

Health status

Gender differences in life expectancy have decreased by one year since 2000, up to two years in some regions in Italy, New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland.

Good health is an important determinant of quality of life and also contributes to other well-being dimensions such as being able to pursue education, having a job, and engaging in economic activities. In 80% of OECD regions, life expectancy at birth, a common measure of health outcomes, exceeded 81 years in 2016. Average life expectancy has risen by almost four years since 2000 and now stands at around 82 years. Within OECD countries, regional disparities in life expectancy in this same period remained generally stable, with the exceptions of Finland, Greece and Turkey, where the residents of the regions with the lowest longevity in 2000 increased their life expectancy by two years more than the regions where residents had the highest life expectancy. At the opposite end of the spectrum, in Hungary, Belgium, Korea and the Czech Republic, life expectancy improved more rapidly in the healthiest region than in the remaining ones (Figure 2.12).

Relatively low levels of life expectancy (below 75 years) are found in 17 OECD regions, which include ten Mexican States, four Latvian regions, Northern Hungary and Nunavut (Canada). While difference in life expectancy among OECD countries can be up to eight years (between Japan and Mexico), within countries such difference can reach 11 years between British Columbia and Nunavut in Canada, and six years between Hawaii and Mississippi in the United States (Figure 2.12).

Women live longer than men in all regions, with an average difference of more than five years. In Pieriga (Latvia), Southern Estonia (Estonia) and Lublin Province (Poland) gender differences in life expectancy are the largest, exceeding nine years. In non-OECD regions like Mari El Republic (Russian Federation) and Vilnius county (Lithuania), women live more than 12 years longer than men (Figure 2.13). However, the gender differences in life expectancy has decreased in most countries between 2000-16, with men improving their life expectancy faster, reducing the gender gap by more than two years in some regions like West Coast (New Zealand), Ticino (Switzerland), Aosta Valley (Italy), Northern Norway and Madeira (Portugal).

Regions with the highest gender gap in life expectancy in 2000 had different profiles. These regions have relatively low life expectancies for both sexes compared to the national average in seven out of thirty countries, like Northern Territory (Australia), Wallonia (Belgium), Scotland (United Kingdom), Aosta Valley (Italy), Guerrero (Mexico), Madeira

(Portugal), and Eastern Slovenia. The life expectancy gap in other countries was driven by men who had shorter lives, with the exception of four regions, where women had noticeably longer lives compared to their country average, like Los Ríos (Chile), Epirus (Greece), Jeju (Kora) and Eastern Black Sea (Turkey) (Figure 2.13). The progress in longevity is due to advances in medicine, which have first benefited people with potentially shorter lives. Interestingly, the majority of the regions that had a high gender gap in life expectancy have seen an improvement in the density of physicians in their region relative to their country.

Definition

Life expectancy at birth measures the number of years a new born can expect to live, if death rates in each age group stay the same during her or his lifetime.

Source

OECD (2018), OECD Regional Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en>.

See Annex B for data sources and country-related metadata. United States: Life Expectancy, Measure of America, www.measureofamerica.org.

Reference years and territorial level

2016; TL2. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, TL3.

Further information

OECD Regional Well-Being: www.oecdregionalwellbeing.org.

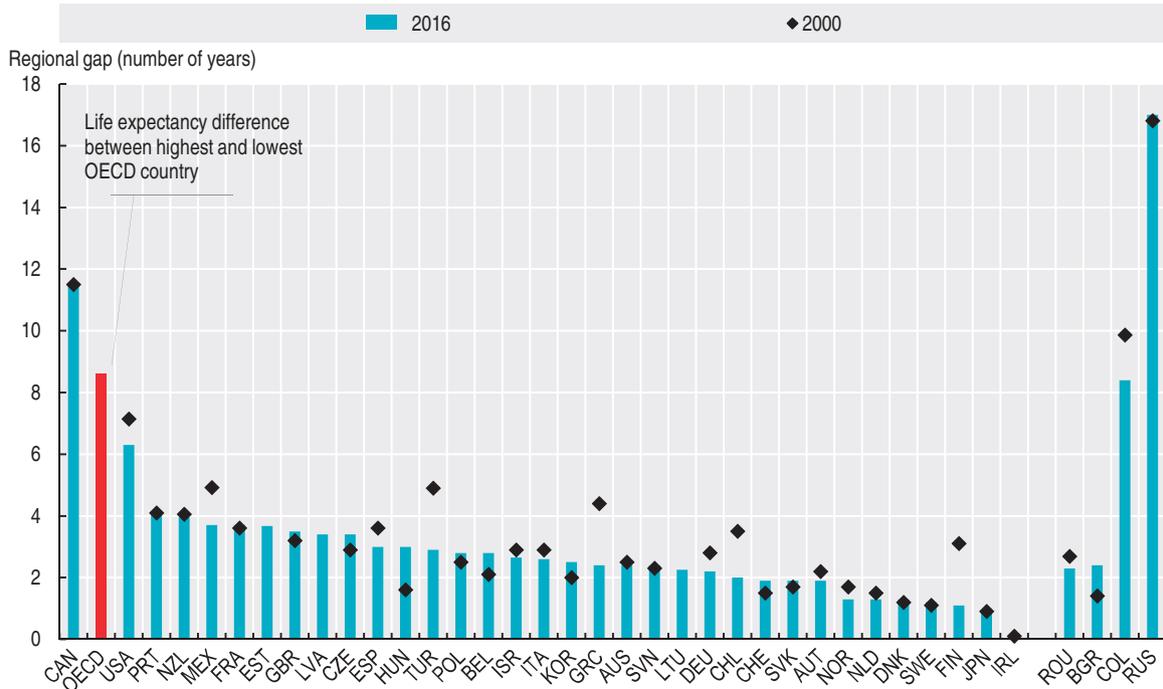
Figure notes

2.12 and 2.13: 2016 data or latest available year: Australia, Canada and Korea, 2014; Japan, 2010. First year 2000, or first available year: Netherlands and New Zealand, 2001; Slovenia, 2005; Australia, 2010; Turkey, 2011. First year values are not presented for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania due to lack of long historical time series. No regional data are available for Iceland.

2.13: Each observation (point) represents a TL2 region of the countries shown in the vertical axis.

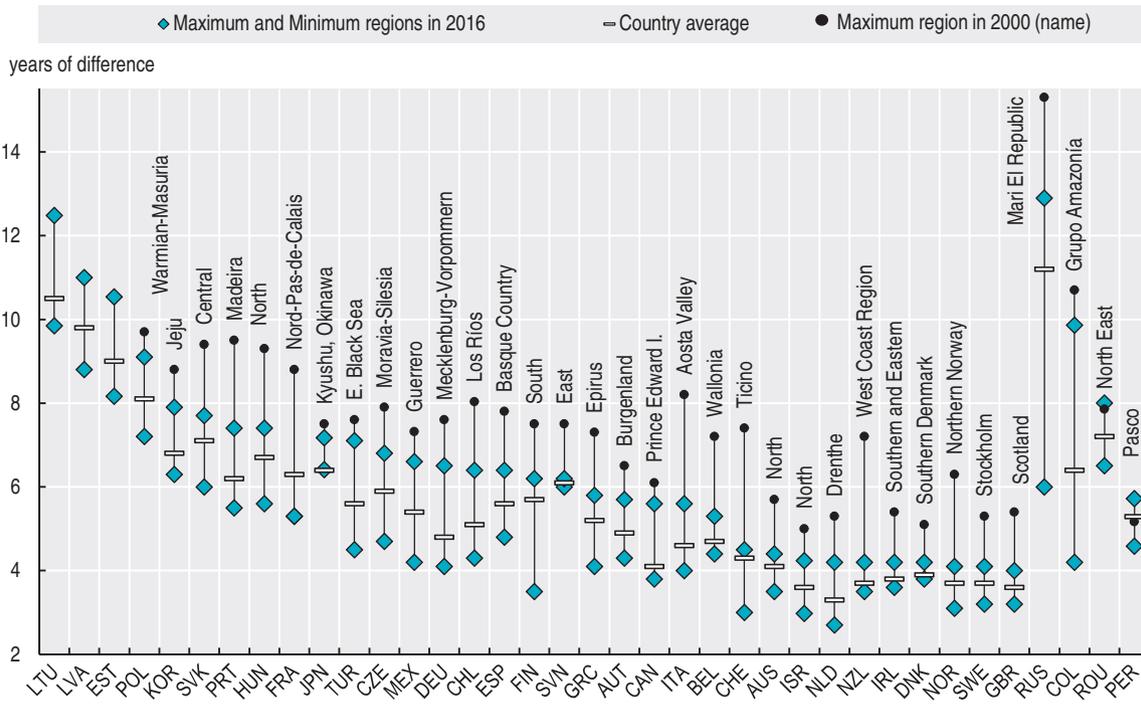
2.12. Regional differences in life expectancy at birth, 2000 and 2016

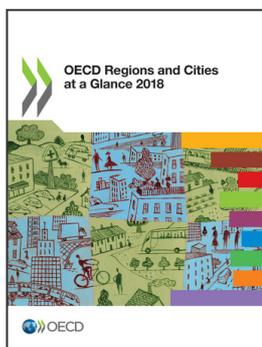
Life expectancy of total population, large regions (TL2)



2.13. Regional gender gap in life expectancy at birth (female-male), 2016

Gender gap regional disparity in 2016 and region with highest gap in 2000 (TL)





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