



8.6. Proportion of practising physicians aged 55 years and over (S-7) and proportion of general practitioner aged 55 years and over (S-15)

8.6.1. Documentation sheet

Description	S-7: Proportion of practising physicians aged 55 years and over (% of total practising physicians) S-15: Proportion of practising general practitioners (GPs) aged 55 years and over (% of total practising GPs)
Calculation	S-7: Numerator: number of practising physicians aged 55 years and over Denominator: total number of practising physicians S-15: Numerator: number of practising GP aged 55 years and over Denominator: total number of practising GP
Rationale	Aside the overall number of doctors, the distribution of medical workforce by age category, gender and specialisation have also important implications on the current and future supply of medical services. Since many years, physicians ageing in OECD countries has raised concerns about the insufficient recruitment to replace the actual workforce who will retire within 10 years. Although there is evidence that retirement of doctors often only occurs gradually and that their retirement age is increasing. Moreover, there are also concerns the growing imbalance number of doctors preferring greater specialisation instead of general medicine and access to primary care for all the population. ¹ The proportion of practising physicians (and GPs) aged 55 years and over gives a rough estimation of the share of physicians that will retire within 10 years (although a significant number of doctors continues to practise after 65 years old). ¹ This indicator should be analysed together with the current number of practising physicians, and the number of medical graduates (input). At the European level, there is currently a “Joint action on health workforce planning and forecasting”. ^{II} The objective of this platform is to facilitate collaboration and exchange between Member states in order to better prepare the future of the health care workforce. This will support Member states in their capacity to take effective and sustainable measures. Also, various tools will be developed to enable Member states to implement health care workforce planning and/or to enhance the current planning processes.
Data source	RIZIV – INAMI (annual statistics)
Results source	OECD Health statistics ¹
Technical definitions	All practising physicians (and GPs) are included, even those with very low volume of activity. A care provider is considered to be practising (RIZIV – INAMI: “profiles”) if he/she provided more than 1 clinical service (i.e. consultations, visits, technical acts, but not prescriptions) during a given year.

^{II} <http://healthworkforce.eu/>



	This information will also be available by specific speciality in the PlanCad reports for physicians (published by the Federal Public Service Public Health), in addition with the computation of the FTE (full time equivalent) by age and speciality. The publication of the PlanCAD is planned for 2019-2020.
International comparability	<p>This is an OECD indicator.</p> <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, researches, etc) and physicians licensed to practise (i.e. having the required diploma).</p> <p>Limitation: OECD countries use different methodologies to calculate the same indicator (such as different levels of activity).</p>
Related indicators	<p>Number of practising physicians</p> <p>Number of medical graduates</p>

8.6.2. Results

Number of practising physicians and practicing GPs per age group

The number of practising physicians increased over the time from 29 022 in 2000 to 34 834 in 2016 (see table and Table 75). Table and Table 75 shows the number of practising physicians by age category. Even if the number of physicians is increasing over the time, we observed that physicians are getting older and older (see Figure 108 and Table 76). In 2016, 15 637 physicians were aged over 55 years instead of 6 985 in 2000 (see Table 76). They represented almost half of Belgian physicians (44.9%) whereas only one quarter in 2000 (24%, see Table 75). Most of the physicians aged over 55 years old are men (Table 76).

In 2015, the proportion of practising physicians aged 55 years old and over was higher for French-speaking physicians than for Dutch-speaking physicians (47.8 % and 41.3% respectively, based on the linguistic role of the physician. This difference is yet higher for GPs, i.e. 58.6% and 51.1% respectively.


Table 74 – Number of practising physicians by age category (2000-2013)

Year (OECD)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total practising physicians	29 022	29 325	29 553	29 663	29 903	30 098	30 450	30 878	31 280	31 578	31 815	32 182	32 583	32 999
under 35 years old	3 255 (11.2%)	3 344	3 198	3 100	2 978	2 765	2 628	2 596	2 617	2 595	2 416	2 420	2 356	2 457
35-44 years old	9 339 (32.2%)	9 001	8 736	8 300	8 085	7 978	7 907	7 968	7 843	7 770	7 867	7 871	7 898	7 946
45-54 years old	9 443 (32.5%)	9 679	9 934	10 124	10 133	10 105	9 996	9 798	9 618	9 391	9 108	8 850	8 641	8 337
55-64 years old	4 285 (14.8%)	4 593	4 923	5 331	5 828	6 327	6 853	7 322	7 831	8 309	8 691	8 974	9 240	9 446
65-74 years old	2 700 (9.3%)	2 708	2 762	2 808	2 879	2 923	3 066	3 194	3 371	2 681	2 861	2 011	2 012	2 013
75 years old and over										832	872	32 182	32 583	32 999

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018

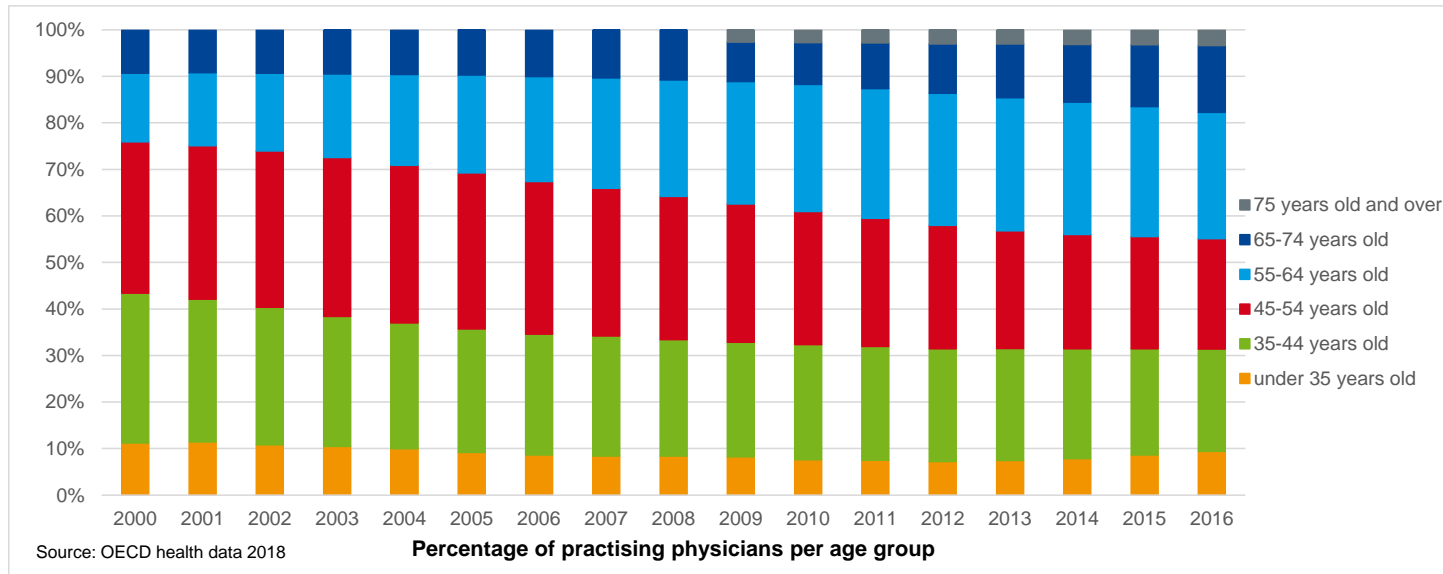
Table 75 – Number of practising physicians by age category (2014-2016)

Year (OECD)	2014	2015	2016
Total practising physicians	33 353	34 020	34 834
under 35 years old	2 615	2 926	3 275 (9.4%)
35-44 years old	7 878	7 781	7 664 (22%)
45-54 years old	8 180	8 192	8 258 (23.7%)
55-64 years old	9 487	9 502	9 457 (27.2%)
65-74 years old	4 137	4 527	4 996 (14.3%)
75 years old and over	1 056	1 092	1 184 (3.4%)

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018



Figure 108 – Percentage of practising physicians by age category (2000-2016)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018

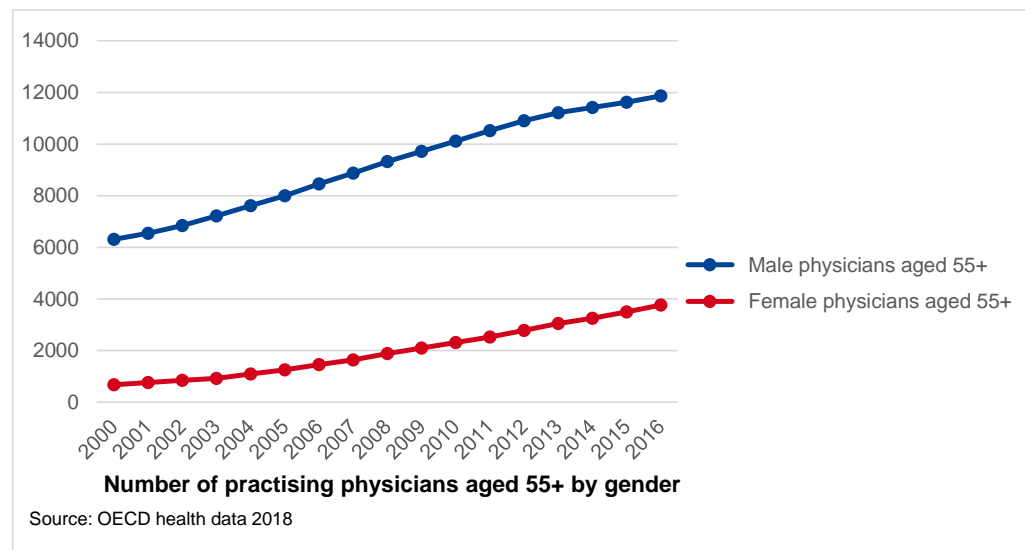
Table 76 – Number of practising physicians aged 55+ by gender (2000-2016)

Year (OECD)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Male physicians aged 55+	6 308	6 541	6 838	7 216	7 610	7 994	8 458	8 878	9 321	9 719	10 115	10 517	10 906	11 214	11 423	11 624	11 870
Female physicians aged 55+	677	760	847	923	1 097	1 256	1 461	1 638	1 881	2 103	2 309	2 524	2 782	3 045	3 257	3 497	3 767
Total practising physicians aged 55+	6 985	7 301	7 685	8 139	8 707	9 250	9 919	10 516	11 202	11 822	12 424	13 041	13 688	14 259	14 680	15 121	15 637

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018



Figure 109 – Evolution of the number of practising physicians aged 55 years and over by gender (2000-2016)



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018

International comparison

This evolution is observed in all other European countries (Figure 110) and corresponds to the ageing of population, but Belgium has one of the highest share of physicians aged 55 years old and over (compared to 12 countries).

The proportion of physicians aged 55 years and over in Belgium is above the EU-12 average of 34.5%.

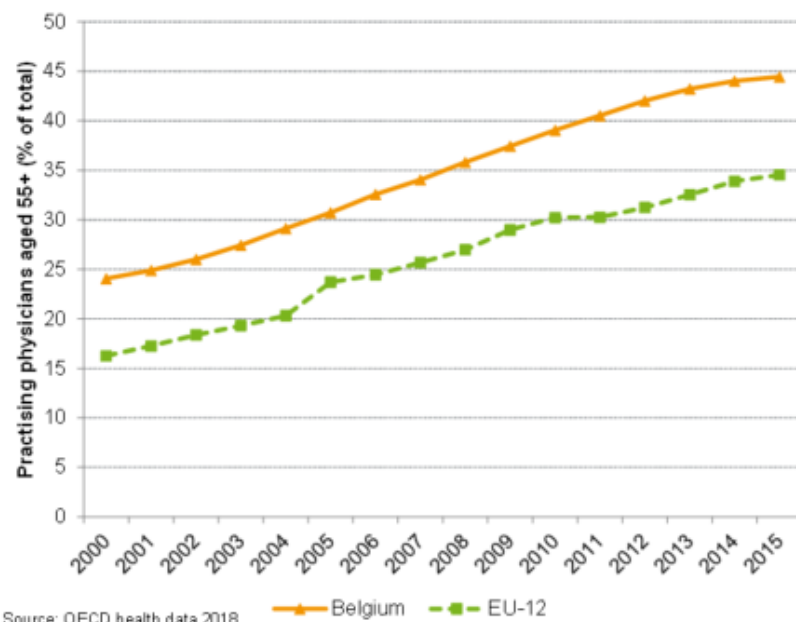
Table 77 – Share of practising physicians aged 55 years and over in Belgium (2000-2016)

Year (OECD)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Practising physicians aged 55+	24.1%	24.9%	26.0%	27.4%	29.1%	30.7%	32.6%	34.1%	35.8%	37.4%	39.1%	40.5%	42.0%	43.2%	44.0%	44.4%	44.9%

Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018



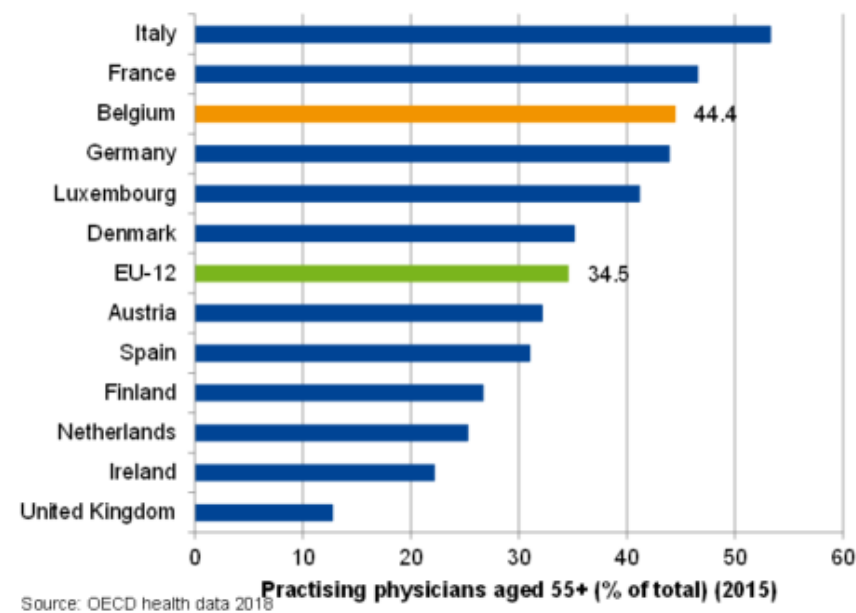
Figure 110 – Share of practising physicians aged 55 years and older: international comparison (2000-2015)^{mm}



Source: OECD Health Statistics 2018

Key points

- In 2016, 44.9% practising physicians were aged from 55 years old and over in Belgium, compared to 24.1% in 2000. In 2016, the percentage of practising GPs aged 55 years old and over was 52.5%.
- The evolution is observed in all European countries, but Belgium has one of the highest share of physicians above 55 years and older among 12 European countries.



References

1. OECD. Health at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators. Paris: 2017. Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2017-en

^{mm} Because of the lack of data from other European countries, 2015 is taken as the reference in the calculation.