



Health at a Glance: EUROPE 2014

How does the United Kingdom compare?

KEY FINDINGS

- The number of doctors in the UK has grown more rapidly than in any other EU countries since 2000; the number per capita remains lower than the EU average.
 - There has been a sharp drop in deaths from heart attacks in the UK since 2000, reflecting reductions in important risk factors like smoking and better treatments.
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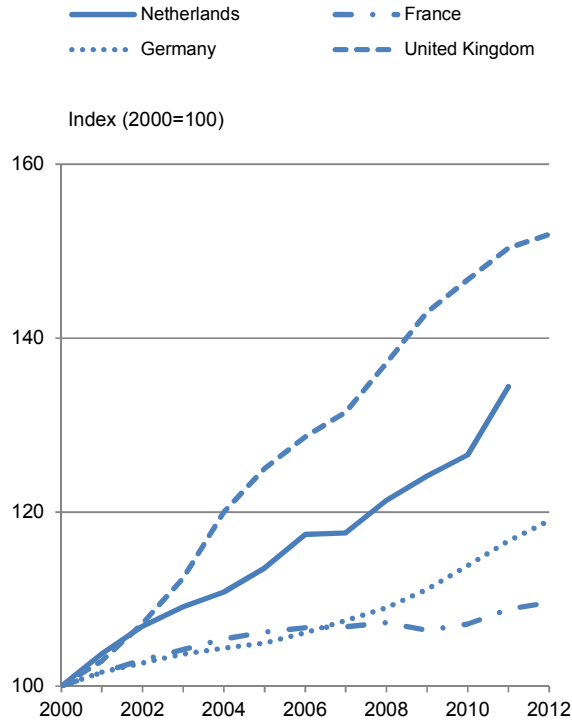
Rapidly growing number of doctors in the UK

Health at a Glance: Europe 2014 shows that the number of doctors in the United Kingdom has increased more rapidly than in any other EU country since 2000, rising by over 50% between 2000 and 2012. This rapid rise began before the economic crisis in 2008-09, but has continued since then. As a result, the United Kingdom had 2.8 practising physicians per 1000 population in 2012, up from 2.0 in 2000. This nonetheless remains below the EU average of 3.4 doctors per 1000 population.

While most of the increase in the number of doctors in the United Kingdom in the early 2000s came from the entry of foreign-trained doctors, the situation changed just before the economic crisis with most of the increase now driven by a strong rise in the number of graduates from domestic medical education programmes. This reflects a deliberate policy in the United Kingdom to reduce its reliance on foreign-trained doctors to meet its own needs.

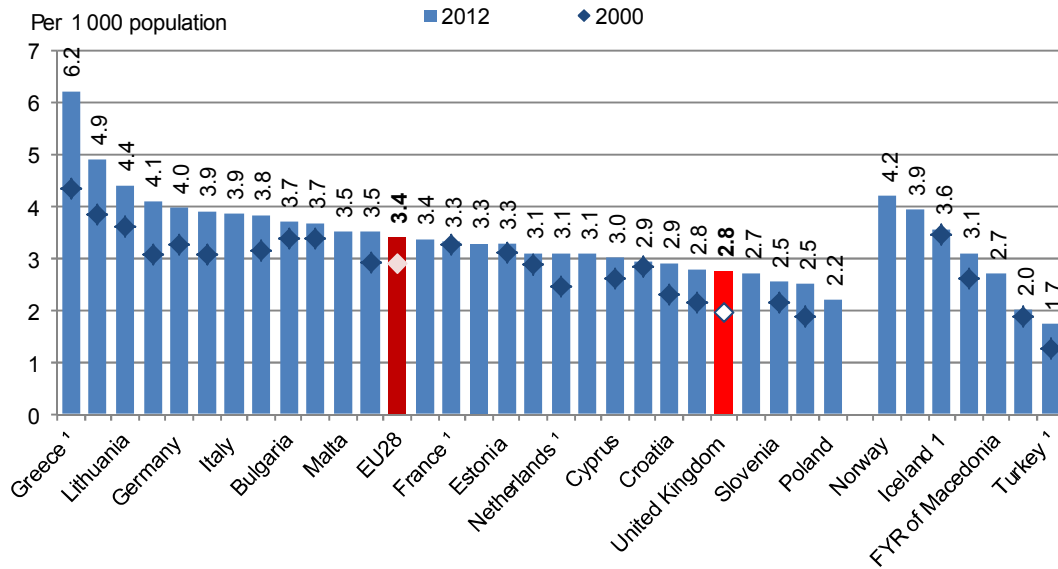
A growing number of doctors will improve access to health care, but will also put pressure on future health care budgets as more graduates enter the medical workforce. There are now concerns that there might be surpluses of certain categories of doctors in the years ahead. This has led to recommendations to reduce slightly student intakes in medical schools or post-graduate training for certain specialties.

Evolution in the number of doctors, selected EU countries, 2000 to 2012 (or nearest year)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2014, Eurostat Statistics Database.

Practising doctors per 1 000 population, 2000 and 2012 (or nearest year)



1. Data include not only doctors providing direct care to patients, but also those working in the health sector as managers, educators, researchers, etc. (adding another 5-10% of doctors). 2. Data refer to all physicians who are licensed to practice. Source: OECD Health Statistics 2014; Eurostat Statistics Database; WHO European Health for All Database.

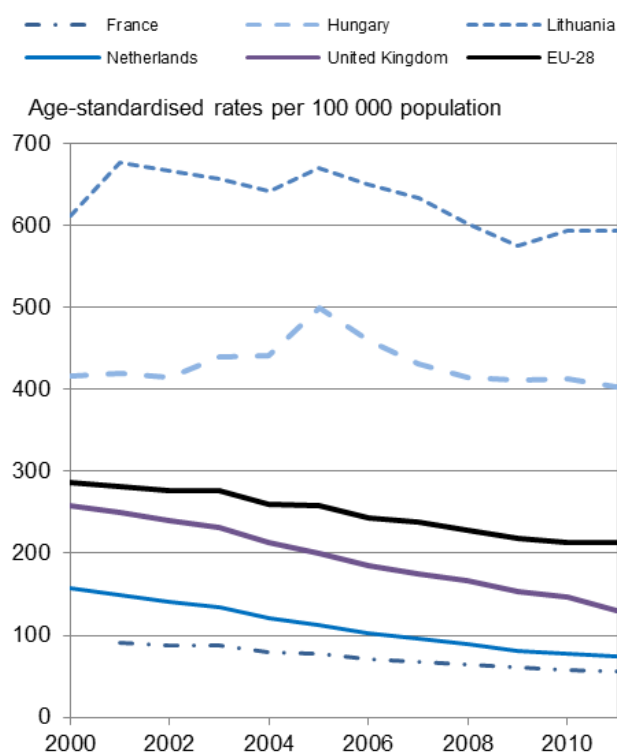
Preventing and treating heart disease

Since 2000, mortality rates as a result of heart attacks (or ischemic heart disease, IHD) have declined significantly in the United Kingdom. In 2000, mortality rates from heart disease were just 10% below the EU average, while by 2011 the rate had halved and was 40% below the EU average. Some of the main contributory factors are the declining smoking rates in the United Kingdom, which is an important risk factor for heart attacks, as well as more and better treatments.

Between 2002 and 2012, the proportion of adults who smoke daily in the United Kingdom has dropped significantly. In 2012, 19% of adults were daily smokers - a drop of 27% over the 10-year period – and now well below the EU average.

Improvements in medical care have also played a role. The use of coronary revascularisation procedures, particularly angioplasty, has increased strongly in the United Kingdom since 2000. There has also been a substantial reduction in mortality rates of patients following their hospital admission for a heart attack in the United Kingdom, with mortality rates now equal to the EU average.

Trends in ischemic heart disease mortality rates, selected EU member states, 2000-11



Source: Eurostat Statistics Database.

More information on **Health at a Glance: EUROPE 2014** is available at <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-at-a-glance-europe-23056088.htm>.

For more information on OECD's work on **United Kingdom**, please visit www.oecd.org/unitedkingdom.
