

# Scabies: a rising problem in the student population?

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## Is scabies increasing among students? What are contributing factors?

Public health service Region Utrecht is receiving an increasing number of questions from general practitioners (GP's) and students about scabies in the student population. Incidence data of scabies in the student population are currently lacking.

### Objectives

- Collect data about the incidence of scabies among students.
- Assess factors contributing to the transmission of scabies among students.
- Assess whether GP's experience difficulties with diagnosis and treatment and informing students about scabies.

## Methods: interviews and incidence data from GP's

Four medical students from Utrecht University performed an inventory of the extent of scabies among the student population and the barriers experienced:

- searching the literature and information on university websites and student forums
- interviewing 3 GP's with mainly a student population, using a semi-structured interview
- collecting scabies incidence data from patient's electronic health records of 2 GP-practices with only students inscribed

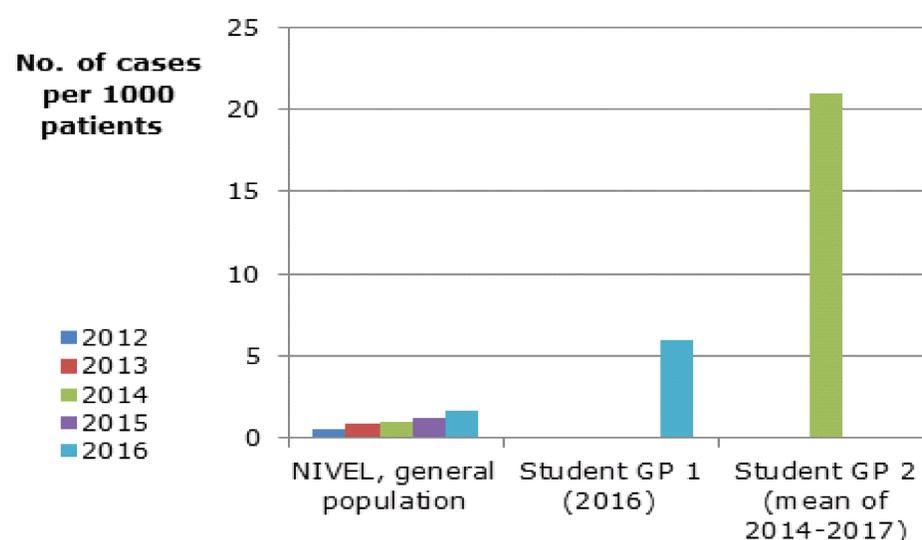
The incidence of scabies in the student population was compared to the incidence in Nivel Primary Care Database from 2012 – 2016 (all ages).

## Preliminary results: higher incidence in student population

Incidence of scabies among students was substantially higher (6 and 21 cases/1.000 GP-patients) compared to the general population (increasing from 0.6 to 1.7 cases/ 1000 GP-patients from 2012 to 2016, with no differences between men and women). (Figure 1)

GP's and students mention that costs and lack of source and contact tracing are important limiting factors for adequate scabies diagnosis and treatment. GP's point out that lack of knowledge about the disease limits students' compliance. Students note that the large amount of internet information complicates finding reliable knowledge about scabies. Shame is mentioned as a barrier for warning contacts.

Figure 1: Incidence of scabies cases in the general population and 2 student GP-practices (Wageningen and Utrecht)



## Scabies incidence is rising and is higher among students

- In the general population, an increasing incidence of scabies was observed.
- We observed a higher scabies incidence among students compared to the general population.
- We need to collect further scabies incidence data and compare scabies incidence in the student population with Nivel data concerning the same age group.
- We aim to further assess the difficulties (experienced by students and GP's) of scabies diagnosis and treatment, and collect clues about what interventions are most effective to reduce the incidence of scabies among students.



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