

3. HEALTH WORKFORCE

3.8. Nursing graduates

Many OECD countries have taken steps in recent years to expand the number of students in nursing education programmes in response to concerns about current or anticipated shortages of nurses. Increasing investment in nursing education is particularly important as the nursing workforce is ageing in many countries and the baby-boom generation of nurses approaches retirement.

In 2011, there were 43 newly graduated nurses per 100 000 population on average across OECD countries (Figure 3.8.1). The number was highest in Korea, Slovenia, Denmark and Switzerland, and lowest in Mexico, Israel, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Italy and Luxembourg, with less than half the OECD average. Nurse graduation rates have traditionally been low in Mexico, Turkey and Israel, three countries which report a relatively low number of nurses per capita (see Indicator 3.7). In Luxembourg, nurse graduation rates are also low, but many nurses are foreign-trained.

The institutional arrangements for nursing education differ across OECD countries. In some countries, the number of students admitted in nursing programmes is not limited. This is the case in Belgium, Chile, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States, although in this latter case state decisions on public funding for nursing education have a direct impact on the capacity of nursing schools to admit students. In most countries, however, entry into nursing programmes is regulated (OECD, 2008a).

The expansion of nursing education in some countries is also visible in the number of graduates per 1 000 currently employed nurses (Figure 3.8.2). There were 54 nursing graduates per 1 000 employed nurses on average in OECD countries in 2011. The number of new graduates per practising nurse was by far the highest in Korea, with more than 200 nursing graduates per 1 000 currently employed nurses in 2011. This should help to rapidly increase the supply of nurses in Korea, and move it closer to the OECD average. In Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, Israel and Germany, there were fewer than 25 nursing graduates per 1 000 employed nurses.

The number of nursing graduates has increased in many OECD countries over the last decade (Figure 3.8.3). This has been the case in Italy, where concerns about shortages of

nurses have led to a large increase in university-level nursing education programmes starting around 2000, with the number of newly graduated nurses more than tripling between 2000 and 2007. This contrasts with a zero growth in the number of medical graduates during the last decade in Italy, following a sharp decline in the 1990s (Indicator 3.5). In Portugal also, there has been a strong growth in the number of nursing graduates between 2003 and 2007, but the number has stabilised since then. In France, the number of nursing graduates increased at a fairly steady pace between 2000 and 2011, with the number rising by two-thirds during this period. In Switzerland, the number increased by 50% between 2000 and 2011.

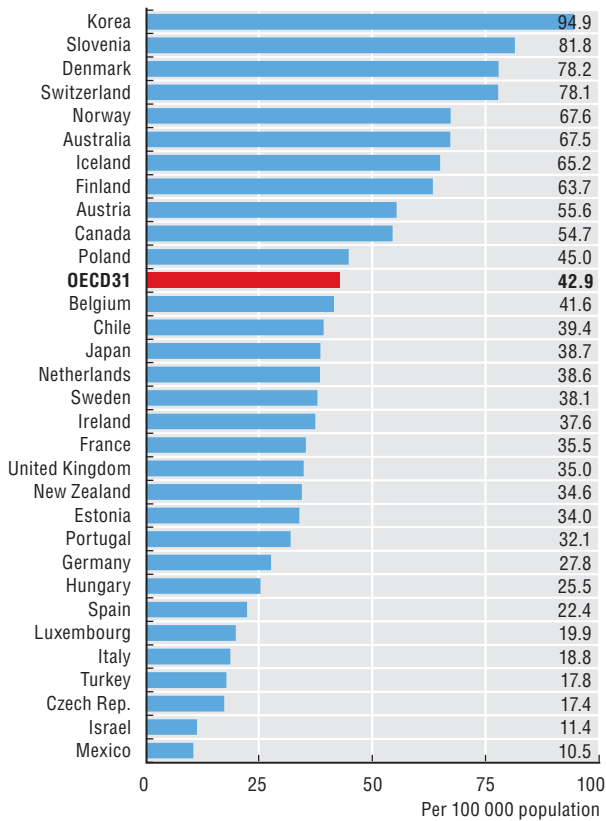
Definition and comparability

Nursing graduates refer to the number of students who have obtained a recognised qualification required to become a licensed or registered nurse. They include graduates from both higher level and lower level nursing programmes. They exclude graduates from Masters or PhD degrees in nursing to avoid double-counting nurses acquiring further qualifications.

The numbers reported by Sweden do not include graduates from lower level nursing programmes, nor are graduates from three-year education programmes focusing on elderly care included in Germany, resulting in an under-estimation in graduation rates per capita. However, the calculation of graduation rates per practising nurses includes the same categories of nurses in the numerator and the denominator to avoid any under-estimation.

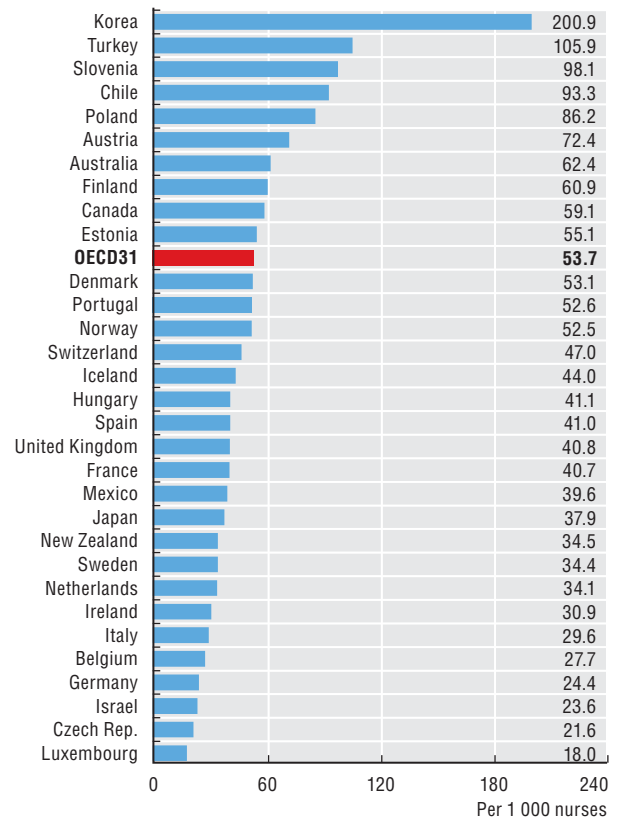
The United Kingdom data are estimates based on the number of nurses newly registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. In Denmark, the data refer to the number of new nurses receiving an authorisation to practice.

3.8.1. Nursing graduates per 100 000 population, 2011 (or nearest year)



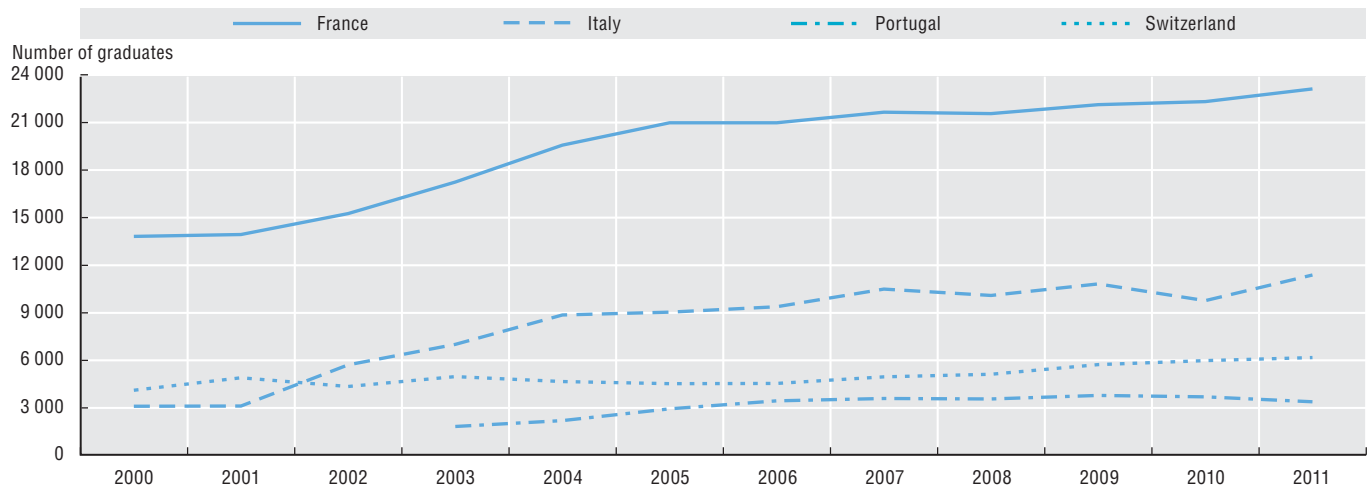
Source: OECD Health Statistics 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932917104>

3.8.2. Nursing graduates per 1 000 nurses, 2011 (or nearest year)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932917123>

3.8.3. Evolution in the number of nursing graduates, selected OECD countries, 2000 to 2011 (or nearest year)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932917142>



From:
Health at a Glance 2013
OECD Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2013-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2013), "Nursing graduates", in *Health at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2013-30-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.