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## **OECD Health Data 2009 – comparing health statistics across OECD countries**

The number of doctors per capita increased 2% per year on average across OECD countries between 1990 and 2007, but in some countries the trend is reversing.

## Some OECD countries hiring more foreign-trained doctors

The number of doctors per capita in Italy has been falling since 2003, but is still above average. In France, the number of doctors per capita started falling in 2006 after a long upward trend. In both countries, the drops are due to fewer medical school graduates.

Though France has recently increased the intake of medical students, the long training period means the number of doctors per capita will continue to decline in the coming decade. There are fewer medical graduates too in Japan and Switzerland, while in Canada and the U.S. graduate rates are increasing but are still low.

Responding to demand for more doctors, the percentage of foreign-trained physicians has increased in many OECD countries. It nearly doubled in Switzerland and Sweden and tripled in Ireland and Finland between 2000 and 2007. In the U.S. and the U.K., about half the increase in the number of doctors was through international recruitment.

## **General Practitioners underpaid compared to specialists**

Medical specialists earn more than general practitioners (GPs) in all OECD countries, with the gap widening in Australia, Finland, France and Hungary since 2000. The U.K. has increased doctors' pay in the last ten years and GPs now make almost as much as specialists.

Though generalist primary care is a cost-effective way to promote good health, the number of specialists rose by 60% between 1990 and 2007, compared with a 23% increase in GPs. On average, there are now two specialists for every GP, and that number is even higher in Central and Eastern Europe and in Greece. Some countries have maintained a better balance between specialists and generalists (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, New Zealand and Portugal), but that's changing as the majority of medical students now choose to specialise.

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These are some of the findings from **OECD Health Data 2009**, the most comprehensive source of comparable statistics on health and health systems across the 30 OECD countries. Covering the period 1960 to 2007, this interactive database can be used for comparative analyses on:

- Health status
- Risk factors to health (including smoking and obesity)
- Health care resources and utilisation (including the supply and activities of doctors)
- Long-term care resources and utilisation
- Health expenditure and its financing
- Social protection (including public health coverage and private health insurance)
- Pharmaceutical markets

For further information about the content of the database, please contact Mark Pearson (tel. 33 1 45 24 92 69) or Gaétan Lafortune (tel. 33 1 45 24 92 67) in the OECD Health Division.

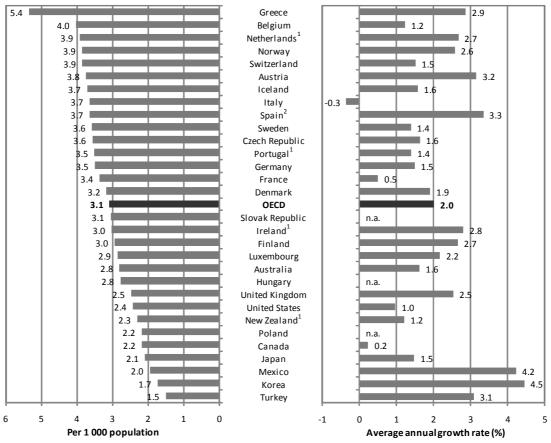
For more information, please go to the **OECD Health Data 2009** website at http://www.oecd.org/health/healthdata.

List of charts (see detailed charts below)

- 1. Practising physicians per 1000 population, OECD countries, 2007
- 2. Growth in practising physicians per capita, 1990 to 2007
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- 7. General practitioners and specialists per 1000 population, OECD countries, 2007
- 8. Remuneration of general practitioners and specialists, ratio to GDP per capita, OECD countries, 2007 (or latest year available)
- 9. Growth in remuneration of general practitioners and specialists, 1997 to 2007

Chart 1. Practising physicians per 1 000 population, 2007

Chart 2. Growth in practising physician per capita, 1990 to 2007



<sup>1.</sup> Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Portugal provide the number of all physicians entitled to practise rather than only those practising.

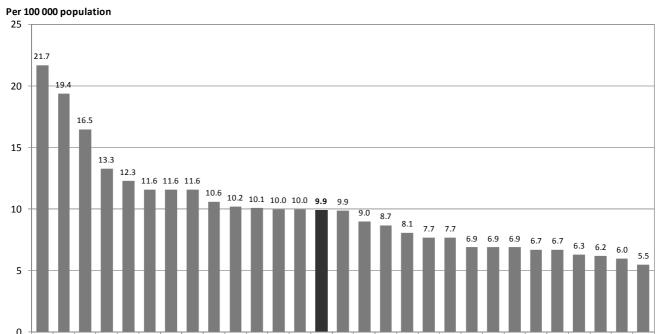
Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.

<sup>2.</sup> Data for Spain include dentists and stomatologists.

Poland

. Turkey

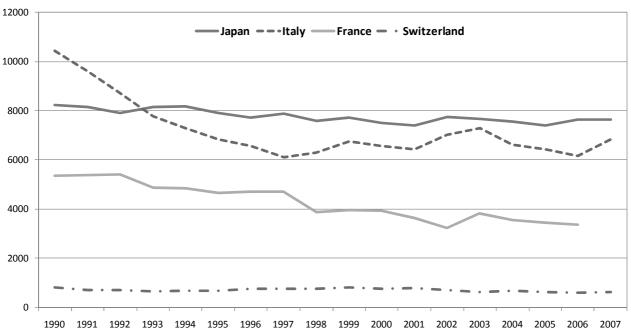
Chart 3. Medical graduates per 100 000 population, 2007



Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.

Chart 4. Absolute number of medical graduates, selected OECD countries, 1990 to 2007

## Number of graduates



Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.

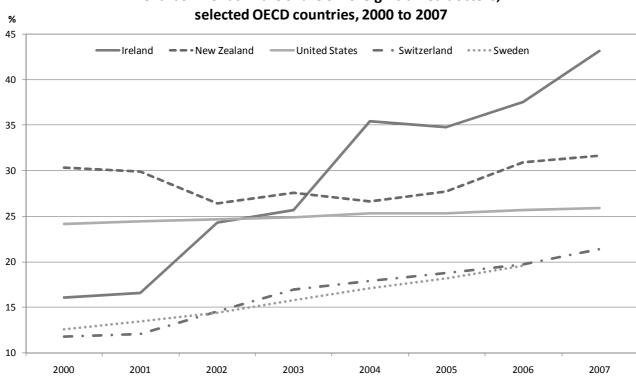
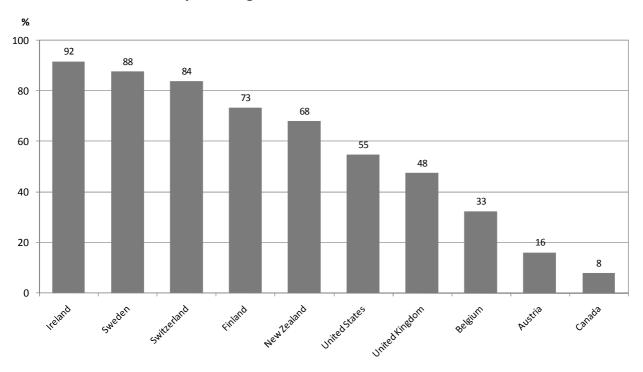


Chart 5. Trends in the share of foreign-trained doctors,

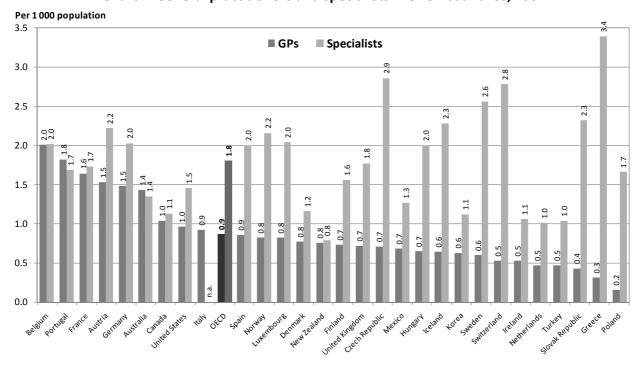
Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.

Chart 6. Contribution of the foreign-trained doctors to the net increase in the number of practising doctors, selected OECD countries, 2000 to 2007



Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.

Chart 7. General practitioners and specialists in OECD countries, 2007



Note: Some countries are unable to report all their practising doctors in these two categories of GPs and specialists. Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.

Ratio to GDP per capita

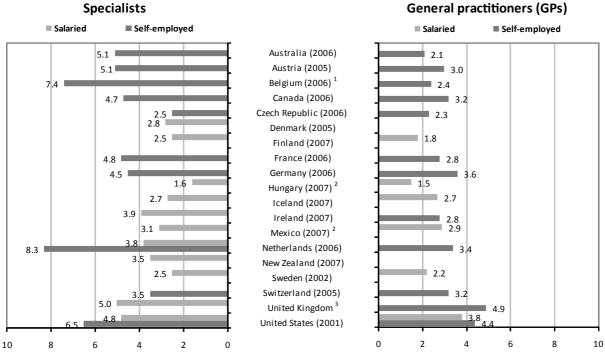


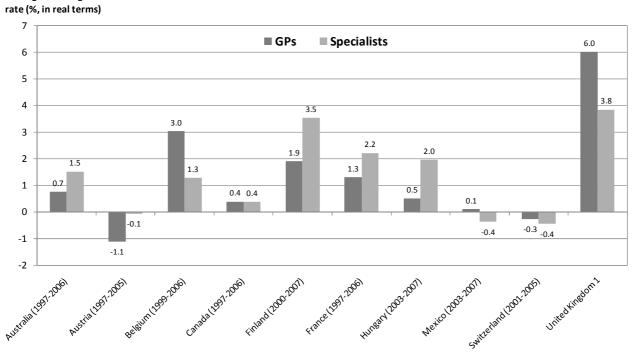
Chart 8. Remuneration of general practitioners and specialists, ratio to GDP per capita

1. Data include practice expenses, resulting in an over-estimation.

Ratio to GDP per capita

- 2. Data on salaried doctors relate only to public sector employees who tend to receive lower remuneration than those working in the private sector.
- 3. Remuneration of self-employed GP is for 2006 and the income of salaried specialists is for 2007. *Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.*

Chart 9. Growth in remuneration of general practitioners and specialists,
Average annual growth 1997 to 2007



1. Data on remuneration for self-employed GPs are for 1997-2006 and data for salaried specialists are for 1998-2007. Source: OECD Health Data 2009, June 2009.