



## 12.5. Supply of healthcare professionals: number of practicing geriatricians (ELD-6)

### 12.5.1. Documentation sheet

<b>Description</b>	Number of practicing geriatricians per 10 000 population
<b>Calculation</b>	Numerator: Number of practising geriatricians x 10 000 Denominator: Total Belgian population
<b>Rationale</b>	There is a shortage of geriatricians in our country. The High Council for physicians-specialists and general practitioners has worked on a reform of the studies for specialists in internal medicine. The reformed study trajectory of six years starts with a joint trajectory of 3 years in which every student also acquires experience in geriatrics. Only after these 3 years, a definite choice for subspecialties has to be made. It is hoped that this new approach will motivate more physicians to choose for geriatrics. Furthermore, more RIZIV – INAMI codes were created to improve the remuneration of geriatricians. This indicator is used to monitor the evolution of the geriatric medical workforce, considering that even more geriatricians will be needed in the future because of the ageing population.
<b>Data source</b>	RIZIV – INAMI
<b>Technical definition</b>	
<b>International comparability</b>	No OECD data are available. Two data sources were detected in the literature: - Results for G-7 countries (Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, USA, France, UK) in a systematic review published in 2017. <sup>1</sup> - Results of a survey on the status of geriatrics in 22 countries published in 2018. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Dimension</b>	Care for the elderly; Accessibility; Sustainability

### 12.5.2. Results

#### Belgian data

RIZIV – INAMI data show that in 2015 318 geriatricians were entitled to perform activities. In 2016 331 geriatricians were entitled to perform activities. This is an increase by 13 in geriatricians compared to 2015. However, in its formal advice of 2016, the Planning commission for medical supply advises a yearly quota of 29 students to get admission to the education for a title of geriatrician (16 in the Flemish Community, 13 in the French Community).<sup>3</sup> The observed increase of 13 therefore cannot be considered as sufficient.



Table 116 – Number of geriatricians RIZIV – INAMI data 2015-2016

YEAR	N (entitled to perform activities)	N (practising)	N ETP	% ETP Dutch speaking*	% ETP French speaking*	% ETP German speaking*	N ETP Dutch speaking*	N ETP French speaking*
2009	246	237	166,35	65%	35%	0%	108,13	58,22
2010	308	262	176,67	64%	36%	0%	113,07	63,60
2011	326	276	184,85	64%	36%	0%	118,30	66,55
2012	290	265	196,41	66%	34%	0%	129,63	66,78
2013	297	274	200,93	64%	36%	0%	128,60	72,33
2014	306	279	202,1	63%	37%	0%	127,32	74,78
2015	318	289	215,12	62%	38%	0%	133,37	81,75
2016	331	296	213,31	63%	37%	0%	134,39	78,92

Source: RIZIV – INAMI ; \* Based on preferred communication language with RIZIV-INAMI

### International comparison

In the G-7 countries, rates for number of geriatricians per 10 000 population 65 and over range from 0.4 in Canada up to 2.4 in the UK. Compared to G-7 countries, Belgium has the lowest geriatrician workforce with 0.3 per 10 000 population aged over 65.<sup>1</sup>

Another recent publication reported on the status of geriatrics in 22 countries. According to this publication, the size of the population over 80 per geriatrician varies with a median of 1 500 (in Switzerland) and with low numbers of 450 (in Austria) and 820 (in Iceland) rising to 5 000 (in Lithuania) and 25 000 (in Turkey).<sup>2</sup> Note however that these data are not based on official sources but on a small survey filled out by individual geriatricians; therefore results could be flawed and have to be interpreted with caution.

### Key points

- **There was a slight increase in number of geriatricians entitled to perform activities from 2015 to 2016. The number increased by 13, from 318 in 2015 to 331 in 2016. However, this increase was lower than the advised yearly increase of 29 by the Planning commission for medical supply.**

### References

1. Morley J, Arai H, Cao L, Dong B, Merchant R, Vellas B, et al. Integrated Care: Enhancing the Role of the Primary Health Care Professional in Preventing Functional Decline: A Systematic Review. Journal of the American Medical Directors Association. 2017;18(6):489-94.
2. Pitkälä KH, Martin FC, Maggi S, Jyväkorpi SK, Strandberg TE. Status of Geriatrics in 22 Countries. J Nutr Health Aging. 2018;22(627).
3. Planningscommissie-Medisch aanbod. Formeel advies 2016-02 van de Planningscommissie-Medisch aanbod. 2016. Available from: [https://overlegorganen.gezondheid.belgie.be/sites/default/files/documents/avis\\_medecin\\_signe-advies\\_arts\\_aanteken.pdf](https://overlegorganen.gezondheid.belgie.be/sites/default/files/documents/avis_medecin_signe-advies_arts_aanteken.pdf)