

3. HEALTH STATUS

Mortality from transport accidents

Injuries from transport accidents – most of which are due to road traffic – are a major public health problem in OECD countries, causing the premature deaths of more than 100 000 people in 2013 (more than 1% of all deaths). Almost three-quarters of these deaths occurred among men. In addition, more than 5 million people were injured in road accidents. The direct and indirect financial costs of transport accidents are substantial, with estimates ranging from 1 to 3% of GDP annually (OECD/ITF, 2015).

Most fatal traffic injuries occur in passenger vehicles, although other road users also face substantial risks. In Korea, Japan, Israel and Poland, pedestrians account for over one third of all road user fatalities. Cyclists in the Netherlands and motorcyclists in Greece, Italy and France account for over one fourth of road traffic accident deaths in these countries (OECD/ITF, 2015).

The average OECD mortality rate due to transport accidents was 7 per 100 000 population in 2013 (Figure 3.10). There is considerable variation between countries with transport accidents claiming more than five times as many lives per 100 000 population in Mexico compared to the United Kingdom and Sweden. Mortality rates from road transport accidents were also relatively high in Korea, Chile and the United States.

Much transport accident injury and mortality is preventable. Road safety for car occupants has increased greatly over the past decades in many countries through improvements of road systems, education and prevention campaigns as well as vehicle design. In addition, the adoption of new laws and regulations and the enforcement of these laws to improve compliance with speed limits, seatbelt use and drink-driving rules have had a major impact on reducing the burden of road transport accidents.

As a result, deaths due to transport accidents have decreased in almost all countries over the last few decades. Since 1990, the average OECD mortality rate due to transport accidents has fallen by more than 70% (Figure 3.11). These gains are even more impressive when considering the increase in the number of vehicle kilometers travelled over this period (OECD/ITF, 2015). Chile is the only country where deaths due to transport accidents have increased. In 1990, Chile's mortality rate was comparatively low, but then

rose during the 1990s as the economy and the number of vehicles grew and has remained relatively high since then (Nghiem et al., 2013).

Declines in mortality rates for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists were substantially less than those for car occupants. Reductions in deaths among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists have levelled-off and some increases have been recorded. As a consequence, road safety priorities in many countries have recently shifted to vulnerable road users in urban areas (OECD/ITF, 2015).

The economic crisis has contributed to the reduction in road traffic deaths in many countries, by reducing the distance travelled (especially by young men and by trucks). However, this impact is likely to be short-lived and, over the longer term, effective road safety policies will remain the primary contributor to reduced mortality (OECD/ITF, 2015).

Definition and comparability

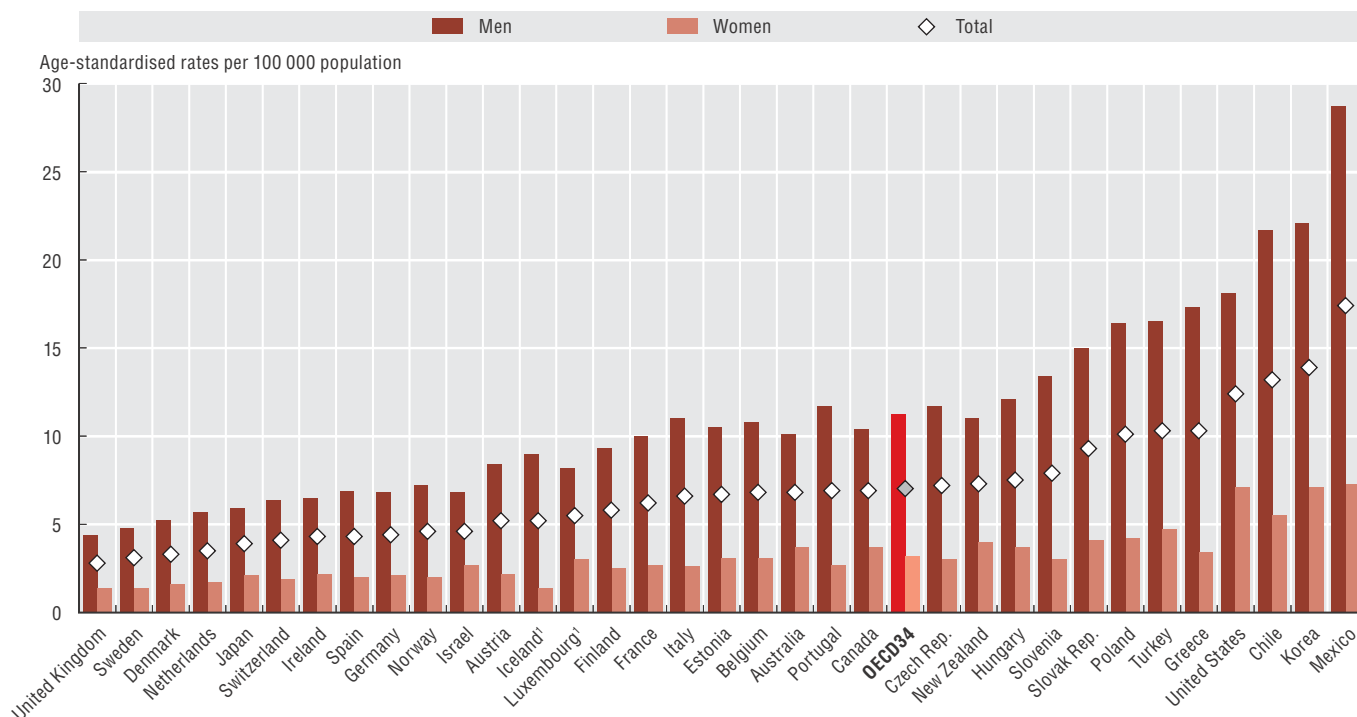
Mortality rates are based on numbers of deaths registered in a country in a year divided by the size of the corresponding population. The rates have been directly age-standardised to the 2010 OECD population to remove variations arising from differences in age structures across countries and over time. The source is the *WHO Mortality Database*.

Deaths from transport accidents are classified to ICD-10 codes V01-V89.

References

- Nghiem, H., L. Connelly and S. Gargett (2013), "Are Road Traffic Crash Fatality Rates Converging among OECD Countries?", *Accident Analysis & Prevention*, Vol. 52, pp. 162-170.
- OECD/ITF (2015), *IRTAD Road Safety 2015 Annual Report*, OECD Publishing.

3.10. Transport accident mortality, 2013 (or nearest year)

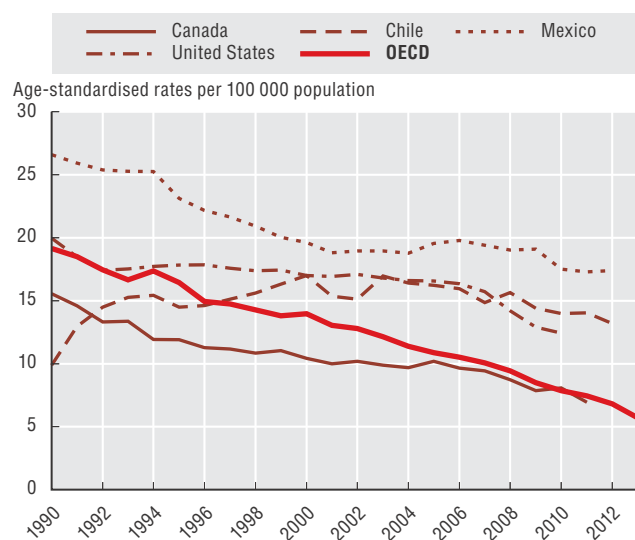


1. Three-year average.

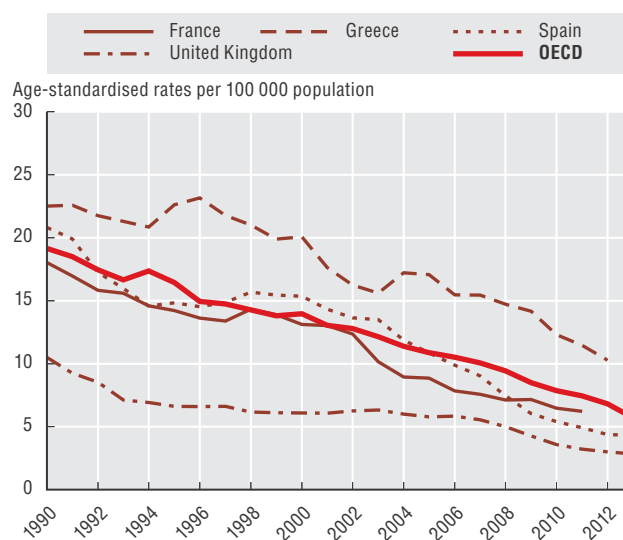
Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en> and Ministry of Health for New Zealand.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933280766>

3.11. Trends in transport accident mortality, selected OECD countries, 1990-2013

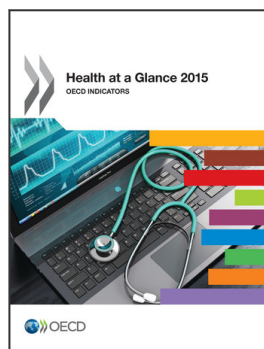


Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933280766>

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



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), "Mortality from transport accidents", in *Health at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2015-10-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.