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NIPH: Assistant director and vaccine manager Geir Bukholm. Photo: Helge Mikalsen

FHI: We can now compare the coronavirus with the flu

<https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/i/ALEMnM/fhi-vi-kan-naa-sammenligne-coronaviruset-med-influenta>

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respiratory infections.

Of **LINE FAUSKO** and **MARTHA C. S. HOLMES**

Updated September 21st

artikkelen fortsetter under annonsen

- We are now in a new phase where we must look at the coronavirus as one of several respiratory diseases with seasonal variation, says assistant director Geir Bukholm in FHI to VG.

This is because the vast majority of those at risk are protected. And although the infection is still circulating, hospital numbers remain low. Thus, the coronavirus will not lead to a heavy burden on the health service. For those vaccinated who may become infected and develop symptoms, the vast majority will have mild cold-like symptoms.

The coronavirus thus joins the ranks of other respiratory diseases such as colds and seasonal flu.

- This means that the coronavirus can now be compared especially with seasonal

Flu and RS infections.

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- No, that certainly does not mean. The pandemic is not over as long as it exists in the world and in countries where vaccine coverage is still low. As long as the disease spreads outside the territories of rich countries, there is still a pandemic.

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- *Is the epidemic over, then?*

- No, I do not want to say that. But it is down to a saving flame in Norway and in many countries that have good vaccine coverage.

Of the population over the age of 18, 90 per cent have received the first dose and 83 per cent have been fully vaccinated.

Denmark fully opened up the country a little over a week ago. The Danish professor Søren Riis Paludan has highlighted one important thing to VG, which he believes made the Danes able to adjust to a new everyday life : That over several months they have stopped focusing on infection rates.

With few exceptions, they focus on hospitalizations and vaccinations, and not on infection, he says.

Bukholm agrees with this. His boss Camilla Stoltenberg has also previously told VG that here too the focus must be on the number of infections and rather focus on hospitalizations.

- **Reached the top**

Bukholm also does not believe that the hospitals will be burdened with covid patients, but that it may be challenged by the combination of covid, RS virus and influenza this winter.

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coming later, but we do not think that it will be bigger than what the health service can not handle it.

What could go wrong in the next few weeks for the infection to skyrocket?

- That people do not follow the usual hygiene rules and do not stay at home when you are ill, and adds that the seasonal effect in winter and new varieties can also play a role.

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