



Health at a Glance 2015

How does Ireland compare?

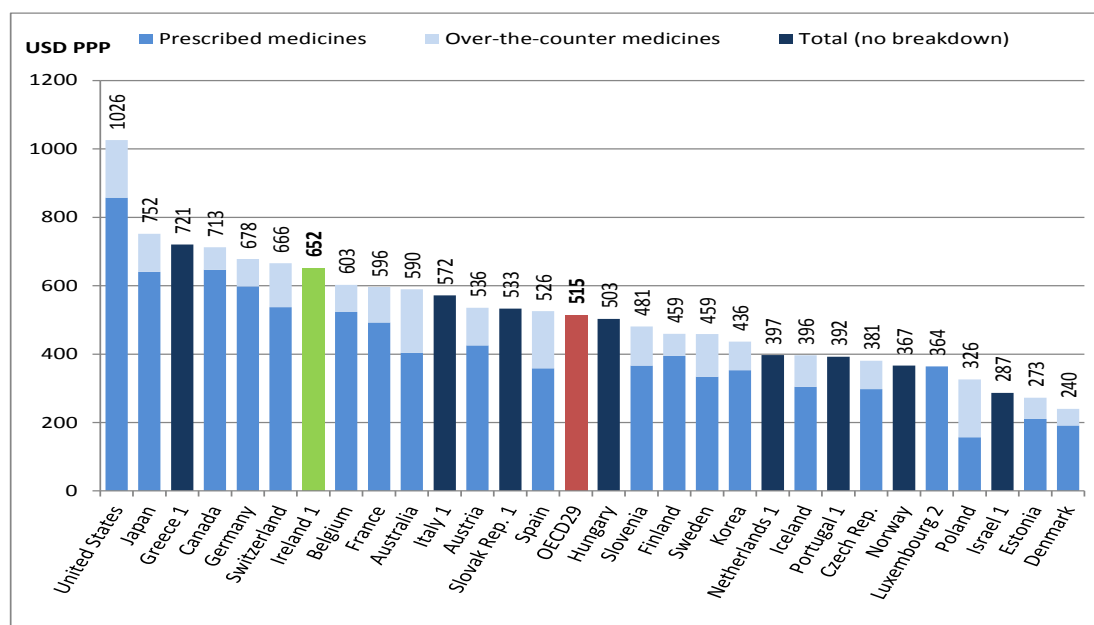
KEY FINDINGS

- Although expenditure on pharmaceuticals in Ireland fell over the past few years, it still remains well above the OECD average.
- The number of doctors per population in Ireland is lower than the OECD average, while the number of nurses is higher. This does not mean that there are no shortages of nurses if the demand for their services exceeds their supply.

Despite recent cuts, expenditure on pharmaceuticals in Ireland remains well above the OECD average

As in many other OECD countries, pharmaceutical spending in Ireland has been cut in recent years as policy measures were introduced to reign in public spending on health following the financial and economic crisis. Still, spending on pharmaceuticals per capita in Ireland remains higher than in most other OECD countries, and nearly 30% above the OECD average in 2013.

Expenditure on pharmaceuticals per capita, 2013 (or nearest year)

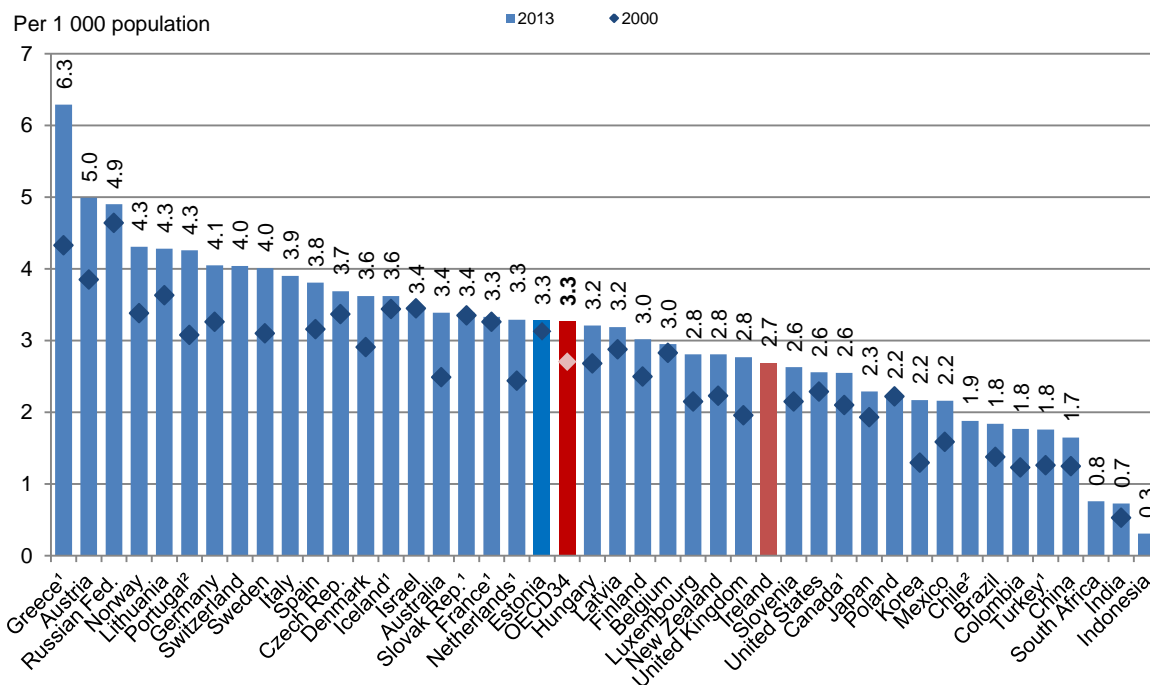


1. Includes medical non-durables (resulting in an over-estimation of around 5-10%) 2. Excludes spending on over-the-counter medicines.
 Source: OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>.

As in many other countries, Ireland has introduced a series of measures to encourage the prescription and consumption of generics to reduce pharmaceutical cost. Although the share of the generic market has increased in recent years, it nonetheless remains relatively low compared with other OECD countries, both in volume (29% compared with an OECD average of 48%) and in value (16% compared with an OECD average of 24%).

Number and composition of health workers

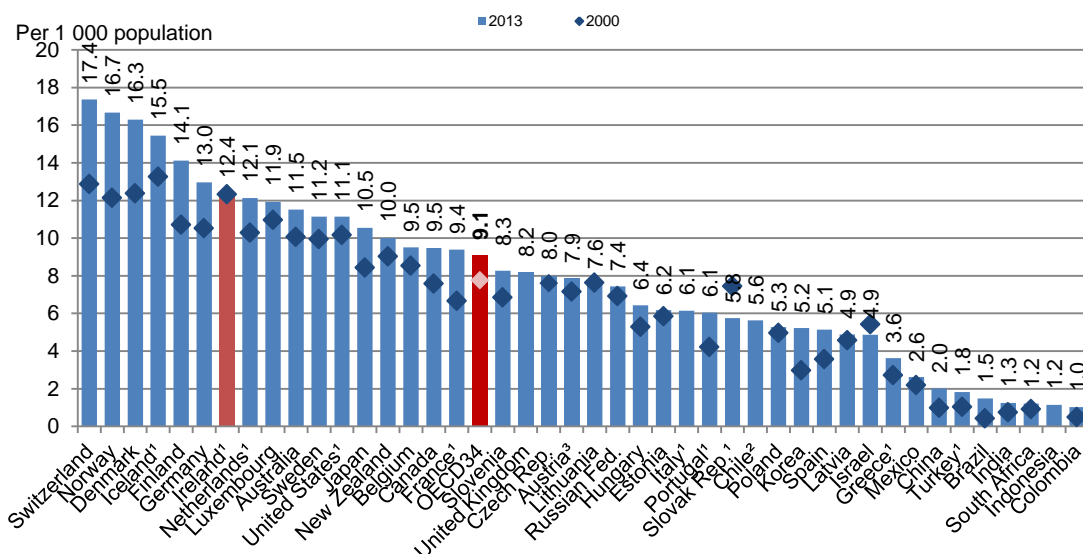
The number of doctors per population in Ireland in 2013 was slightly higher than in countries like Canada and the United States, but lower than the OECD average (2.7 doctors per 1 000 population compared with 3.3 doctors for the OECD average). About one-third of doctors working in Ireland are foreign-trained doctors. There have been recent efforts to increase the number of graduates from medical schools in Ireland, although some new medical graduates intend to go work overseas.



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 doctors licensed to practice (resulting in a large over-estimation of the number of practising doctors in Portugal, of around 30%).

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

By contrast with other OECD countries, the number of nurses per population in Ireland was not greater in 2013 than what it was in 2000, but nonetheless remains higher than in most other OECD countries, except in Nordic countries and in Switzerland and Germany.



1. Data include not only nurses providing direct care to patients, but also those working in the health sector as managers, educators, researchers, etc. 2. Data in Chile refer to all nurses who are licensed to practice (less than one-third are professional nurses with a university degree). 3. Austria reports only nurses employed in hospital.

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

Having a high supply of nurses does not mean that there are no shortages of nurses if the demand for their services is greater than their supply. This might be the case if nurses are asked to perform a wide range of tasks in hospitals and outside hospitals, with very few health care assistants to support them in their work.

Health at a Glance 2015 provides international comparisons of health status, risk factors to health, health expenditure, health care resources, 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 **Ireland**, please visit <http://www.oecd.org/ireland>.
