

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTADISTICA



Registered Health Professionals Statistics

Methodology

I Background

The Registered Health Professionals Statistics have been compiled uninterrupted in the National Statistics Institute since the year 1952, and they collect the information on the registered professionals in the health sector. The importance of this characteristic lies in its requirement, for certain professional groups, in order to carry out their professional activity. Therefore, it provides key information for measuring the human resources that are eligible for working within the health system, and in fact, it is one of the key indicators required by international organisations (WHO, OECD, Eurostat) for including them in the assessment statistics of the health systems, together with the professionals who are practicing.

The statistics have evolved as the concept of health professional has changed. The latest regulation corresponds to Law 44/2003, of 21 November, on Health Profession Planning, and it is using this regulation, when expanded to other Registers and Councils, that data is requested and the number of registered professionals is published. Modifications were also included in the questionnaires as of the year 2003, for the purpose of adapting the information to the requirements of different international organisations.

II Objective

The main objective is to ascertain the number of Health Professionals in a registered situation in Spain, according to the different health profession Councils and Associations. Moreover, the statistics must provide the structure by sex and age, and the geographical distribution of the group.

III Scopes

Territorial scope: the statistics include those registered professionals throughout the country.

Time scope: the statistics are structural and annual. On analysing the number of registered professionals at a given moment (stock), the data refers to 31 December of the reference year.

IV Variables

The statistic compiles the professionals that are recognized as health professionals and that are registered in a professional association.

It is considered as a **health profession** that under the Law 44/2003 of 21 November on Organization of Health Professions, or that meeting the established requirements.

It is considered as a **professional association** those recognized by the Administration according to the Law 2/1974 of 13 February on Professional Associations.

The **objective variables** are the number of registered professionals according to the following health professions: physicians, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, psychologists, physicists, chemists, nurses, physiotherapists, chiropractors, opticians and optometrists, dieticians and nutritionists, speech therapists, occupational therapists and dental technicians and biologists.

Among psychologists, physicists, chemists and biologists only professionals with a health specialization are considered.

1. In the case of physicists, those with the specialization on Hospital Radiophysics are taken into account as health professionals.

2. In the case of chemists, those who specialise in Clinical Biochemistry, Clinical Analysis, Microbiology and Parasitology, Radiopharmacy, Immunology, Genetics and Biomedicine, Biochemical Research, Clinical Chemistry, Embryology and Perinatology and Forensic Biopathology are considered to be health professionals.

3. Psychologists with the specialization of Health are currently divided into four types:

3.1 Psychologists specialised on Clinical Psychology.

3.2 Psychologists belonging to the Spanish Army Medical Corps.

3.3 General Health Psychologists (degree/graduate studies plus the Masters on Health Psychology)

3.4 Authorised Psychologist to carry out health activities, those psychologist authorized to carry out health activities, and entered in the registry of health centers and services, pursuant to the provisions of sections 6 and 7 of the seventh additional provision of Law 33/2011, of October 4, General of Public Health.

4. In the case of biologists, healthcare professionals are considered to be those who specialise in Clinical Analysis, Clinical Biochemistry, Clinical Immunology, Microbiology and Parasitology, Radiopharmacy and Hospital Radiophysics.

Data is also obtained on qualified nurses, with the Obstetrics-Gynaecology speciality (Midwife).

The **classification variables** are sex and age, labour situation and geographical distribution of registration (province and Autonomous Community).

There are two types of labour situation: **Retired** and **not Retired**. Those professionals retired from work for turning the age specified by law or for illness that get the corresponding pension are considered **Retired** (retirement is an administrative act by which an economically active person goes into a passive situation or becomes economically inactive). In the rest of the cases, registered professionals are considered not Retired.

V Collection and treatment of the information

Respondent units

The respondent units are the Provincial Associations or General Councils, depending on the type of health professional.

1.- Physicians and Qualified Nurses, Dentists and Physiotherapists: the INE obtains directly the information regarding these professionals via the Associations belonging to the Province or to the Autonomous Community.

2.- Pharmacists, Veterinarians, Psychologists, Physicians, Chiropodists, Opticians and Optometrists, Chemists, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Biologists and Dietistas Nutricionistas: the unit to which the information is requested is the General Council of each one of the health professionals that coordinate and/or represent all of the territorial Associations or Councils in which the respective profession is divided ¹.

3.- Dental technicians: for this profession a mixed compilation system is carried out, in some of the Autonomous Communities the Association of the Autonomous Community informs directly and the General Council informs to the rest of the Autonomous Communities.

The directory with all of the respondent units is updated each year, at the time of statistic collection.

Questionnaires

The information is collected through a web application (IRIA) where the aggregated data is requested on the number of registered professionals distributed according to the classification variables. Data are collected in the first quarter of the year following the reference year.

The **questionnaires** are adapted to each one of the professionals. There are two types of questionnaire:

1. General Councils of Professional Associations: Pharmacists, Veterinarians, Chiropodists, Physicists, Opticians and Optometrists, Psychologists, Dental Technicians, Chemists, Dieticians and Nutritionists, Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists Occupational Therapists and Biologists.

2. Associations of Physicians, Qualified Nurses, Dentists, Physiotherapists and Dental Technicians belonging to the Province and to the Autonomous Community.

Data processing

The web application detects inconsistencies and includes some warnings that enable carrying out a first information quality control when the respondent unit fills it out. The Central Services, as the information is received, verifies the coherence of the data and compares it with the previous data series. In case of anomalies, direct contact is made with the reporting unit in order to confirm the data with the General Councils of Colleges in order to corroborate the information.

¹ The Councils currently targeted by the statistics are the following: General Council of Pharmaceutical Associations, General Council of Veterinary Associations, General Council of Official Chiropodist Associations, General Council of Colleges of Opticians-Optometrists, Official College of Physicists, General Council of Colleges of Psychologists, General Council of Official Colleges of Chemists, General Council of Official Colleges of Dieticians and Nutritionists, General Council of Official Associations of Dental Technicians, General Council of Official Colleges of Speech Therapists, Official College of Occupational Therapists and General Council of Official Associations of Biologists.

VI Publication of results

The results of these statistics are published on the INE website (www.ine.es) in the section Inebase/Society/Health/Statistics of Registered Healthcare Professionals.

86 tables are published, divided by type of healthcare professional. Each type of health professional may have the following tables:

- 1 Registered health professionals, by years and sex.
- 2 Number of collegiates by Autonomous Community or Autonomous City, and by Province of registration, age and sex.
- 3 Distribution of the number of collegiates by Autonomous Community or Autonomous City of registration, age and sex.
- 4 Number of collegiates by Autonomous Community or Autonomous City of registration, labour situation and sex.
- 5 Distribution of the number of collegiates by Autonomous Community or Autonomous City of registration, labour situation and sex.
- 6 Rate of registered health professionals per 100,000 inhabitants, by Autonomous Community or Autonomous City of registration and labour situation².

In the case of Qualified Nurses, the Obstetrics-Gynaecology (Midwife) speciality is published, and as information on the remaining specialities is made available, new tables will be incorporated.

In addition to the tables, a press release is published.

² The population used to calculate the rates is the Flash Estimation of the Population as of 1 January. In the specific case of the Obstetrics-Gynaecology (Midwife) specialisation, women of child-bearing age were the population used.