

Healthcare activities statistics - consultations

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in July 2024.
Planned article update: August 2025.*

Highlights

" On average, people in Italy made 9.7 in-person consultations of medical doctors during 2022, the highest average among the EU countries, just ahead of the averages for people in Germany, the Netherlands and Hungary (9.5 or 9.6 consultations). "

" People in the Netherlands made an average of 3.3 visits to dentists during 2022, by far the highest rate among the EU countries. "

" People in Romania and Cyprus made an average of less than 0.5 visits to dentists during 2022, the lowest ratio among the EU countries. "

This article presents an overview of [European Union \(EU\)](#) statistics related to consultations of medical professionals, in particular the consultation of doctors and dentists. This article is 1 of a set of statistical articles concerning healthcare activities in the EU which forms part of an online publication on [Health in the European Union – facts and figures](#) .

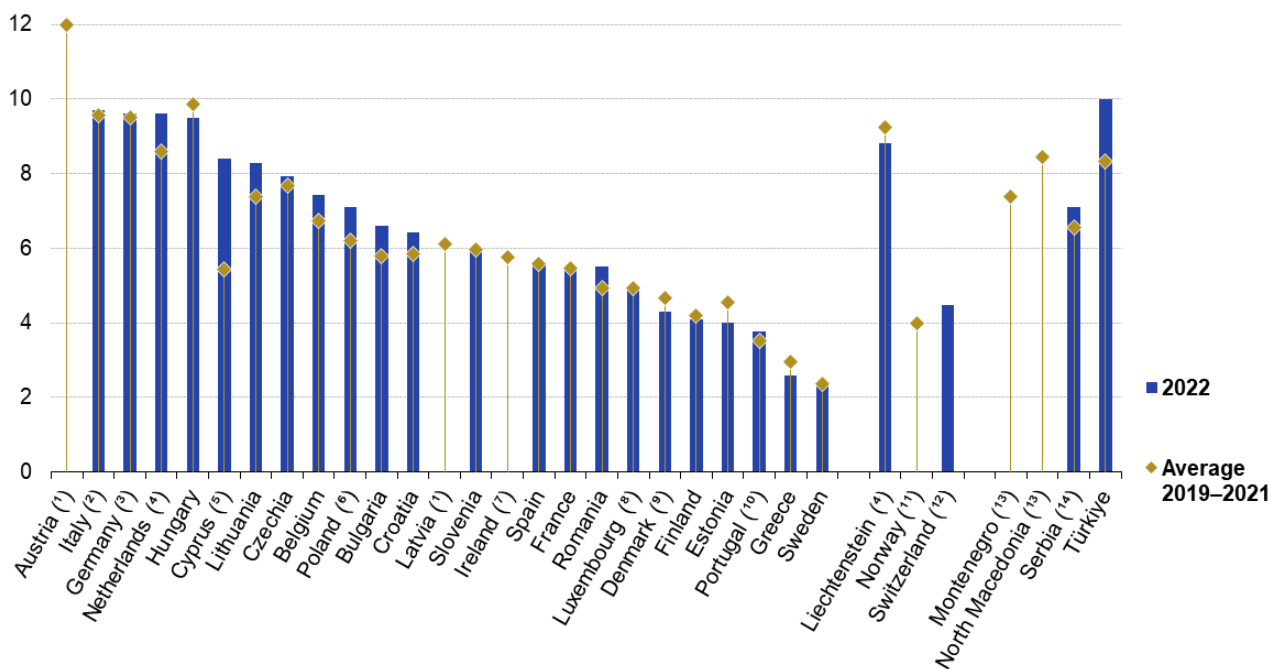
Consultations of doctors

Statistics on the average number of consultations with a [physician](#) per inhabitant include consultations at the physician's office, in the patient's home, or in out-patient departments of hospitals or ambulatory health care centres. It also includes consultations with both generalist and specialist medical practitioners. These figures exclude consultations/visits during treatment as part of in-patient or day care patient care in a hospital or similar institution. In general, they also exclude remote consultations, such as by telephone (teleconsultations).

Among EU countries, the frequency of physician consultations varies greatly. In Sweden and Greece, there were, on average, fewer than 3.0 consultations of a physician per inhabitant during 2022. The average number of consultations generally ranged between 3.8 and 8.4 in most EU countries (see Figure 1 for availability). The highest frequencies for consultations of physicians during 2022 were recorded in Italy (9.7 per inhabitant), Germany (9.6; only including cases according to reimbursement regulations), the Netherlands (9.6; including telephone consultations) and Hungary (9.5). Older data for Austria, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, also indicate a high frequency (12.0 in 2019).

Compared with the average for 2019 to 2021, the average number of consultations decreased in 2022 in 6 of the 22 EU countries for which data are available (see Figure 1 for data availability): Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Finland and Sweden. In 4 other EU countries, there was no change. In the remaining 12 EU countries, the average number increased. The largest increase in absolute terms was recorded for Cyprus, although there is an improvement in coverage, and the inclusion of additional data sources from 2020. After Cyprus, the largest increase was in the Netherlands, up 1.0 from 8.6 to 9.6 consultations per inhabitant.

Consultation of a medical doctor, average 2019–2021 and 2022 (average number of consultations per inhabitant)



Note: Malta and Slovakia, not available.

(1) Average 2019–2021: 2019 only. 2022: not available.

(2) Estimates.

(3) Only including cases of physician treatments according to reimbursement regulations.

(4) Also including telephone consultations.

(5) 2019: limited to out-patient consultations of hospitals and health centres of the public sector during part of the year. 2020–2022: only including hospitals and health centres of the public sector and consultations of physicians practising in the private sector under the General Health Scheme.

(6) Average 2019–2021: break in series.

(7) Also including telephone consultations. Persons aged 15 years or over only. Estimate. Average 2019–2021: 2019 only. 2022: not available.

(8) 2022: provisional.

(9) Excluding visits to hospital out-patient departments.

(10) Excluding medical consultations in a patient's home by hospitals and consultations at a physician's office.

(11) 2022: not available. Definition differs.

(12) Average 2019–2021: not available.

(13) 2022: not available.

(14) Only including consultations of physicians in institutions under the Ministry of Health. Excluding the private health sector.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_hc_phys2)

eurostat

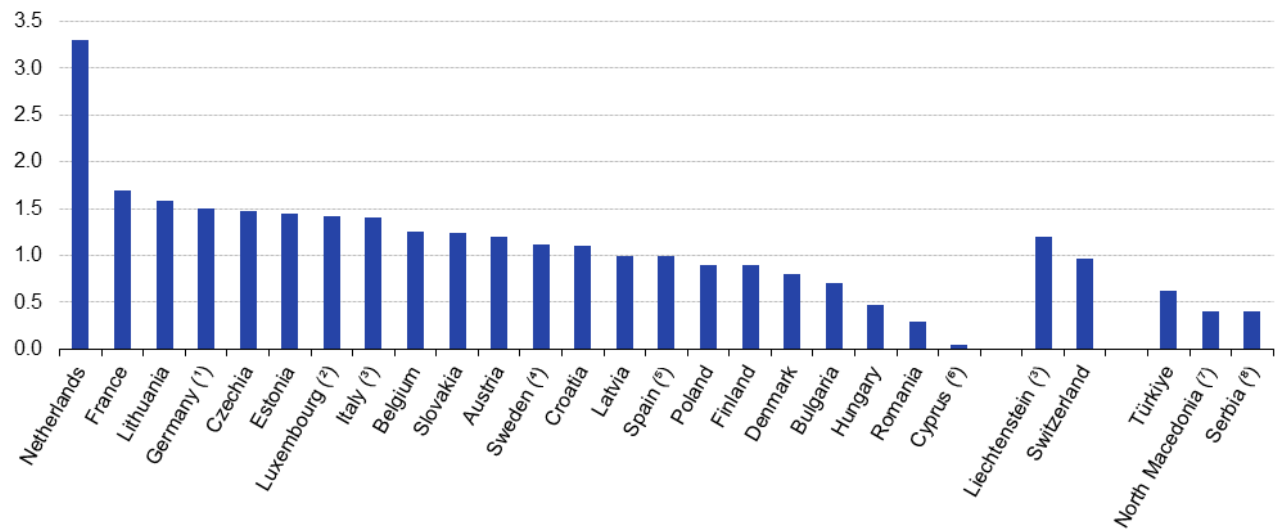
Figure 1: Consultation of a medical doctor, average 2019–21 and 2022 (average number of consultations per inhabitant) Source: Eurostat (hlth_hc_phys2)

Consultations of dentists

In 2022, the highest average number of consultations of dentists was in the Netherlands

The average number of consultations of dentists was far lower than the average number of consultations of medical doctors, as can be seen by comparing the scales of Figures 1 with Figures 2. In Cyprus (incomplete coverage), Romania and Hungary, there were, on average less than 0.5 consultations of a dentist per inhabitant during 2022. Most other EU countries reported averages between 0.7 and 1.7 consultations. The Netherlands was well above this range, with an average of 3.3 consultations per inhabitant.

Consultation of a dentist, 2022 (average number of consultations per inhabitant)



Note: Ireland, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia, not available.

⁽¹⁾ Only including cases of dental treatments according to reimbursement regulations.

⁽²⁾ Provisional.

⁽³⁾ Estimate.

⁽⁴⁾ Persons aged 24 years or over. Consultations registered in the state dental care insurance.

⁽⁵⁾ 2020.

⁽⁶⁾ Only including the public sector. Excluding consultations with maxillofacial surgeons.

⁽⁷⁾ 2021.

⁽⁸⁾ Only including consultations of dentists in institutions under the Ministry of Health. Excluding the private health sector.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth_hc_dent)

eurostat

Figure 2: Consultation of a dentist, 2022 (average number of consultations per inhabitant) Source: Eurostat (hlth_hc_dent)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Healthcare activities – consultations: tables and figures](#)

Data sources

This article presents data on consultations of medical professionals mainly from administrative data.

Healthcare resources and activities

Statistics on healthcare resources and healthcare activities (such as information on consultations of doctors and dentists) are documented in this [background article](#) which provides information on the scope of the data, its legal basis, the methodology employed, as well as related concepts and definitions. Consultations of doctors generally exclude telephone contacts, visits for prescribed laboratory tests, or visits to perform prescribed and scheduled treatment procedures (such as injections and physiotherapy). Consultations of dentists include consultations of dental specialists, such as orthodontists.

For country specific notes on these data collections, please refer to the annexes at the end of the national metadata reports accessible from links at the beginning of the [European metadata report](#).

The [Healthcare non-expenditure statistics manual](#) provides an overview of the classifications, both for mandatory variables and variables provided on a voluntary basis.

Context

Medical consultations are usually held in a doctor's surgery / dentist's practice or another place for the provision of ambulatory care, including out-patient care in hospitals, although medical professionals may also travel to patients, for example, in the case of an accident or emergency, or a home visit. Consultations may also be remote, for example by telephone, but such consultations should not be included in the data presented here; when it is known that they have been included, such cases are footnoted in this article.

The frequency of consulting a particular type of medical professional may be influenced by the way doctors and other professionals are paid, the range of services offered by other professionals (for example, some services may be provided by both nurses and doctors), and the division of work between generalist and specialist practitioners.

From the patient's perspective, the time and monetary cost of a consultation may be factors which influence their decision to seek a consultation, alongside their perception as to their own needs for professional assistance. The frequency of consultations is also related to socio-demographic factors, such as age and sex.

Explore further

Other articles

Online publications

- [Health in the European Union – facts and figures](#)
- [Disability statistics](#)

Healthcare resources

- [Physicians](#)
- [Healthcare personnel statistics - nursing and caring professionals](#)
- [Dentists, pharmacists and physiotherapists](#)
- [Healthcare resource statistics - beds](#)
- [Healthcare resource statistics - technical resources and medical technology](#)

Healthcare activities

- [Hospital discharges and length of stay](#)
- [Medicine use](#)
- [Cancer screening statistics](#)
- [Surgical operations and procedures](#)
- [Unmet needs for medical care](#)

Methodology

- [Healthcare non-expenditure](#)

General health statistics articles

- [Health_statistics_introduced](#)
- [Regional health statistics](#)

Database

- [Health \(hlth\)](#), see

Health care (hlth_care)

 Consultations (hlth_consult)

 Consultation of a dentist per inhabitant (hlth_hc_dent)

 Consultation of a medical doctor per inhabitant (hlth_hc_phys2)

Thematic section

- [Health](#)

Methodology

- [Health care resources](#) (ESMS metadata file – hlth_res_esms)

External links

- [European Commission – Public health](#) , see
- [Joint OECD / European Commission report – Health at a Glance: Europe](#)
- [OECD – The future of health systems](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) , see
 - [WHO – Global Health Observatory \(GHO\)](#)
 - [WHO – Health system governance](#)