

Hospital beds

The number of hospital beds provides a measure of the resources available for delivering services to inpatients in hospitals. This section presents data on the number of hospital beds overall and for different types of care (curative care, psychiatric care, long-term care and other functions). It also includes an indicator of bed occupancy rates focusing on curative care beds.

Among OECD countries, the number of hospital beds per capita is highest in Japan and Korea, with 11 beds or more per 1 000 population in 2013 (Figure 6.7). In Japan and Korea hospitals have so-called “social admissions”, that is, a significant part of hospital beds are devoted to long-term care. The number of hospital beds is also well above the OECD average in the Russian Federation, and in Germany and Austria. On the other hand, some of the large partner countries in Asia (India and Indonesia) have very few hospital beds compared with the OECD average. This is also the case for countries in Latin America (Colombia, Mexico, Chile and Brazil).

The number of hospital beds per capita has decreased over the past decade in most OECD countries, falling on average from 5.5 per 1 000 population in 2000 to 4.8 in 2013. This reduction has been driven partly by progress in medical technology which has enabled a move to day surgery and a reduced need for hospitalisation. In many European countries, the financial and economic crisis which started in 2008 also provided a further stimulus to reduce hospital capacity as part of policies to reduce public spending on health. Only in Korea and Turkey has the number of hospital beds per capita grown since 2000.

More than two-thirds of hospital beds (69%) are allocated for curative care on average across OECD countries (Figure 6.8). The rest of the beds are allocated for psychiatric care (14%), long-term care (13%) and other types of care (4%). However, in some countries, the share of beds allocated for psychiatric care and long-term care is much greater than the average. In Korea, 35% of hospital beds are allocated for long-term care. In Finland, this share is also relatively high (27%) as local governments (municipalities) use beds in health care centres (which are defined as hospitals) for at least some of the needed long-term care in institutions. In Belgium and Norway, about 30% of hospital beds are devoted to psychiatric care.

In several countries, the reduction in the number of hospital beds has been accompanied by an increase in their occupancy rates. The occupancy rate of curative care beds stood at 77% on average across OECD countries in 2013, slightly above the 2000 level (Figure 6.9). Israel and Ireland had the highest rate of hospital bed occupancy at approximately 94%, followed by Norway and Canada at around 90%. In the United Kingdom, Belgium and France, the bed occupancy rate remained relatively stable during that period.

Definition and comparability

Hospital beds are defined as all beds that are regularly maintained and staffed and are immediately available for use. They include beds in general hospitals, mental health hospitals, and other specialty hospitals. Beds in residential long-term care facilities are excluded (OECD, 2015).

Curative care beds are accommodating patients where the principal intent is to do one or more of the following: manage labour (obstetric), treat non-mental illness or injury, and perform surgery, diagnostic or therapeutic procedures.

Psychiatric care beds are accommodating patients with mental health problems. They include beds in psychiatric departments of general hospitals, and all beds in mental health hospitals.

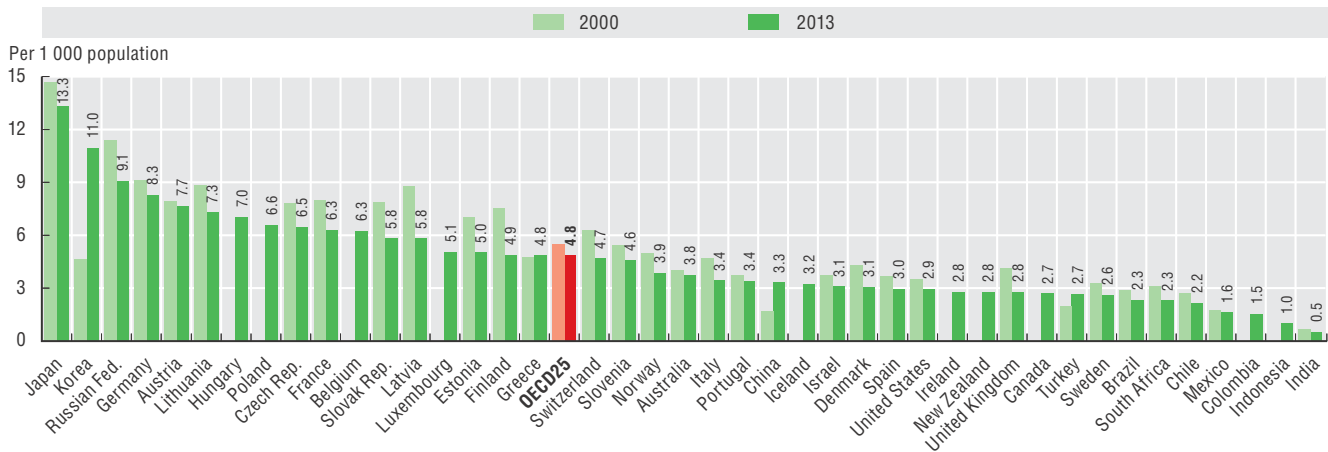
Long-term care beds are accommodating patients requiring long-term care due to chronic impairments and a reduced degree of independence in activities of daily living. They include beds in long-term care departments of general hospitals, beds for long-term care in specialty hospitals, and beds for palliative care.

The occupancy rate for curative (acute) care beds is calculated as the number of hospital bed-days related to curative care divided by the number of available curative care beds (multiplied by 365).

References

OECD (2015), *OECD Health Statistics 2015*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

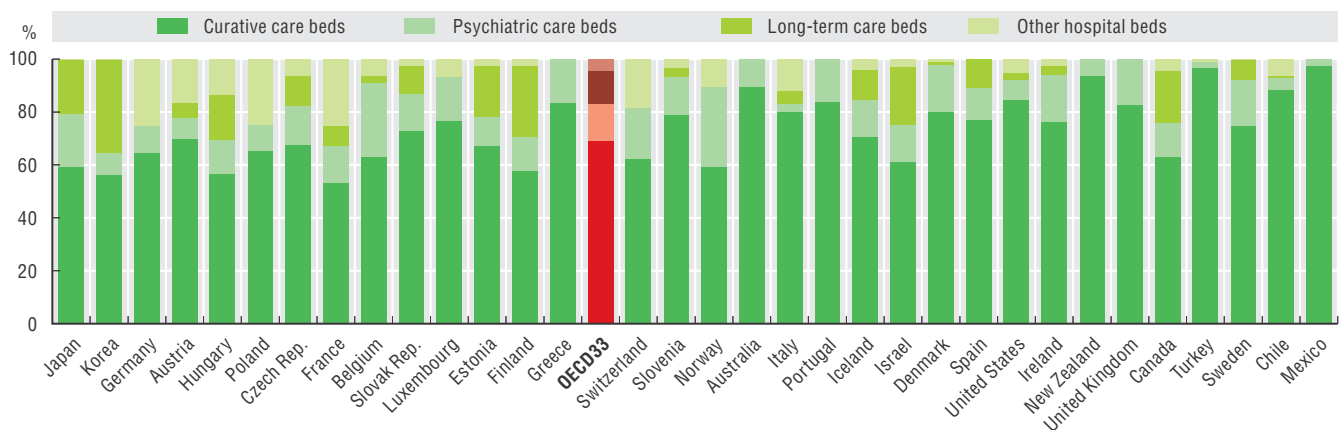
6.7. Hospital beds per 1 000 population, 2000 and 2013 (or nearest year)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933280981>

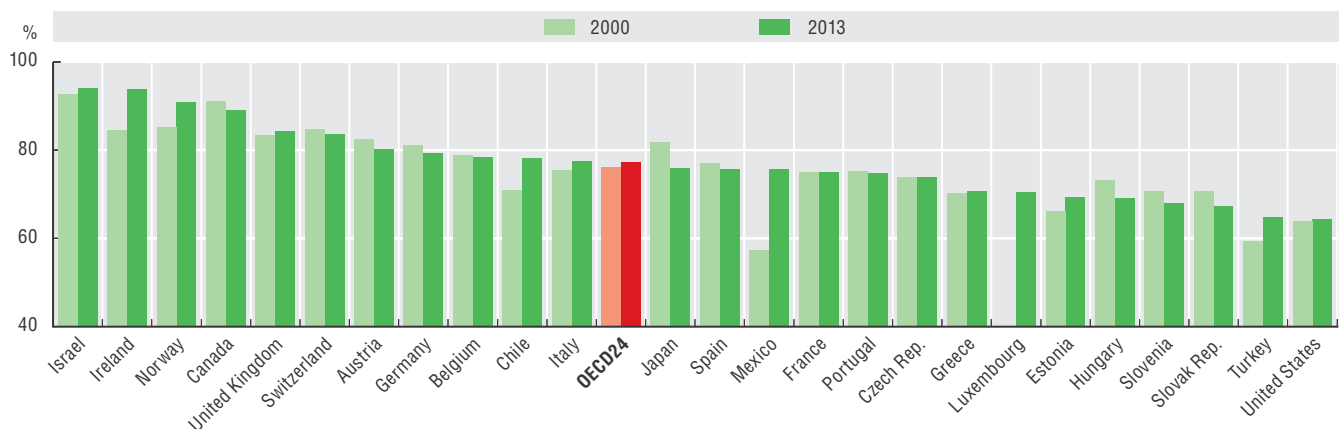
6.8. Hospital beds by function of health care, 2013 (or nearest year)



Note: Countries ranked from highest to lowest total number of hospital beds per capita.
Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933280981>

6.9. Occupancy rate of curative (acute) care beds, 2000 and 2013 (or nearest year)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

Information on data for Israel: <http://oe.cd/israel-disclaimer>

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933280981>



From:
Health at a Glance 2015
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2015-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2015), "Hospital beds", in *Health at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2015-32-en

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.