

2018 Annual Report  
on the National Health System  
Executive Summary



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## Executive Summary

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***The birth rate in Spain continues to drop, while the average maternal age is on the rise.***

***The dependency ratio continues to grow.***

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1. As at 1 January 2018, Spain has 46.6 million inhabitants, up 0.28% on the prior year, due to the increase in the foreign population. In turn, the gross birth rate has dropped by four decimal points, going from 8.8 to 8.4 births per 1,000 inhabitants, and the average maternal age has risen to 32.1 years. By territory, the lowest number of births occurred in Asturias (5.8 per 1,000 inhabitants), and the highest, in Melilla (15.9).
2. The proportion of the population under 16 and over 64 (dependent population), and the population aged 16 to 64 (productive population), i.e. the dependency ratio, is 53.4%, having risen 7.7. points since the year 2000, with growth in most of Spain's Autonomous Communities. The dependency ratio for older people is 29%, and for young people, 25%. The Autonomous Communities with the highest number of older people are Castilla y León, Galicia and Asturias; whereas Melilla, Ceuta and Murcia have the highest rate of young dependents.

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***Life expectancy and the positive self-perceived health continue to rise. Good self-perceived health decreases with age and as social status declines.***

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3. Life expectancy at birth is 83.4 years —80.4 years for men and 86.2 years for women—constituting a four-year increase from 2001.
4. At the age of 65, life expectancy is 21.6 years; women, with a life expectancy of 23.5 years, live four years longer than men, whose life expectancy is 19.4 years.
5. 74% of the population aged 15 or older describe their health as good or very good. Good self-perceived health decreases with age and as social status declines. Men declare to have better health than women: 77.8% and 70.4%, respectively. The greatest difference between the sexes can be seen among those aged 65 or older, with a difference of 12 points. This difference increases as social status declines.
6. The proportion of people at risk of poverty is 21.6% (21% for men and 22.2% for women). Likewise, the proportion of lower class people is 46.9%, and is greater for women (48.2%) than for men (45.7%). In terms of educational level, the proportion of people aged 25-64 who state that they have completed the first stage of Compulsory Secondary Education, or lower, is 41.7%, with a 5-point difference between men (44.3%) and women (39.1%).

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***There is an increase in chronic diseases among adults. Practically 20% of the population aged 65 and over has difficulties in carrying out daily activities.***

***The most prevalent chronic disease in childhood is allergy, followed by asthma.***

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7. The gross mortality rate is 9.1 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. Malignant neoplasms (26.5% of all deaths) and heart disease (20.1%) are still the leading causes of death. Most deaths are caused by bronchial or lung cancer among men, and by breast cancer among women; both types of cancer are declining for each sex. For both sexes, colon cancer is the second most fatal neoplasm. Deaths due to bronchial or lung cancer are on the rise for women, possibly as a result of its relationship with tobacco use.
8. Suicide is the principal external cause of death, accounting for 22.8% of deaths due to external causes, and 0.9% of all deaths in Spain. By sex, the age-adjusted rates for men triple those for women.
9. The most frequent chronic health conditions among adults are high blood pressure (19.8%), lower back pain (18.5%), high cholesterol (17.9%), osteoarthritis (17.5%), and chronic neck pain (14.6%). High blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes are on the rise in Spain: since 1993, high blood pressure in adult population has increased from 11.2% to 19.8%; diabetes has risen from 4.1% to 7.8%; and high cholesterol from 8.2% to 19.9%.
10. The most prevalent chronic disease in childhood (0-14 years) is allergy, followed by asthma, affecting one out of 10 children, and one out of 20 children, respectively.
11. 19.6% of the population aged 65 and over have difficulties in carrying out daily activities; personal hygiene (17%) is the most frequent limitation, followed by getting dressed (14.1%). Only 17.7% of people aged 85 and over have no difficulties in daily domestic activities.
12. Rubella, measles and mumps, all included in the vaccination calendar, have been falling since the 1990s. However, in 2016, cases of mumps rose slightly, to a rate of 10.8 reported cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The number of reported cases of pertussis per 100,000 is 11.6. Pertussis continues to have a cyclical epidemic pattern, and since 2010 there has been a steady increase in the occurrence, hospitalization, and death caused by this disease.

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***In 2017, vaccination coverage among children under 12 months is higher than 95%.***

***In the past 20 years, the proportion of totally or partially breastfed children under the age of five has grown steadily.***

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13. The maternal mortality rate due to complications during pregnancy, childbirth or postpartum is 3.7 per 100,000 live births. In 2016, there were 15 deaths due to complications during pregnancy, childbirth or postpartum, the same number as in 2015, and approximately the annual average of maternal deaths in the 2000-2016 period. Moreover, perinatal mortality is 4.5 deaths per 1,000 live births. From 2000 to 2016, perinatal mortality dropped by 18.2%.
14. In the past 22 years, the proportion of totally or partially breastfed children under the age of five has grown steadily: in the case of six-week-old babies, it has risen by 9.4 percentage points; at three months, by 20.7 percentage points; and at six months by 25.2 percentage points.
15. The downward trend in the number of voluntary terminations of pregnancy over the past five years has become consolidated, with 10.5 per 1,000 women in 2017, i.e. 1.2 percentage points less than in 2013.

16. In 2017, vaccination coverage among children under 12 months is higher than 95%. Vaccination coverage rates for booster doses administered to children older than 12 months are not uniform in all territories, and decreases as the target population grows older.
17. Vaccination coverage for diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTPa) is still low, mainly because of supply problems in the 2015-2017 period. Vaccination coverage for pertussis among pregnant women was high (over 80%) in 2016 and 2017.

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***Women eat more fresh fruit, salads and vegetables daily than men, with a strong social gradient.***

***Men's leisure activities are less sedentary than women's.***

***Excess weight continues to rise among adults, and the childhood obesity rate already amounts more than one out of 10 children.***

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18. Diet is one of the principal factors relating to obesity, in addition to being an important health determinant. The percentage of people aged one or older who eat fresh fruit (excluding fruit juice) daily is 64.2%: 59.4% among men, and 68.9% among women. This higher percentage of women is present in all social classes. In turn, the difference in the daily consumption of fresh fruit among the highest social class and the most underprivileged amounts to 13.4 percentage points (14.5 percentage points among women, and 13.2 among men).
19. The percentage of people aged one or older who eat vegetables and salads daily is 40.4%: 34.4% among men, and 46.2% among women. This higher percentage of women is present in all social classes. The difference in consumption between women of the highest social class and women of the most underprivileged class is 14.8 percentage points, and among men, it is 7.4.
20. 36.0% of the population state that their leisure activities are sedentary; inactivity is more extended among women (40.0%) than among men (31.9%).
21. Considering obesity and excess weight among adults jointly, more than half (54.5%) of adults are overweight.
22. The steady increase in the prevalence of childhood obesity (population aged 2 to 17) continues, and now more than one out of 10 children (10.3%) are obese. More than one fourth of children (28.6%) are overweight or obese.

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***Half of the adult population say that they have never smoked, and nearly three out of every 10 adults say that they are ex-smokers. In absolute terms, deaths attributable to tobacco use are decreasing.***

***One third of adults drink habitually. Eight out of 10 adults consider that society is too permissive about selling alcohol to minors.***

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23. 22.1% of the population aged 15 or older smoke daily, 2.3% are occasional smokers, and 24.9% state that they are ex-smokers. 50.7% have never smoked.
24. Nearly nine out 10 adults have heard of electronic cigarettes, and of these, 48.7% think that they may constitute a health risk, and 52.7% do not believe that they would be helpful for quitting smoking.
25. In the 2000-2016 period, the number of tobacco-related deaths dropped by 13,659 in absolute terms. This drop was sharper among women.

26. One third of the population aged 15 or older drinks habitually (at least once a week), another third never drinks, and nearly another third only drinks occasionally. There are twice as many habitual drinkers who are men (one out of two), than women (one out of four). The highest proportion can be seen among men aged 25 to 34 (19.1%) and among women aged 15 to 24.
27. 79.8% of adults consider that society is too permissive about selling alcohol to minors.

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***Feminization, which has characterized nursing professionals, is also found among medical professionals.***

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28. Since the year 2000, the number of practising physicians and nurses per 1,000 inhabitants —both in public and in private practice— has been on the rise, albeit at different speeds: among nurses, there has been a 2-point increase, reaching the number of 5.5 professionals per 1,000 inhabitants, and among physicians, there has been a 0.6-point increase, reaching the number of 3.8 professionals per 1,000 inhabitants.
29. In the academic year 2016-2017, 6,628 professionals obtained their degree in medicine —more than half of them women— meaning that there were 0.1 new professionals per 1,000 inhabitants. In nursing, the figures are 10,115 new graduates, i.e. 0.23 per 1,000 inhabitants, maintaining the proportion of four women per each man.
30. In Spain's National Health System, the number of nurses is 1.2 times larger than that of physicians, with 3.8 nurses per 1,000 inhabitants; there are nearly five times more professionals working in specialized healthcare than in primary healthcare.
31. The public healthcare network employs 3.1 physicians per 1,000 inhabitants, with twice as many of them working in hospitals than in health centres.

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***On average, Spanish population visits their GP five times a year. Public primary healthcare consultations with GPs are highly rated by citizens.***

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32. The National Health System encompasses 3,048 health centres and 10,081 primary healthcare units. The average ratio of 3.3 local primary healthcare units per health centre varies widely from region to region (from 14.9 to 0), reflecting the variations in geographic dispersion in Spain.
33. In the area of primary healthcare, citizens are seen by their GP 5.1 times per year, and by a nurse 2.9 times per year. Women make more visits to primary healthcare professionals (both GPs and nurses) than men do.
34. Home visits represent 1.7% of GPs' total activity, and 7.2% of nurses' activity. The main recipients of home visits are people aged over 65.
35. Among those aged under 15, the predominant problems are acute and infectious conditions. Both chronic and acute processes are reported among people aged 15 and above. The main health problems affecting those over the age of 64 are chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, lipid disorders, diabetes mellitus, cataracts, and osteoarthritis.
36. Emergency primary healthcare is provided at the 13,129 primary healthcare centres during normal opening hours; the primary healthcare professionals who perform this service combine this activity with their usual duties. Additionally, emergency care is also provided by primary healthcare professionals at Spain's 1,988 non-hospital accident and emergency units.

37. The average score given by citizens to rate the care they receive from public system GPs and nurses is 7.3.

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***More than four out of every five hospital beds in use belong to the National Health System network.***

***The number of outpatient surgical procedures is on the rise.***

***One out of every 10 hospital admissions is due to a cause which, potentially, should not have led to the patient's hospitalization.***

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38. The National Health System network owns 466 hospitals, of which 322 are under public management. The hospitals belonging to the National Health System network provide 80.5% of hospital beds in use. The total rate of hospital beds in use in Spain is 3.0 per 1,000 inhabitants, with 2.4 of them belonging to the National Health System. Spain has 39.2 outpatient hospital places per 100,000 inhabitants, a resource which is gradually increasing in line with the rise in outpatient care for procedures that do not require hospitalization.
39. National Health System hospitals manage 4.1 million patient discharges per year, representing 76.5% of discharges in the Spanish hospital sector. The average hospital stay at National Health System hospitals is 7.9 days, with a turnover rate of 36.6.
40. The National Health System undertakes 3.6 million surgical interventions per year, of which over 1 million are outpatient procedures. National Health System hospitals also assist 309,443 births, of which 78.6% are vaginal deliveries and 21.4% are C-sections.
41. Outpatient procedures to treat certain pathologies are gradually replacing interventions involving patient hospitalization. 98.7% of interventions for cataracts, 78.8% of lower-limb varicose vein stripping procedures, 63.6% of knee arthroscopies, 54.0% of inguinal hernia repairs, and 31.7% of tonsillectomies are performed on an outpatient basis. Similarly, the number of interventions performed using less invasive surgical procedures has increased: 82.3% of cholecystectomies and 48.3% of the appendectomies are now performed laparoscopically.
42. Circulatory diseases are the main cause of hospitalization in Spain (13.1%), followed by digestive diseases (12.9%) and respiratory diseases (12.4%).
43. The Accident and Emergency services of National Health System hospitals attend 22.7 million medical emergencies each year out of a total of 30.0 million medical emergencies attended in public and private hospitals.
44. The National Health System has 281 Reference Centres, Services and Units (CSUR), 27 of which were designated in 2018, belonging to 16 hospitals and representing the incorporation of 15 different reference units.
45. The number of organ donors per million inhabitants is 48.0, amounting to 2,241 donors in absolute terms. The profile of donors has changed in terms of the cause of death: among the organ donor population, deaths due to stroke have increased from 39.0% in 1992 to 61.8%; deaths due to head injuries resulting from traffic accidents currently represent only 3.8% of donors, while in 1992 they accounted for 43.0% of donors.
46. The Transfusion Network registers 1.7 million voluntary and altruistic blood donations, representing a rate of 36.6 donations per 1,000 inhabitants, which reflects a considerable increase over the past three decades, from 20.0 to 36.6 donations per 1,000 inhabitants.

47. 9.8% of the total volume of hospital discharges are due to causes which, potentially, should not have led to hospitalization had proper outpatient monitoring been provided.
48. Citizens awarded an average score of 6.9 to hospital stays and to the healthcare provided in public hospitals.

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***Vaccine coverage against seasonal flu in people aged 65 and over was similar to that of the previous season.***

***Eight out of every 10 women have undergone breast and cervical cancer screening tests within the recommended term.***

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49. In the 2017/2018 campaign, vaccine coverage against seasonal flu in people aged 65 and over was 55.7%, with considerable variations between regions. This coverage was similar to that reported for the 2016/2017 season (55.5%).
50. During the 2017/2018 campaign, only two Autonomous Communities surpassed the proposed target of 40% vaccination coverage among healthcare professionals, with the national average reaching 31.1%.
51. The coverage of cancer screening tests continued to increase in 2017, with eight out of every 10 women undergoing breast and cervical cancer screening tests within the recommended period, and over two out of every 10 people undergoing the recommended colon cancer screening test during the period indicated.

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***Public healthcare expenditure has increased by 8.8% since 2013.***

***Curative and rehabilitative care services accounted for more than half of public healthcare expenditure.***

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52. The total expenditure of the Spanish healthcare system amounted to 101,721 million euros in 2016 (public expenditure of 72,402 million vs. 29,319 million funded by the private sector), representing 9.1% of GDP.
53. Public healthcare expenditure represents 71.2% of total healthcare expenditure and 6.5% of GDP. Private healthcare expenditure (28.8% of total healthcare expenditure) represents 2.6% of GDP.
54. 81.5% of private healthcare expenditure comprises direct payments made by households, in an amount of 23,906 million euros, primarily on dental care, medicine (co-payments and over-the-counter drugs), and therapeutic devices such as glasses, contact lenses and hearing aids.
55. Expenditure on curative and rehabilitative care services reached 58,010 million euros in 2016 (public expenditure of 44,363 million euros and private expenditure of 13,648 million euros), representing 57.0% of the total healthcare expenditure.
56. Hospital expenditure, the greatest healthcare expense, accounted for 42.4% of the total healthcare expenditure, which amounts to 43,180 million euros (40,650 million euros public expenditure and 2,530 million euros private expenditure).
57. The healthcare expenditure of the public administrations amounted to 72,402 million euros in 2016, rising up to 8.8% since 2013 figures (66,552 million euros).



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***The pharmaceutical expenditure for medical prescriptions has increased since the previous year.***

***The group of drugs used to treat diabetes accounts for the highest volume of spending.***

***In the public network hospitals, antineoplastics are the group of drugs on which the greatest expenditure is made.***

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58. The average expense per prescription (11.2 euros) and the pharmaceutical expenditure per inhabitant (228 euros) through National Health System medical prescriptions have grown compared with 2016, but remain lower than the expenditure for 2011. By pharmacological group, analgesics are the most widely consumed medicines, based on the number of packaging units consumed (10.2% of the total). The group of drugs used to treat diabetes is that which accounts for the highest volume of spending, representing 12.2% of the total.
59. 37 new active ingredients have been included for the first time among those funded by the National Health System. These active ingredients include significant innovations in the treatment of metastatic or locally advanced breast cancer, the treatment of short bowel syndrome, additional treatment in adult patients with severe uncontrolled eosinophilic asthma, new antiviral combinations for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C and HIV infection, as well as the first authorized treatment for a rare metabolic disease caused by a lysosomal acid lipase deficiency.
60. Generic medicines account for 46.4% of the total volume of packaging units of medicines invoiced and 22.2% of expenditure. From 2010 to 2017 consumption of generic drugs in terms of the number of packaging units consumed increased by 73% and the percentage in terms of expenditure has doubled.
61. At the hospitals of the National Health System public network, antineoplastic agents have become the drug group representing the highest expenditure, followed by systemic immunosuppressive and antiviral drugs.
62. The most used medical products continue to be urinary incontinence pads, both in terms of the number of packaging units consumed (42%) and in terms of expenditure (58.3%).

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***All public health centres and primary healthcare units have implemented the interoperable e-prescription.***

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63. The covered population database of the National Health System (BDPP-SNS) is the strategic tool for interoperability and traceability projects concerning clinical information, namely the National Health System's digital medical records (HCDSNS) and e-prescriptions. Every person covered by the National Health System has a unique, lifelong personal ID code for the entire system.
64. As at December 2018, the HCDSNS contains clinical information on 42,129,501 individuals, representing coverage of 93.2% of the population with an active individual health card (a total of 45.2 million people).
65. The e-prescriptions that can be used throughout Spain's Autonomous Communities have been fully implemented at health centres and primary healthcare units, and their extension into hospital healthcare is advancing appreciably. As at December 2018, all of Spain's Autonomous Communities were certified to use the system, and in 16 of them, in addition to the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the system was up and running.

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*The degree of satisfaction with the functioning of the public healthcare system is high, with primary healthcare receiving the highest scores.*

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66. 67.6% of citizens rated the functioning of the Spanish healthcare system favourably, considering that it functions quite well or well, although certain changes are required.
67. The degree of satisfaction with the functioning of the public healthcare system in Spain has received a score of 6.7 out of 10, an improvement upon the results obtained in 2016. Primary healthcare continues to receive the highest scores, with 7.3 out of 10, continuing the trend begun in 2015.
68. As in prior years, the general public has a clear preference for public centres, although in the four levels of healthcare studied, the public-private difference has narrowed for the first time in recent years.
69. 88.6% of citizens affirm that they have not been prevented from purchasing the medicines prescribed to them by their doctor for financial reasons. 4.7% do report having had problems purchasing medicines due to financial reasons.
70. As regards the stockpiling of full packaging units of medicines, 83.2% of citizens say that they have not stockpiled any full units, and only 16.2% replied affirmatively. Half of these full units (50.7%) contain medicines prescribed in advance, to avoid the patient going without, and 31.1% are units which have not been used due to a change in treatment.



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