

Men and women in the populations of OECD countries

Did you know?

Up to their early teens, boys slightly outnumber girls in all the OECD countries. In the 25-54 age group – “prime working life” – the numbers of men and women are about equal in all countries. But in the older age groups women often outnumber men by more than two to one.

In 2005 women slightly outnumbered men in all OECD countries except Iceland, where the numbers were equal, and Korea and Turkey where there were slightly more men than women. In the OECD area as a whole there are 104 women for every 100 men.

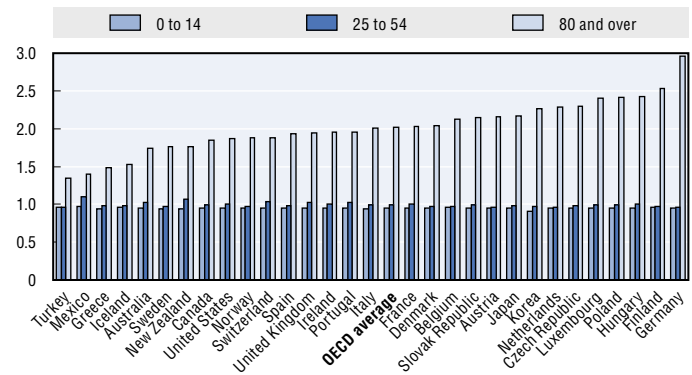
OECD populations in 2005 and ratios of women to men

	Population ('000)	W/M ratio		Population ('000)	W/M ratio	Population ('000)	W/M ratio	
Iceland	295	1.00	Sweden	9 041	1.02	Spain	43 064	1.04
Luxembourg	465	1.03	Hungary	10 098	1.05	Korea	47 817	0.99
New Zealand	4 028	1.03	Czech Rep.	10 220	1.10	Italy	58 093	1.06
Ireland	4 148	1.01	Belgium	10 419	1.04	United Kingdom	59 668	1.05
Norway	4 620	1.01	Portugal	10 495	1.07	France	60 496	1.05
Finland	5 249	1.04	Greece	11 120	1.02	Turkey	73 193	0.98
Slovak Rep.	5 401	1.02	Netherlands	16 299	1.01	Germany	82 689	1.05
Denmark	5 431	1.06	Australia	20 155	1.03	Mexico	107 029	1.05
Switzerland	7 252	1.06	Canada	32 268	1.02	Japan	128 085	1.05
Austria	8 189	1.05	Poland	38 530	1.06	United States	298 213	1.03

In all OECD countries a few more boys are born than girls, so that boys predominate in the 0-14 age group. However, men smoke and drink alcohol more than women, have higher suicide rates, and indeed have higher mortality rates from many other causes. As a result, women are much more numerous than men in the 80+ age group.

High male death rates in the Second World War explain the women/men ratios in excess of 2.0 in the chart below. The male death toll was particularly high in Germany, Finland, Japan and the countries of central Europe.

Ratios of women to men at different ages
2005



Source: United Nations population projections, 2004 revisions.

Further reading:

OECD (2006), *Labour Force Statistics* – 2006 Edition, OECD, Paris.