



1.1 Practising psychiatrists (/10 000) (MH-2)

1.1.1 Documentation sheet

Description	Number of practising psychiatrists per 10 000 population
Calculation	Numerator: Number of practising psychiatrists x 10 000 Denominator: Total end of year Belgian population
Rationale	<p>The number of care providers gives important information on the medical workforce and thus the accessibility of healthcare. Together with the number of graduates, this information can be used for health providers supply planning.</p> <p>People with mental health problems may receive help from a variety of professionals but international organisations¹ focus mostly on psychiatrists, as psychiatrists have a pivotal role in the mental health care system and the availability of comparable data on others, such as psychologists, is more limited. Therefore also in this report figures for psychiatrists are reported separately within the results-section.</p>
Data source	INAMI – RIZIV annual statistics
Technical definitions	<p>A care provider is considered to be practising (INAMI – RIZIV: “profiles”) if he/she provided more than one clinical service (i.e. consultations, visits, technical acts, but not prescriptions) during a given year or the two preceding years.</p> <p>Physicians still in training are not counted. Psychiatrists are medical doctors who specialise in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. They have post-graduate training in psychiatry and may also have additional training in a psychiatric specialty. The Belgian data excludes non-practising physicians, physicians in training, retired professionals and professionals working abroad. Professionals who are of foreign origin are included.</p> <p>The INAMI – RIZIV codes used to identify psychiatrists include: 780 and 784 for psychiatrists and 764, 760, 889 (child) and 192 (+ neurosurgery) for neuropsychiatrists.</p>
International comparability	<p>The OECD differentiates between practising physicians (doctors providing direct care to patients), professionally active physicians (including also doctors working in the health sectors as managers, educators, researchers, etc.) and physicians licensed to practise (i.e. having the required diploma).</p> <p>In addition, OECD countries use different methodologies to calculate the same indicator (such as different levels of activity). For instance, the definition of used psychiatrists in Germany includes practising physicians with specialty “psychiatry and psychotherapy”, “paediatric psychiatry and psychotherapy”, “neuropsychiatry” and “psychosomatal medicine and psychotherapy”, while in Portugal and Spain child or paediatric psychiatrists are included. Moreover the role of psychiatrists varies across countries (e.g. collaboration with GPs). Comparisons are therefore potentially inadequate.</p> <p>While the OECD definition of practicing physicians include medical interns and resident physicians training in psychiatry, data from Belgium, France and Luxembourg excluded interns and residents, data from Greece and Portugal included all physicians licensed to practice, and data from Finland included all physicians working in healthcare and excluded interns and residents. EU countries for which data were not available in the OECD database are: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Malta, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.</p>
Limitations	The psychiatrists’ home address was used to identify the geographical distribution of psychiatrists (i.e. by region and district). Consequently, using the home address instead of the workplace address provides little information on the real available workforce per region and district, as there is potentially a lot of professional mobility between the regions and districts.



	Reporting the rate of psychiatrists alone does not give a sufficiently good picture of the mental health workforce.
Dimensions	Accessibility, Health workforce
Related indicators	Medical graduates, Number of registered psychologists
Reviewer	Jan De Lepeleire (KU Leuven)

Results

Belgium

In 2021, the number of practising psychiatrists in Belgium was 2011, corresponding to a density of 1.74 per 10 000 inhabitants. The number of psychiatrists increased since 2011 (1865 at that time), and the density increased slightly (Table 1). The number of practising psychiatrists acceding to the agreement (“conventioned”) was 1800 (Table 2).

Regional comparison

At the regional level (based on home address of the psychiatrists), the density of psychiatrists was 3.30 per 10 000 pop. in Brussels, 1.50 in Flanders, 1.64 in Wallonia, and 0.89 in the German-speaking community in 2021 (Figure 1 and Table 2 for a more complete picture in 2021). The number of psychiatrists also varied substantially within region (Figure 2). It should be noted that this provides little information on the real available workforce per region, as the workplace address is not available and there is potentially a lot of professional mobility between the regions. Furthermore, the density of practising psychiatrists by district is correlated with the distribution of psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric departments within general hospitals across Belgium (Figure 3).

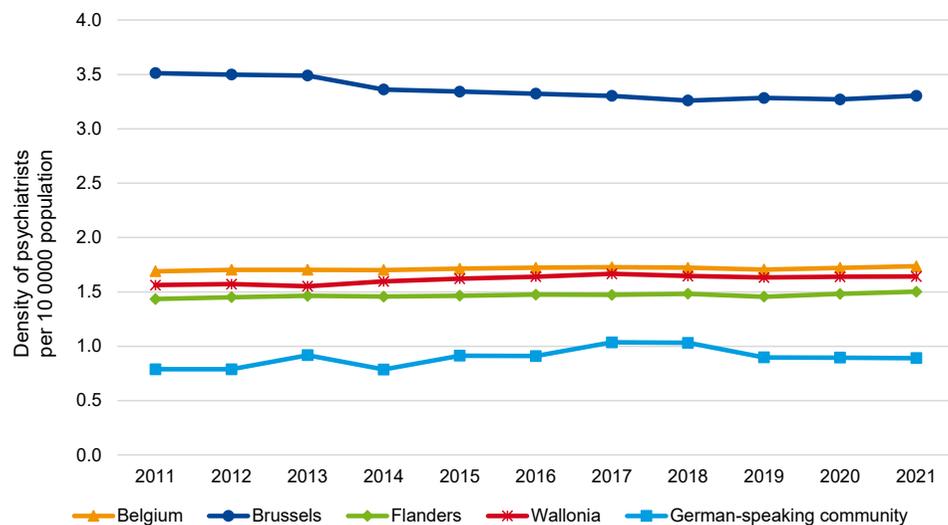


Table 1 – Data on practising psychiatrists (2011-2021)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of persons (head counts)	1865	1890	1899	1907	1930	1950	1965	1969	1960	1983	2011
Density per 10 000 population (head counts)	1.69	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.71	1.72	1.73	1.72	1.71	1.72	1.74
Number of FTEs	1247	1229	1248	1241	1258	1289	1303	1316	1291	1240	1316
Density per 10 000 population (FTEs)	1.13	1.11	1.12	1.11	1.12	1.14	1.15	1.15	1.12	1.08	1.14

Source: INAMI – RIZIV (based on the home address of the psychiatrist); calculation: KCE

Figure 1 – Density of practising psychiatrists per 10 000 inhabitants by region or community



**Table 2 – Number (head counts) of psychiatrists per region and title (2021)**

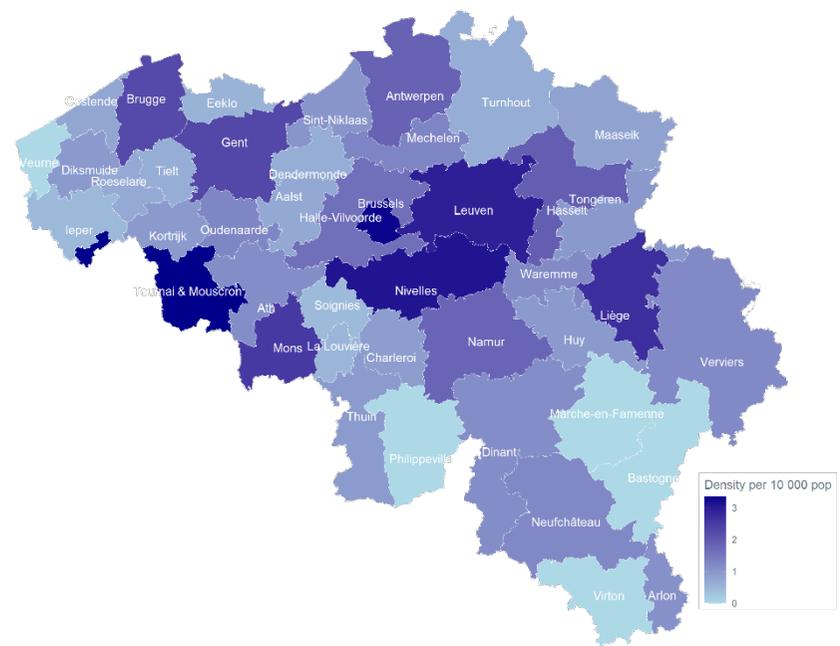
Region	Licensed	Practising	Practising psychiatrists acceding to the agreement (conventioned)	Density of practising psychiatrists per 10 000 inhabitants
Brussels	497	404	343	3.30
Flanders	1268	1006	925	1.50
Wallonia	724	601	532	1.64
German-speaking community	10	7		0.89
Belgium*	2489	2011	1800	1.74

**Belgium is equal to total of Brussels, Flanders, Wallonia. Licensed: Number of licensed psychiatrists (head count); Practising: number of psychiatrists that is practising on the Belgian labour market (as employee or with RIZIV – INAMI activity); Practising psychiatrists acceding to the agreement (conventioned psychiatrists): Number of psychiatrists with a minimal activity (at least 0.1 FTE in the Social security context or at least two RIZIV/INAMI activities billed).*

Source: INAMI – RIZIV (based on the home address of the psychiatrist); calculation: KCE

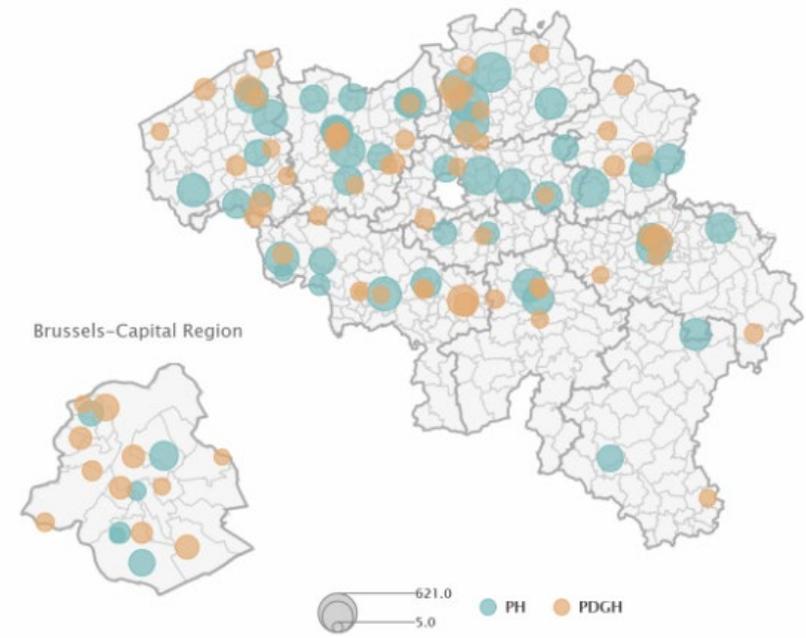


Figure 2 – Density of practising psychiatrists: number of practising psychiatrists per 10 000 inhabitants, by district (2021)



Source: INAMI – RIZIV (based on the home address of the psychiatrist); calculation: KCE

Figure 3 – Distribution of psychiatric hospitals (PH) and psychiatric departments within general hospitals (PDGH) in Belgium (2020)



Note: the size of the circles indicate the number of beds for adults. Source: CIC, FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment (1/01/2020)



International comparison

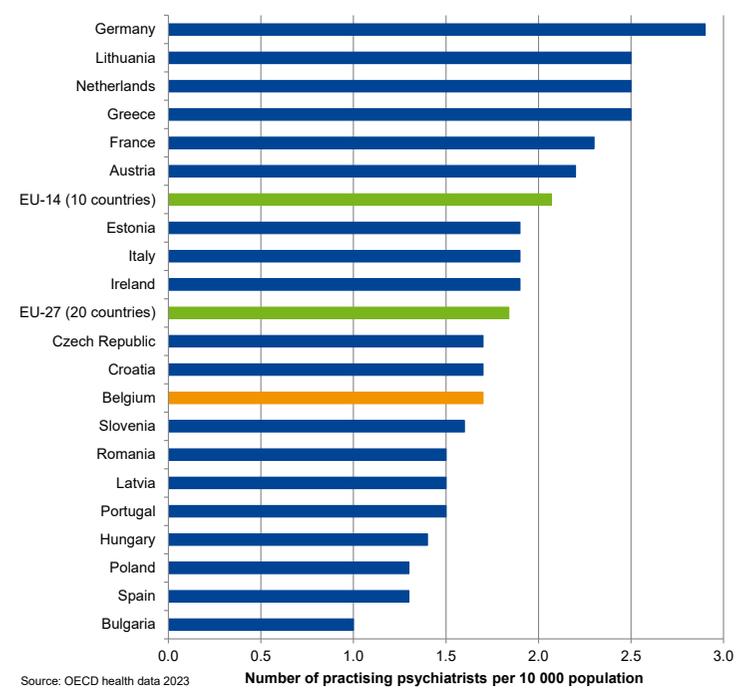
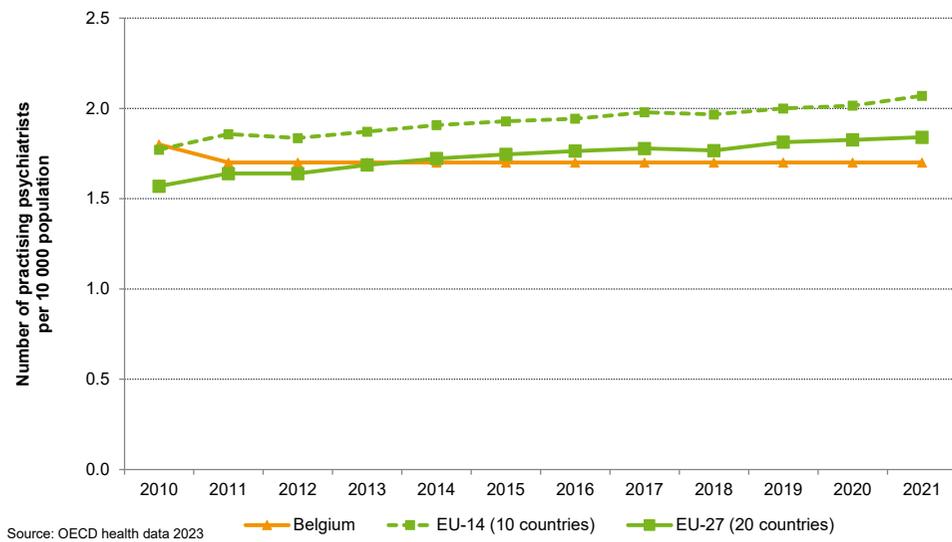
The role of psychiatrists and other mental health service providers (e.g. psychologists) varies across countries. An estimation on which types of care providers are consulted per country can be found in Eurobarometer.^{2,3}

Data from OECD show an increase in the density of practising psychiatrists in EU-27 and EU-14 countries over the period 2010-2021 (Figure 4). In 2021, the density of practising psychiatrists in Belgium (1.74 per 10 000) was lower than the EU-14 (2.07 per 1000) and EU-27 (1.84 per 10 000) averages.

No impact of the COVID-19 pandemic



Figure 4 – Number of practising psychiatrists per 10 000 pop: international comparison (2010-2021)





Key points

- The density of practising psychiatrists was relatively stable between 2011 (1.69 per 10 000 pop.) and 2021 (1.74 per 10 000 pop.).
- The density of psychiatrists in 2021 is higher in Brussels (3.30 per 10 000 pop.), compared with Flanders (1.50 per 10 000 pop.) and Wallonia (1.64 per 10 000 pop.); however, the region is based on the home address of the psychiatrists, giving little information on the actual workplace.
- Compared to the EU-27 and EU-14 countries that report the number of practising psychiatrists to the OECD health data, Belgium has a density of practising psychiatrists below the EU-14 and EU-27 averages in 2021 (2.07 and 1.84 per 10 000 pop., respectively).

References

1. OECD. OECD Health Statistics 2021 [Web page]. [cited 5 May 2023]. Available from: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?ThemeTreeId=9>
2. OECD. Making Mental Health Count , the social and economical costs of neglecting mental healthcare. OECD Publishing; 2014. OECD Health Policy Studies
3. OECD. Health at a glance 2011. 2011. OECD Health Policy Studies