care. Unlike guidelines in other countries, the Swedish guideline introduced functional demands as the basis for treatment selection, instead of age.

## Objectives and study methods:

This retrospective comparative study aimed to evaluate the impact of the new national guideline on decision making for general and special patient groups with distal radius fractures at Karolinska University Hospital. We reviewed the records of all consecutive admitted patients due to distal radius fractures during 2020 and 2022. The patient demography and treatment options were compared. The costs for healthcare were calculated.

## Results:

The patient demographics in terms of age, sex, exhibited similar patterns in 2020 and 2022 (Table I). In 2022, a slight decrease in the proportion of operative treatments was observed among women across all age groups, while the opposite trend was observed among men. Notably, the choice of operative treatment increased for female patients aged  $\geq 65$ y (Table I & Figure I.) The healthcare cost per patient was slightly increased in 2022. There was no statistical difference in the mean age, proportion operative treatment or mean cost per patient for women or men between the two years.

## Conclusion:

Treating distal radius fractures based on functional demand can be effectively implemented without incurring apparent extra costs for the healthcare budget. It is important to conduct further research on a larger population, considering functional demand, fracture type, co-morbidities and normal random variation.