LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy at birth remains one of the most frequently quoted indicators of health status. Gains in life expectancy at birth in OECD countries in recent decades can be attributed to a number of factors, including rising living standards, improved lifestyle and better education, as well as greater access to quality health services. Other factors, such as better nutrition, sanitation and housing also played a role, particularly in developing countries.

Definition

Life expectancy at birth measures how long on average a person may expect to live based on the age-specific death rates prevailing in a country at the time of his or her birth. It should be noted that the actual age-specific death rates of any particular birth cohort cannot be known in advance; this implies that, if age-specific death rates are falling (as has been the case over the past few decades in all OECD countries), the actual life span of a person will be higher than the life expectancy calculated based on current death rates.

Comparability

Each country calculates life expectancy at birth according to methodologies that can vary somewhat from country to country. These differences in methodology can affect the comparability of reported life expectancy estimates, as different methods can change a country's estimates by a fraction of a year.

Overview

On average across OECD countries, life expectancy at birth for the whole population reached 79.1 years in 2007, more than ten years greater than in 1960. In almost half of OECD countries, life expectancy at birth exceeded 80 years in 2007. The country with the highest life expectancy was Japan, with a life expectancy of 82.6 years. At the other end of the scale, life expectancy in OECD countries was the lowest in Turkey, followed by Hungary. However, while life expectancy in Hungary has increased only modestly since 1960, it has increased sharply in Turkey, rapidly catching up with the OECD average. OECD countries with higher GDP per capita generally experience higher life expectancy at birth, although the relationship is less pronounced at higher income levels.

The gender gap in life expectancy stood at 5.6 years on average across OECD countries in 2007, with life expectancy reaching 76.3 years among men and 81.9 years among women. This gender gap increased by halfa-year on average across countries between 1960 and 2007. But this result hides different trends between earlier and later decades. While the gender gap in life expectancy increased substantially in many countries during the 1960s and the 1970s, it narrowed during the past 25 years, reflecting stronger gains in life expectancy among men than among women in most OECD countries. The narrowing of the gender gap in life expectancy over the past 25 years can been partly attributed to the narrowing of gap in risk-behaviours such as smoking between men and women, and to sharp reductions in mortality rates from cardio-vascular diseases among men.

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LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy at birth: total

Number of years

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	70.9	70.8	74.6	77.0	77.9	79.3	79.7	80.0	80.3	80.6	80.9	81.1	81.4
Austria	68.7	70.0	72.6	75.5	76.6	78.1	78.6	78.8	78.8	79.3	79.5	79.9	80.1
Belgium	69.8	71.1	73.3	76.1	76.9	77.8	78.1	78.1	78.2	78.9	79.0	79.5	79.8
Canada			75.3	77.6	78.1	79.3	79.6	79.7	79.9	80.2	80.4	80.7	
Czech Republic	70.6	69.6	70.4	71.5	73.3	75.1	75.3	75.4	75.3	75.9	76.1	76.7	77.0
Denmark	72.4	73.3	74.3	74.9	75.3	76.8	77.0	77.1	77.4	77.8	78.2	78.4	78.4
Finland	69.0	70.8	73.6	75.0	76.6	77.7	78.1	78.3	78.5	78.9	79.1	79.5	79.5
France	70.3	72.2	74.3	76.9	77.9	79.1	79.2	79.4	79.4	80.3	80.2	80.7	81.0
Germany	69.1	70.6	72.9	75.3	76.6	78.2	78.5	78.5	78.6	79.2	79.4	79.8	80.0
Greece	69.9	72.0	74.5	77.1	77.7	78.0	78.5	78.7	78.9	79.1	79.3	79.6	79.5
Hungary	68.0	69.2	69.1	69.4	69.9	71.7	72.3	72.6	72.6	72.8	72.8	73.2	73.3
Iceland	72.9	74.3	76.7	78.0	78.0	80.1	80.2	80.6	81.2	81.0	81.2	81.2	81.2
Ireland	70.0	71.2	72.9	74.9	75.5	76.6	77.2	77.9	78.3	78.9	79.5	79.8	79.7
Italy			74.0	77.1	78.3	79.8	80.1	80.3	79.9	80.9	80.8	81.4	
Japan	67.8	72.0	76.1	78.9	79.6	81.2	81.5	81.8	81.8	82.1	82.0	82.4	82.6
Korea	52.4	62.2	65.9	71.4	73.5	76.0	76.4	77.0	77.4	78.0	78.5	79.1	79.4
Luxembourg	69.4		72.8	75.5	76.8	78.0	77.9	78.1	77.8	79.2	79.5	79.4	79.4
Mexico	57.5	60.9	67.2	70.6	72.5	73.9	74.2	74.3	74.5	74.6	74.7	74.8	75.0
Netherlands	73.5	73.7	75.9	77.0	77.5	78.0	78.3	78.4	78.6	79.2	79.4	79.8	80.2
New Zealand		71.5	73.2	75.5	76.8	78.4	78.7	79.0	79.3	79.5	79.8	80.1	80.2
Norway	73.8	74.4	75.9	76.7	77.9	78.8	78.9	79.0	79.6	80.1	80.3	80.5	80.6
Poland	67.8	70.0	70.2	70.7	72.0	73.9	74.3	74.6	74.7	75.0	75.1	75.3	75.4
Portugal	63.9	66.7	71.4	74.1	75.4	76.7	77.0	77.2	77.4	78.3	78.1	78.9	79.1
Slovak Republic	70.6	69.8	70.6	71.0	72.4	73.3	73.6	73.8	73.9	74.1	74.0	74.3	74.3
Spain	69.8	72.0	75.4	77.0	78.1	79.4	79.7	79.8	79.7	80.3	80.3	81.1	81.0
Sweden	73.1	74.7	75.8	77.6	78.8	79.7	79.9	79.9	80.2	80.6	80.6	80.8	81.0
Switzerland	71.4	73.1	75.6	77.5	78.6	79.9	80.3	80.5	80.6	81.2	81.4	81.7	81.9
Turkey	48.3	54.2	58.1	67.5	69.3	71.1	71.5	71.9	72.2	72.6	73.0	73.2	73.4
United Kingdom	70.8	71.9	73.2	75.7	76.6	77.9	78.2	78.3	78.3	78.9	79.1	79.5	
United States	69.9	70.9	73.7	75.3	75.7	76.8	77.1	77.2	77.5	77.8	77.8	78.1	
OECD average	68.5	70.3	72.6	74.9	76.0	77.4	77.7	77.9	78.0	78.5	78.7	79.0	79.1
Brazil			62.7	66.6	68.6	70.5	70.8	71.1	71.4	71.7	72.0	72.3	
Chile			68.6	73.3	74.9	76.5	76.9	77.3	77.7	77.9	78.0	78.2	78.3
China				68.6		71.4					73.0		
Estonia			69.4	69.7	67.6	70.6	70.4	71.0	71.6	72.0	72.8	73.0	73.0
India					60.3	61.9	62.5	62.5	62.7	62.9	63.6	63.4	
Indonesia											70.0		
Israel			73.9	76.8	77.4	78.8	79.3	79.5	79.8	80.3	80.3	80.7	80.7
Russian Federation		68.8	67.5	69.2	64.5	65.3	65.2	65.0	64.9	65.3	65.3	66.6	67.5
Slovenia			71.2	73.3	74.0	75.6	75.9	76.1	77.1	77.4	77.8	78.5	78.3

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Life expectancy at birth: total

Number of years



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LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy at birth: men

Number of years

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	67.9	67.4	71.0	73.9	75.0	76.6	77.0	77.4	77.8	78.1	78.5	78.7	79.0
Austria	65.4	66.5	69.0	72.2	73.3	75.1	75.6	75.8	75.9	76.4	76.7	77.1	77.3
Belgium	66.8	67.9	69.9	72.7	73.5	74.6	75.0	75.1	75.3	76.0	76.2	76.6	77.1
Canada			71.7	74.4	75.1	76.7	77.0	77.2	77.4	77.8	78.0	78.4	
Czech Republic	67.8	66.1	66.9	67.6	69.7	71.7	72.1	72.1	72.0	72.6	72.9	73.5	73.8
Denmark	70.4	70.7	71.2	72.0	72.7	74.5	74.7	74.8	75.0	75.4	76.0	76.1	76.2
Finland	65.5	66.5	69.3	71.0	72.9	74.2	74.6	74.9	75.2	75.4	75.6	75.9	76.0
France	67.0	68.4	70.2	72.8	73.8	75.3	75.4	75.7	75.8	76.7	76.7	77.2	77.5
Germany	66.5	67.5	69.6	72.0	73.3	75.1	75.6	75.7	75.8	76.5	76.7	77.2	77.4
Greece	67.3	70.1	72.2	74.6	75.0	75.5	75.9	76.2	76.5	76.6	76.8	77.1	77.0
Hungary	65.9	66.3	65.5	65.1	65.3	67.4	68.1	68.4	68.4	68.6	68.6	69.0	69.2
Iceland	70.7	71.2	73.7	75.4	75.9	78.4	78.1	78.7	79.7	79.2	79.2	79.4	79.4
Ireland	68.1	68.8	70.1	72.1	72.8	74.0	74.5	75.2	75.9	76.5	77.3	77.4	77.4
Italy			70.6	73.8	75.0	76.9	77.1	77.4	77.1	77.9	78.0	78.5	
Japan	65.3	69.3	73.4	75.9	76.4	77.7	78.1	78.3	78.4	78.6	78.6	79.0	79.2
Korea	51.1	58.7	61.8	67.3	69.6	72.3	72.8	73.4	73.9	74.5	75.1	75.7	76.1
Luxembourg	66.5		70.0	72.4	73.0	74.6	75.1	74.7	74.8	76.0	76.7	76.8	76.7
Mexico	55.8	58.5	64.1	67.7	69.7	71.3	71.6	71.8	72.0	72.1	72.2	72.4	72.6
Netherlands	71.5	70.8	72.5	73.8	74.6	75.5	75.8	76.0	76.2	76.9	77.2	77.6	78.0
New Zealand		68.4	70.1	72.5	74.1	75.9	76.3	76.6	77.0	77.3	77.7	78.0	78.2
Norway	71.6	71.2	72.4	73.5	74.8	76.0	76.2	76.4	77.1	77.6	77.8	78.2	78.3
Poland	64.9	66.6	66.0	66.2	67.6	69.7	70.2	70.4	70.5	70.7	70.8	70.9	71.0
Portugal	61.1	63.7	67.9	70.6	71.7	73.2	73.5	73.8	74.2	75.0	74.9	75.5	75.9
Slovak Republic	68.4	66.7	66.8	66.6	68.4	69.1	69.5	69.8	69.9	70.3	70.1	70.4	70.5
Spain	67.4	69.2	72.3	73.4	74.4	75.8	76.2	76.3	76.3	76.9	77.0	77.7	77.8
Sweden	71.2	72.2	72.8	74.8	76.2	77.4	77.6	77.7	77.9	78.4	78.4	78.7	78.9
Switzerland	68.7	70.0	72.3	74.0	75.4	77.0	77.5	77.9	78.0	78.6	78.7	79.2	79.5
Turkey	46.3	52.0	55.8	65.4	67.2	69.0	69.4	69.8	70.1	70.5	70.9	71.1	71.1
United Kingdom	67.9	68.7	70.2	72.9	74.0	75.5	75.8	76.0	76.2	76.8	77.1	77.3	
United States	66.6	67.1	70.0	71.8	72.5	74.1	74.4	74.5	74.8	75.2	75.2	75.4	
OECD average	65.9	67.2	69.3	71.6	72.8	74.3	74.7	74.9	75.2	75.6	75.9	76.2	76.3
Brazil			59.6	62.8	64.8	66.7	67.0	67.3	67.6	67.9	68.1	68.4	
Chile			65.3	70.3	72.0	73.6	74.0	74.4	74.8	74.9	75.1	75.2	75.4
Estonia			64.2	64.5	61.3	65.1	64.6	65.1	66.0	66.3	67.3	67.4	67.1
India					59.7	61.0	61.3	61.6	61.8	62.1	63.3	62.6	
Indonesia											68.1		
Israel			72.1	74.9	75.5	76.7	77.3	77.5	77.6	78.0	78.2	78.7	78.7
Russian Federation		63.2	61.5	63.7	58.1	59.0	58.9	58.7	58.6	58.9	58.9	60.4	61.4
Slovenia		65.0	67.3	69.4	70.3	71.9	72.1	72.3	73.2	73.5	74.1	74.8	74.6

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Life expectancy at birth: men

Number of years



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LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy at birth: women

Number of years

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	73.9	74.2	78.1	80.1	80.8	82.0	82.4	82.6	82.8	83.0	83.3	83.5	83.7
Austria	71.9	73.4	76.1	78.8	79.9	81.1	81.5	81.7	81.6	82.1	82.2	82.7	82.9
Belgium	72.8	74.3	76.7	79.5	80.4	81.0	81.2	81.2	81.1	81.8	81.9	82.3	82.6
Canada			78.9	80.8	81.1	81.9	82.1	82.1	82.4	82.6	82.7	83.0	
Czech Republic	73.5	73.1	74.0	75.5	76.8	78.5	78.6	78.7	78.6	79.2	79.3	79.9	80.2
Denmark	74.4	75.9	77.3	77.8	77.9	79.2	79.3	79.4	79.8	80.2	80.5	80.7	80.6
Finland	72.5	75.0	78.0	79.0	80.4	81.2	81.7	81.6	81.9	82.5	82.5	83.1	83.1
France	73.6	75.9	78.4	80.9	81.9	82.8	82.9	83.0	82.9	83.8	83.7	84.1	84.4
Germany	71.7	73.6	76.2	78.5	79.9	81.2	81.5	81.3	81.3	81.9	82.0	82.4	82.7
Greece	72.4	73.8	76.8	79.5	80.3	80.5	81.0	81.1	81.3	81.5	81.7	82.0	82.0
Hungary	70.1	72.1	72.7	73.7	74.5	75.9	76.4	76.7	76.7	76.9	76.9	77.4	77.3
Iceland	75.0	77.3	79.7	80.5	80.0	81.8	82.2	82.5	82.7	82.7	83.1	83.0	82.9
Ireland	71.9	73.5	75.6	77.7	78.3	79.2	79.9	80.5	80.8	81.4	81.8	82.2	82.1
Italy			77.4	80.3	81.5	82.8	83.1	83.2	82.8	83.8	83.6	84.2	
Japan	70.2	74.7	78.8	81.9	82.9	84.6	84.9	85.2	85.3	85.6	85.5	85.8	86.0
Korea	53.7	65.6	70.0	75.5	77.4	79.6	80.0	80.5	80.8	81.4	81.9	82.4	82.7
Luxembourg	72.2		75.6	78.7	80.6	81.3	80.7	81.5	80.9	82.4	82.3	81.9	82.2
Mexico	59.2	63.2	70.2	73.5	75.2	76.5	76.7	76.8	77.0	77.0	77.1	77.2	77.4
Netherlands	75.4	76.5	79.2	80.1	80.4	80.5	80.7	80.7	80.9	81.4	81.6	81.9	82.3
New Zealand		74.5	76.2	78.4	79.5	80.8	81.1	81.3	81.5	81.8	82.0	82.2	82.2
Norway	76.0	77.5	79.3	79.9	80.9	81.5	81.7	81.6	82.1	82.6	82.7	82.9	82.9
Poland	70.6	73.3	74.4	75.2	76.4	78.0	78.3	78.7	78.8	79.2	79.4	79.6	79.7
Portugal	66.7	69.7	74.9	77.5	79.0	80.2	80.5	80.6	80.6	81.5	81.3	82.3	82.2
Slovak Republic	72.7	72.9	74.3	75.4	76.3	77.4	77.7	77.7	77.8	77.8	77.9	78.2	78.1
Spain	72.2	74.8	78.5	80.6	81.8	82.9	83.2	83.2	83.0	83.7	83.7	84.4	84.3
Sweden	74.9	77.1	78.8	80.4	81.4	82.0	82.1	82.1	82.5	82.7	82.8	82.9	83.0
Switzerland	74.1	76.2	79.0	80.9	81.9	82.8	83.2	83.2	83.2	83.8	84.0	84.2	84.4
Turkey	50.3	56.3	60.3	69.5	71.3	73.1	73.5	73.9	74.3	74.6	75.0	75.3	75.6
United Kingdom	73.7	75.0	76.2	78.5	79.3	80.3	80.5	80.6	80.5	81.0	81.2	81.7	
United States	73.1	74.7	77.4	78.8	78.9	79.5	79.8	79.9	80.1	80.4	80.4	80.7	
OECD average	71.0	73.3	76.0	78.3	79.2	80.3	80.6	80.8	80.9	81.3	81.5	81.8	81.9
Brazil			65.7	70.4	72.3	74.3	74.6	74.9	75.2	75.5	75.8	76.1	
Chile			72.0	76.5	77.9	79.6	80.0	80.4	80.8	81.0	81.1	81.3	81.4
Estonia			74.2	74.7	74.1	76.0	76.2	77.0	76.9	77.8	78.1	78.5	78.7
India					60.9	62.7	63.6	63.3	63.5	63.7	63.9	64.2	
Indonesia											72.0		
Israel			75.7	78.4	79.5	80.9	81.2	81.5	81.8	82.4	82.2	82.5	82.4
Russian Federation		73.4	73.0	74.3	71.6	72.3	72.2	71.9	71.8	72.3	72.4	73.2	73.9
Slovenia		72.4	75.1	77.2	77.8	79.1	79.6	79.9	80.7	81.1	81.3	81.9	81.8

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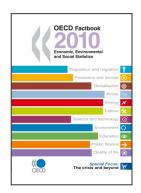
Life expectancy at birth: women

Number of years



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