

NSQH2022

# The influence of COVID-19 on Danish cancer care

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## Cancer services during COVID-19

- Cancer services within the Danish Health Care System remained in operation throughout the Covid -19 pandemic
  - Screenings programs were not paused – but drops in participation during early phase of the pandemic
  - Cancer Patient Pathways (CPPs) were to be prioritized

A challenge under the first lockdown period (11 March – 18 April 2020) was lack of protective equipment and COVID-19 test capacity provided to health care professionals

### National data sources :

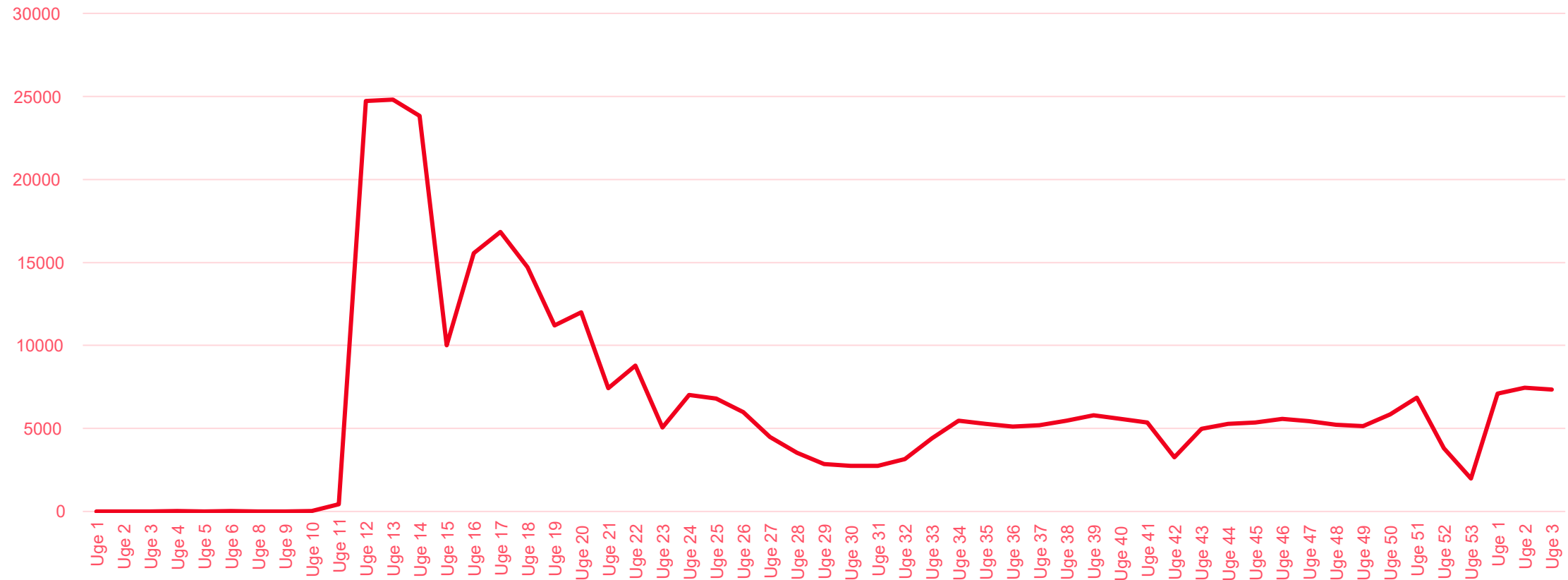
<https://www.sst.dk/da/corona/Retningslinjer-rapporter-og-andet-materiale-om-covid-19/Statusrapport>

<https://www.esundhed.dk/home/emner/kraeft/pakkeforloeb%20for%20kraeftomraadet>

<https://www.esundhed.dk/home/emner/patienter%20og%20sygehuse/monitorering%20af%20genaabningen%20af%20sundhedsvaesnet>



# Rapid conversion to virtual contacts to GPs during 1st lockdown in 2020

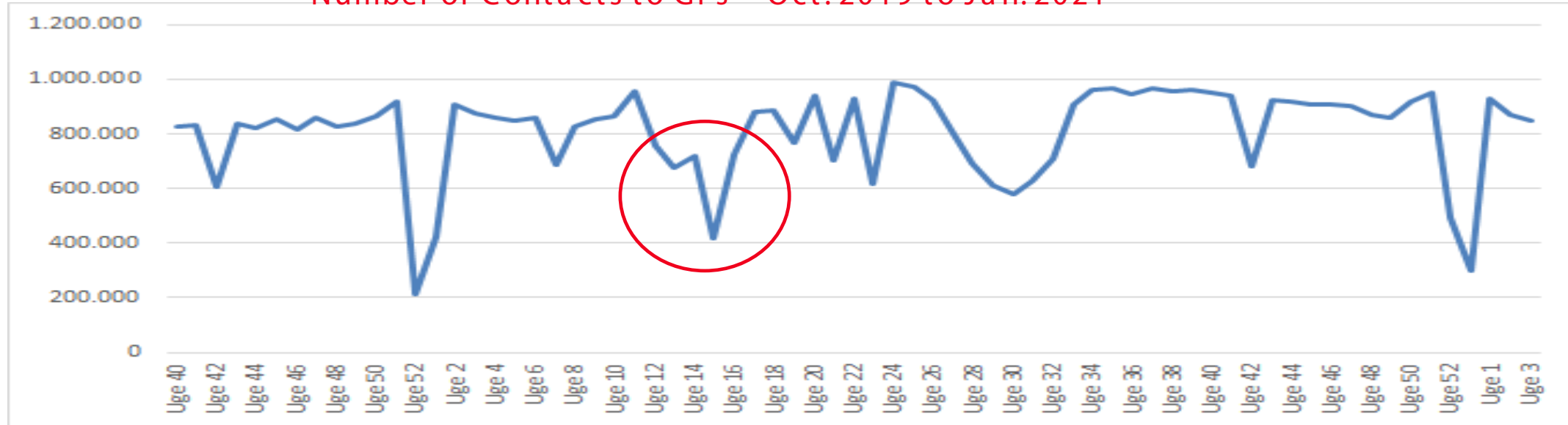


Data: <https://www.esundhed.dk/Emner/Patienter-og-sygehuse/Monitoreringen-af-genaabningen>

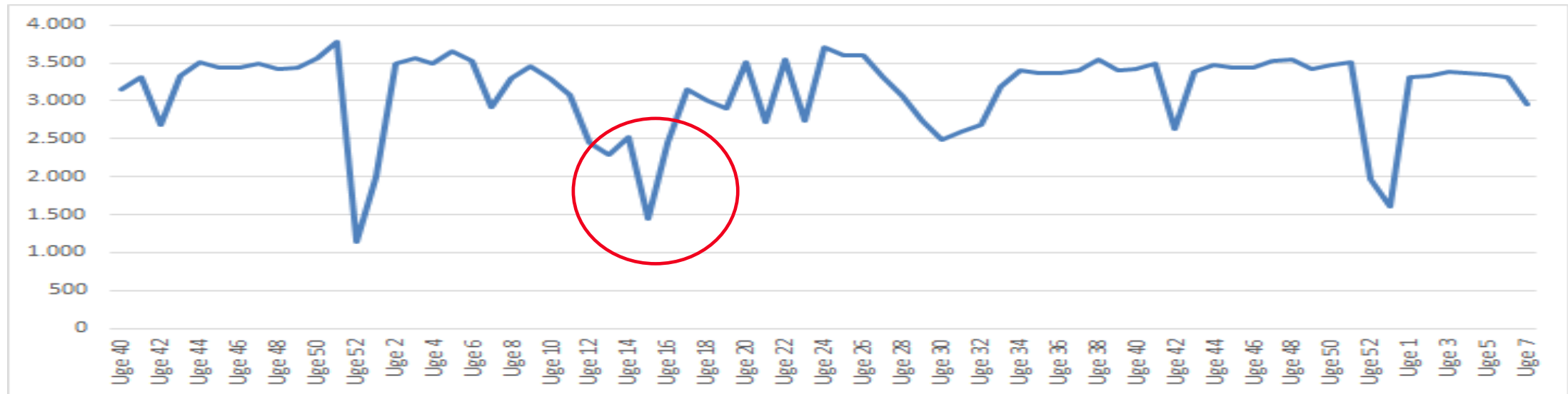


# Focus: Contacts to GPs as a primer for referrals to CPPs

Number of Contacts to GPs – Oct. 2019 to Jan. 2021

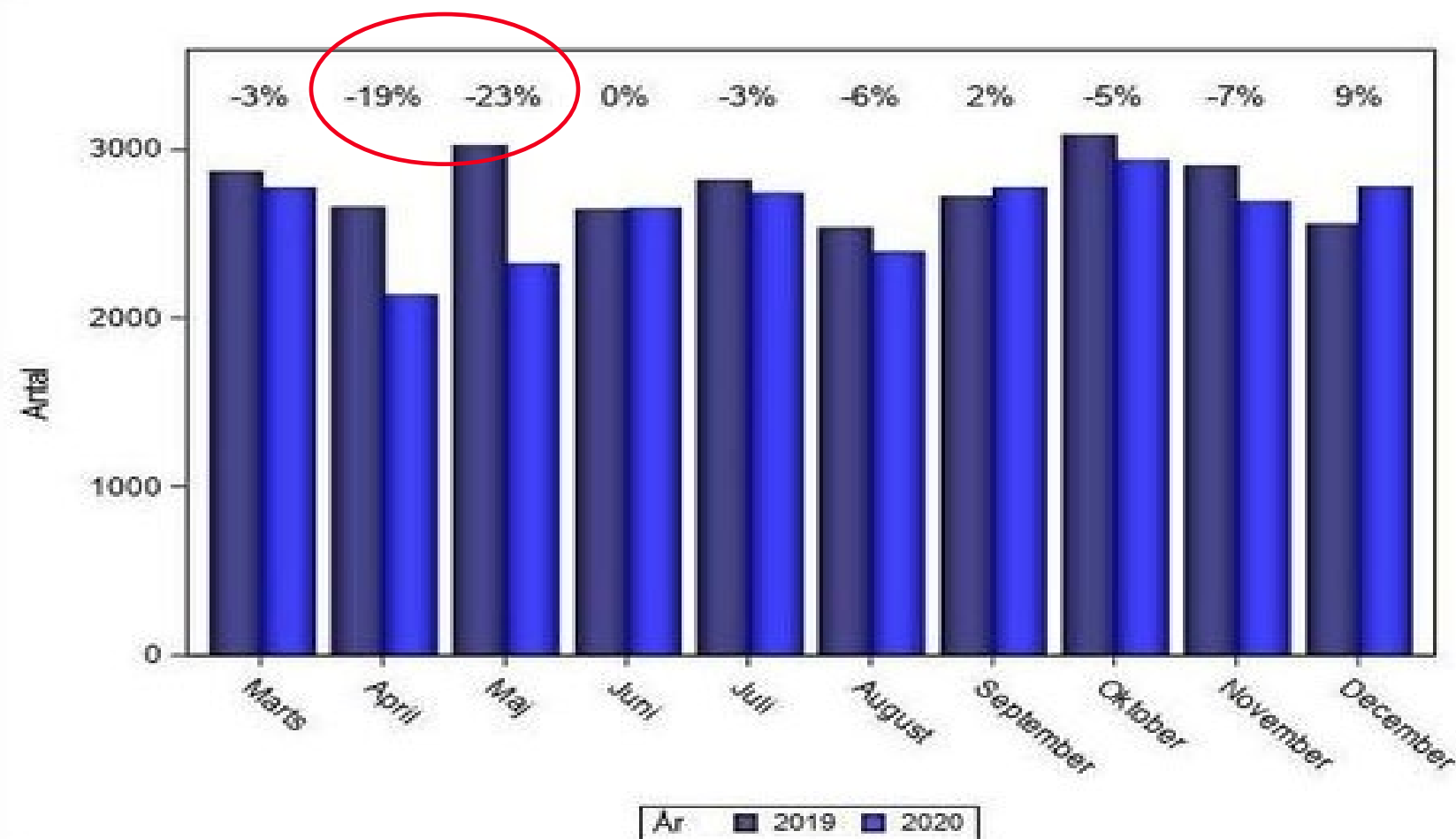


Number of Referrals to CPPs – Oct. 2019 to Feb. 2021



# Patients with a cancer diagnosis in 2020

Danish study:



Charlotte Wessel Skovlund,  
Søren Friis, Jane Christensen, Mef  
Christina Nilbert & Lina Steinrud  
Mørch (2022) Drop in cancer  
diagnosis during the COVID-19  
pandemic in Denmark:  
assessment of impact during  
2020,  
Acta Oncologica, 61:5, 658-661,  
DOI:  
10.1080/0284186X.2021.2024879

6% fewer cancer diagnosis in March-December 2020 compared to same period in 2019  
(app. 1600 persons)



## Activity in all of 2020

### GP Activity

- Slightly more contacts to GP's in 2020 than in 2019 – but including COVID-19 contacts

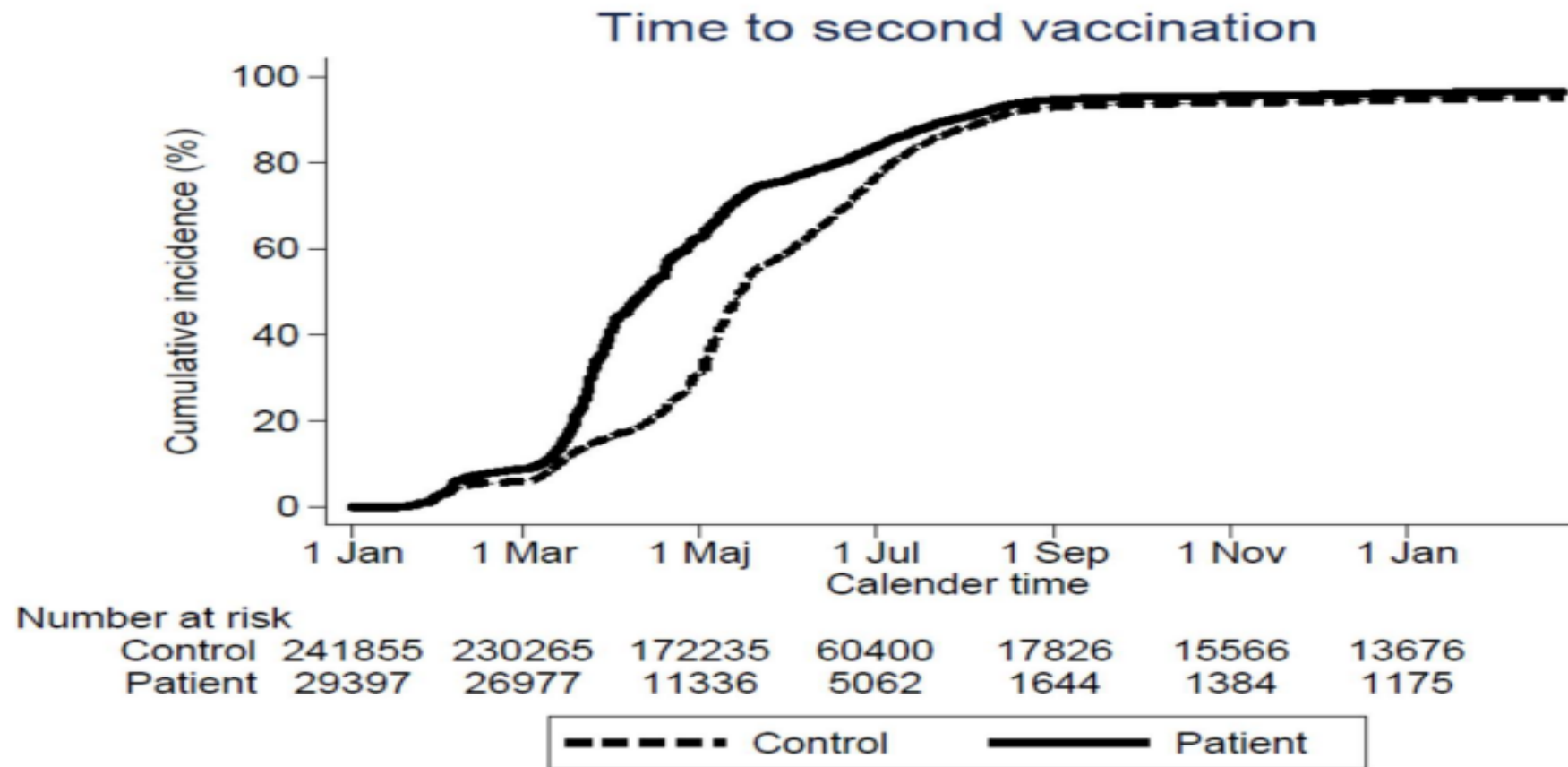
### Cancer Patient Pathways (CPPs)

- More CPPs (with initiated treatment) in 2020 than in 2018
- Indications of fewer CPPs for lung cancer – and big decline in lung function tests in general practice
- The process time from referral to initial treatment was overall probably slightly lower in 2020 than in 2018



# Patients with hematologic/blood cancer

March 2020-March 2022

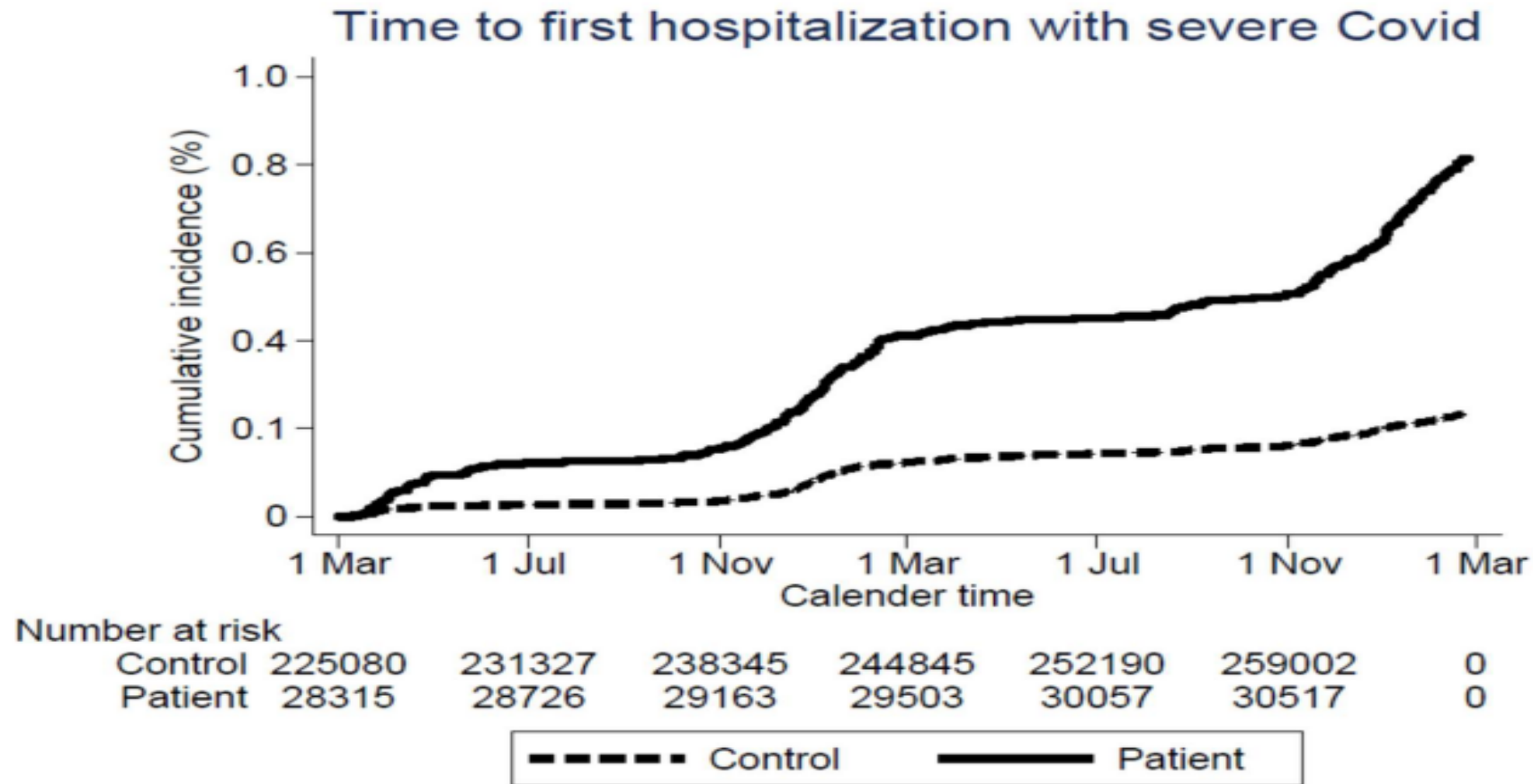


<https://covid19.ssi.dk/-/media/arkiv/subsites/covid19/fokusrapporter/aspekter-hos-patienter-med-malign-haematologisk-sygdom270422.pdf?la=da>



# Patients with hematologic/blood cancer

March 2020-March 2022

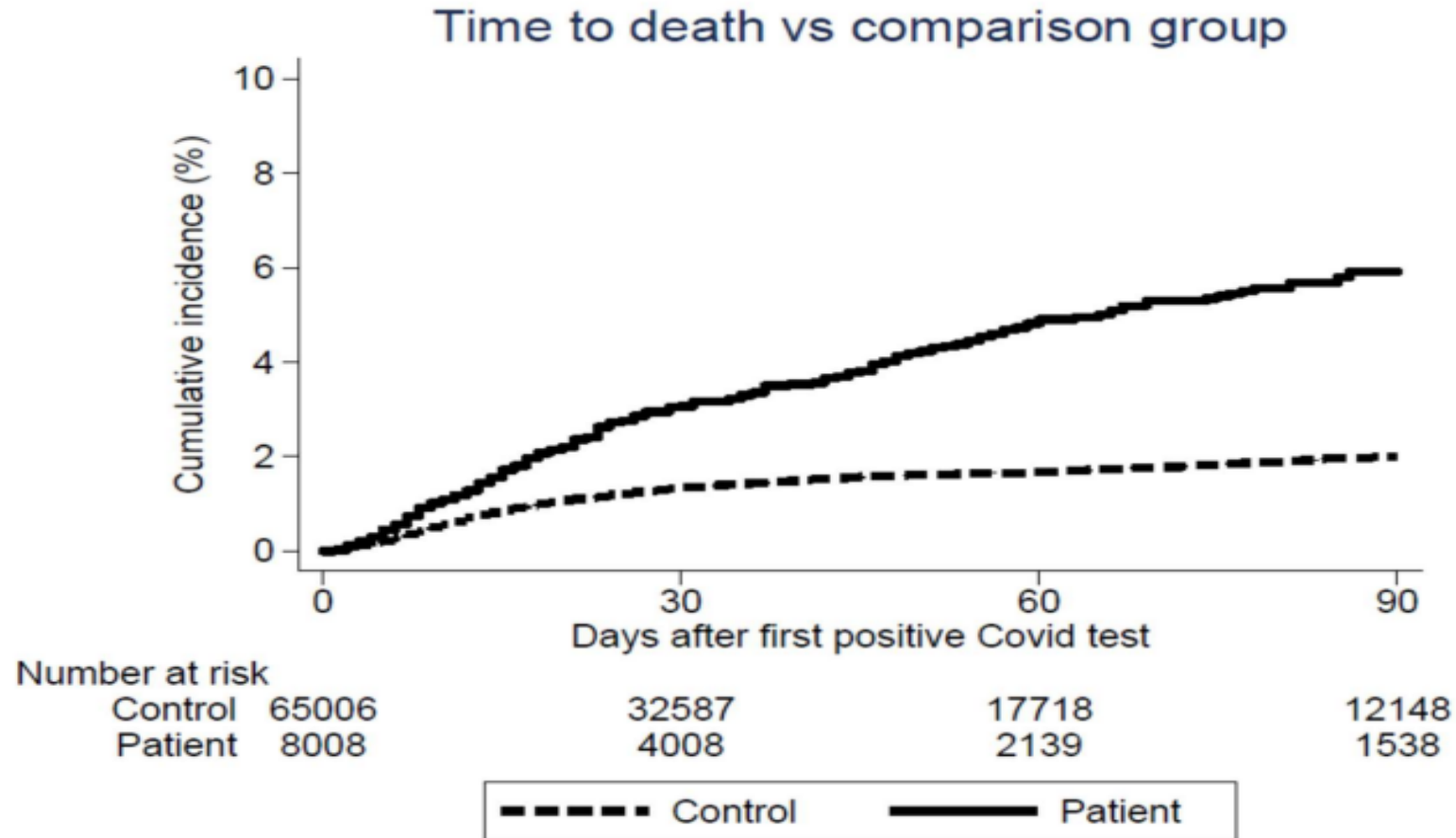


<https://covid19.ssi.dk/-/media/arkiv/subsites/covid19/fokusrapporter/aspekter-hos-patienter-med-malign-haematologisk-sygdom270422.pdf?la=da>





# Patients with hematologic/blood cancer



<https://covid19.ssi.dk/-/media/arkiv/subsites/covid19/fokusrapporter/aspekter-hos-patienter-med-malign-haematologisk-sygdom270422.pdf?la=da>



## We need more data and knowledge

### ➤ Stage at diagnosis

- Did the main lockdown during the Spring of 2020 have the consequence that cancer patients are diagnosed at a later stage under the pandemic?

### ➤ Screening programmes

- Will we 'catch up' on the drops in participation during the early phase of the pandemic?

### ➤ Virtual contacts

- What are the implications of virtual contacts for diagnosing potentially serious illness and recurring cancer?



## Main lessons learned

Hightlighting :

The importance of GPs as 'gate-keepers' to specialised health care, including referral to cancer care pathways

And that agility and fast implementation *is* possible :

- From organisational and professional silo mentality to quick and coordinated implementation of new organisational structures and services
- New types of data collection and monitoring of activity and outcomes at a national level were quickly implemented



Vi vil et liv  
uden kræft