



Health at a Glance 2015

How does Spain compare?

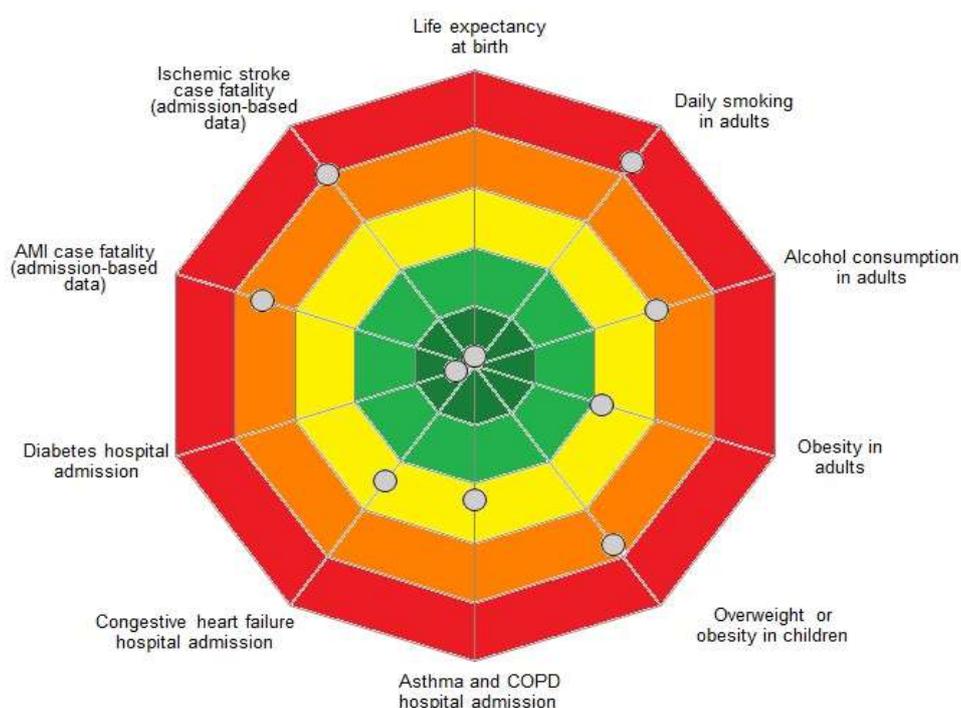
KEY FINDINGS

- Spain's life expectancy is the second highest in the OECD (after Japan). But further progress can still be achieved by addressing important risk factors to health such as tobacco smoking, alcohol consumption and obesity among adults and children.
- Spain could do better in filling gaps in the continuity of care for the growing number of people living with one or more chronic diseases in order to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions for people with asthma or congestive heart failures. The quality of acute care for people admitted to hospital for heart attack (AMI) or stroke could also be improved to increase survival rates.

Spain has the second highest life expectancy in OECD countries

Life expectancy at birth in Spain has increased more rapidly than in many other OECD countries and is now second highest, nearly equal to Japan (83.2 years in Spain compared with 83.4 years in Japan). Spain ranked only sixth in life expectancy at birth in 2000. These gains in life expectancy have been driven by large reductions in mortality from cardiovascular diseases among men and women.

How Spain compares with other OECD countries on selected indicators of health status, risk factors to health and quality of care (2013 or nearest year)



Note: The closest the dot is to the center "target", the better the country performs. The countries in the inner circle are in the top quintile among the best performing OECD countries, while those in the outer circle are in the bottom quintile.
 Source: OECD Health at a Glance 2015 (chart design: Laboratorio MeS).

Spain can do even better in addressing important risk factors to health: high smoking rate, above average alcohol consumption, and high obesity rate among children and adults

Spain has achieved some progress in reducing tobacco consumption, one of the main risk factors for cardiovascular diseases and different types of cancer, with rates of daily smokers among adults coming down 32% in 2000 to 24% in 2013. However, smoking rates in Spain still remain higher than the OECD average of 20%, and much greater than in leading countries (Sweden, Iceland, Australia and the United States) where smoking rates among adults is now below 14%.

Overall alcohol consumption in Spain has also come down since 2000, but remains higher than the OECD average. As in other countries, alcohol consumption in Spain tends to be concentrated among a certain segment of the population: the heaviest-drinking 20% of the population drink almost 60% of all alcohol. Governments can use a range of policies to tackle harmful alcohol use, some targeting heavy drinkers, others more broadly based, including: stepping up enforcement of drink-and-driving laws, raising taxes, and increasing the regulation of the marketing of alcohol drinks.

Obesity rates among adults have increased in Spain, with the rate rising from one in eight adults (12.6%) in 2000 to one in six adults (16.6%) in 2013, although it is still lower than the OECD average (19%). Overweight and obesity among children have also grown a lot in Spain, and about three out of ten boys and girls are now at least overweight if not obese, a higher percentage than the average across OECD countries. This growing rate of overweight and obesity among children is likely to lead to even higher rates among adults in the future, threatening the progress that has been achieved in reducing mortality from cardiovascular diseases.

The quality of care for people with chronic conditions can be improved, and further progress can be achieved in the quality of care for people admitted to hospital for stroke and heart attack

As is the case in other OECD countries, the quality of care in Spain is good in certain areas, but not so good in others:

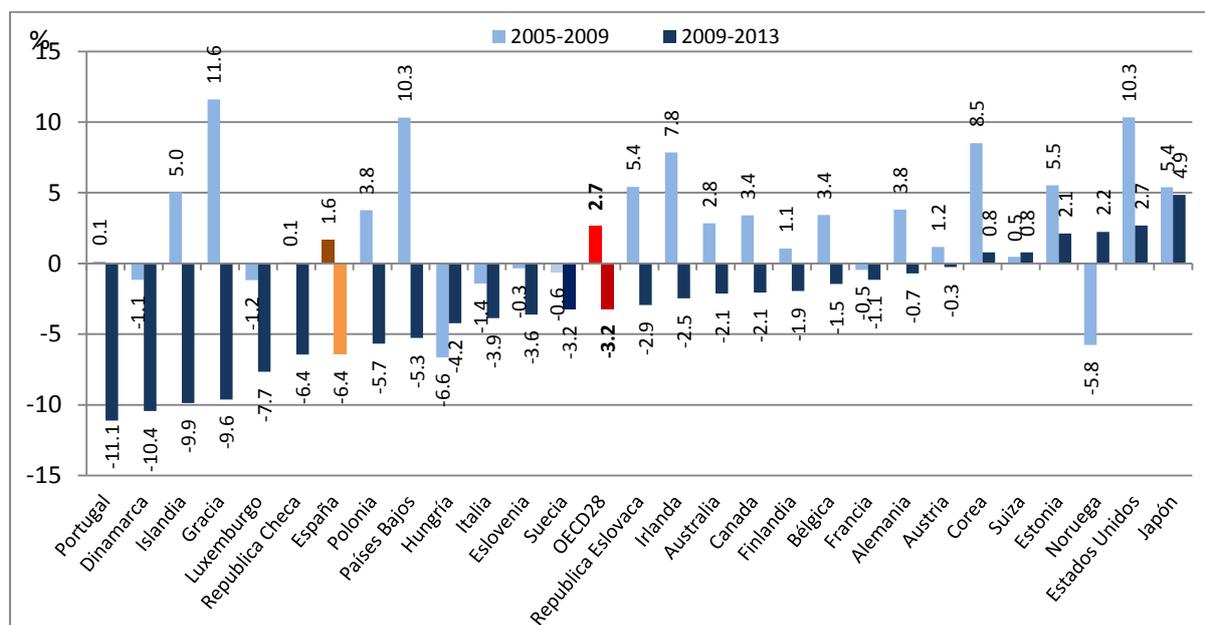
- Spain reports one of the lowest rates of avoidable hospital admissions for diabetes, but admission rates for other chronic conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is more or less equal to the OECD average, with many countries having much lower admission rates for these conditions which should usually be managed outside hospital.
- The mortality rate for people admitted in hospital for stroke is higher in Spain than the OECD average (9.7% in Spain compared with an OECD average of 8.4%), and much greater than in the best performing countries (Japan, Korea and the United States that have a mortality rate of 3% to 4% only). Hospitals in Spain can do better in saving the lives of patients admitted for a heart attack, with a mortality rate of 7.8%, slightly lower than the OECD average (8.0%).

Health spending in Spain continues to fall, partly driven by cuts in pharmaceutical spending

Health expenditure per capita in real terms in Spain has fallen in 2013 for the fourth successive year in a row, and remains at a level below the crisis.

The reduction in health spending in Spain in recent years has been driven partly by a reduction in pharmaceutical expenditure, with public spending on pharmaceuticals falling by more 6% in real terms each year since 2009. This follows the introduction of a series of measures to reduce public cost on pharmaceuticals, including a general rebate applicable for all medicines prescribed by NHS physicians in 2010, mandated price reductions for generics, and increases in user-charges for certain prescription drugs in 2012 which shifted some of the spending to private payers (either households or their complementary private insurance).

Average annual growth rate in public pharmaceutical expenditure per capita in real terms, 2005-2009 and 2009-2013 (or nearest year)



Note: Including also medical non-durables.

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

Health at a Glance 2015 provides international comparisons of health status, risk factors to health, health expenditure, access to care and quality of care. For the first time in 2015, the publication also includes a set of dashboard indicators summarising the comparative performance of OECD countries on these different dimensions of population health status and health system performance.

More information on **Health at a Glance 2015** is available at <http://www.oecd.org/health/health-at-a-glance.htm>.

For more information on OECD's work on **Spain**, please visit <http://www.oecd.org/spain>.