

Graves' disease affects females more often than males by a ratio of 5-10 to 1. The disorder usually develops during middle age with a peak incidence of 40-60, but can also affect children, adolescents and the elderly. Graves' disease occurs in almost any part of the world. Graves' disease is estimated to affect 2%-3% of the general population. Graves' disease is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. A diagnosis of Graves' disease is made based upon a detailed patient and family history, a thorough clinical evaluation, identification of characteristic findings, and specialized tests such as blood tests that measure the levels of thyroid hormone and thyroid-stimulating hormone. Blood tests to detect the presence of specific antibodies that cause Graves' disease can be performed to confirm a diagnosis, but are usually not necessary.