
Health Survey of Catalunya

Health status, health-related behaviours and use of health services in Catalunya

Main results ESCA 2017. Executive summary

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ESCA

Enquesta de salut de Catalunya



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Summary

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Main results

1. Health status

- Eight out of ten people among the **general population** have a **positive self-perceived health** (83.6% men and 77.9% women). This perception is worse among older people (especially those over 45) as well as among people from disadvantaged social classes (77.9% for class III and 88.5% for class I) and people with lower educational levels (59.6% among those with primary education or no education and 88.4% among people with university studies). In general and for each one of these variables, women have worse self-perceived health than men. The population of the Girona Health Region (84.6%) has a higher percentage of good perceived health status than Catalunya (80.7%). From 1994 to 2012, the percentage of people reporting a positive self-perceived health increased, after which it has remained stable among men and women.
- One-fourth of **people aged 15 and over** have **high blood pressure** (24%), with no differences between men and women. The proportion is higher in older groups than among the young (especially those 65 and older), among people from disadvantaged social classes (26.4% in class III and 16.8% in class I) and those with a lower level of education (44.4% of those with primary or no studies and 14.4% with university studies). No differences were found between health regions. The prevalence of high blood pressure shows an increasing trend from 1994 to 2013, after which it has remained stable.
- 8.5% of **people aged 15 and over** suffer from **diabetes**. The proportion is higher among older groups (25.6% among people aged 75 and over), among people from disadvantaged social classes (9.7% in class III and 4.8% in class I, respectively) as well as people with lower educational levels (18.6% people with primary or no education and 3.2% people with university studies). No differences were found between health regions. Camp de Tarragona (22.5%) and Catalunya Central (21.5%) health regions have prevalence above Catalunya. The prevalence of diabetes has remained stable since 2010.
- Half of the **population aged 18 to 74** have **excess body weight** (overweight and obesity), with 58.1% of men and 40.5% of women. A total of 34.5% of these people are **overweight** (42.3% men and 26.5% women) and 14.9% are **obese** (15.8% men and 13.9% women). The prevalence of overweight increases with age. In both men and women, the prevalence of having excess body weight (being either overweight or obese) is higher among people from the most disadvantaged social groups and people with primary or no education. The Terres de l'Ebre Health Region has a higher percentage of population with excess body weight (61.4%) and a prevalence of being overweight (41.5%) than Catalunya in general (49.3% and 34.5%, respectively). Since 2006, the prevalence of obesity has been growing, while the percentage of overweight people has remained steady. Among the **population aged 6 to 12 years**, 36.3% have **excess body weight** (39.1% boys and 33.2% girls), with 24.8% being **overweight** and 11.5% **obese**. Being overweight is equally common among boys and girls (24.5% and 25.2%,

respectively), but obesity is higher among boys (14.6%) than girls (8%). Moreover, the prevalence of obesity is higher among those from disadvantaged social classes (15.5% in class III and 5.1% in class I). No differences were found between health regions. In recent years, the prevalence of overweight children has been increasing in both sexes, while obesity has decreased among both boys and girls.

- 6.2% of **people aged 15 and over** suffer from major **depression or severe major depression** (3.6% men and 8.8% women). This percentage increases in older people (especially those aged 75 and over, reaching 9%), and is higher among people from disadvantaged social classes (7.2% in class III and 3.5% in class I) and people with the lowest educational level (9.4% among those with primary or no studies and 4.3% of those with university studies). There are no results available regarding differences between health regions or trends, due to the data measuring instrument has been included at first time in 2017.
- 5.1% of the **population aged 4 to 14 years** (5.6% boys and 4.5% girls) are **at risk of developing a mental disorder**. No differences were found between the sexes, social class, mother's educational level or health region. Among this population, the risk of developing a mental disorder has been increasing since 2014.
- 37.7% of **people aged 15 years and over** suffer from a **long-term condition or chronic illness or health problem** (34.6% men and 40.6% women). This prevalence grows according to age group (reaching 65% in people aged 65 years and over), and increases among people from disadvantaged social classes (over 39% among class II and class III) as well as those with lower educational levels (53% among those with primary or no education and 29% among those with university studies). The Lleida Health Region has a lower percentage of people with a long-term condition (30.5%) than Catalunya. The proportion of people suffering from a chronic condition rose between 2010 and 2013, after which it decreased slightly. The main long-term condition reported are those related to the musculoskeletal system (arthrosis, arthritis or rheumatism and chronic lower back, dorsal or cervical pain), and the circulatory system (high blood pressure and high cholesterol), as well as depression or anxiety and migraine or frequent headaches. Morbidity in men is firstly related to the circulatory system (high blood pressure and high cholesterol) followed by the musculoskeletal system (arthrosis, arthritis or rheumatism and chronic lower back, dorsal or cervical pain); while morbidity in women is related firstly to the musculoskeletal system (arthrosis, arthritis or rheumatism and lower back, dorsal or cervical pain) followed by the circulatory system (high blood pressure). Moreover, a higher percentage of women than men suffer from depression or anxiety, migraine or frequent headaches, anaemia and chronic allergies. Among the **population aged from 0 to 14 years**, 12.6% suffer from a **long-term or chronic condition** (15.2% boys and 9.9% girls). The most frequent problems are: recurrent bronchitis (11.3%), chronic skin problems (10.6%), recurrent otitis (8.5%), chronic allergies (6.6%) and enuresis (6.5%). Boys more frequently suffer from recurrent bronchitis than girls

(13.1% and 9.4% respectively), while girls suffer from chronic skin problems more frequently than boys (9.8% boys and 11.5% girls).

- 15.2% of **people aged over 15 years have limited ability to perform activities of daily living** due to a health problem (13.4% men and 17% women). This percentage is highest among people aged 75 and over (40.2%), people from the most disadvantaged social class (17.2% for class III and 9.6 for class I) and those with the lowest educational level (28.9% among those with primary or no education and 8.2% among those with university studies). The Girona (9.6%) and Alt Pirineu i Aran (10.3%) health regions have prevalence below Catalunya. Since 2010 this percentage had been falling, although an upturn was recorded in 2017 among both men and women.
- 14.5% of the **population over 15 years old** have a **permanent disability or impairment** (12.4% men and 16.5% women) and one in ten people **lacks personal autonomy** due to a health problem and requires assistance in order to carry out activities of daily living (7% men and 12.3% women). The prevalence among both sexes increases with age and is higher among people from the most disadvantaged social classes as well as people with lower educational levels. The Terres de l'Ebre Health Region has a prevalence of disability (19.8%) above Catalunya, while the Girona Health Region has a prevalence of people requiring help from others (6.9%) below Catalunya. The percentage of people with a disability or lack of personal autonomy is decreasing. Almost 3% of the **population under 15 years old** suffer from a **permanent disability or impairment** (3.2% boys and 1.9% girls). Among children whose mothers have primary or no education, this percentage rises to 3.8%. No differences were found between health regions. This indicator has fluctuated continuously throughout the period studied.
- 5.4% of the **population over 15 years old** have **deficient or poor social support** (4.9% men and 5.9% women), particularly people from 65 to 74 years old (9.7%). No differences were found between social classes or educational levels. There are no results available regarding differences between health regions or trends due to a change in the data measuring instrument in 2017.

2. Health-related behaviours

- The prevalence of **tobacco consumption** (daily and occasional) is 24% in **populations aged 15 years and over** (29.7% men and 18.5% women), and one in ten people is exposed to **second-hand smoke at home**. Tobacco consumption is higher in the youngest age groups, among people from disadvantaged social classes and those with a secondary education or lower. No differences in tobacco consumption were found between health regions, but the prevalence of exposure to second-hand smoke at home in the Camp de Tarragona Health Region is above Catalunya. From 1994 to 2017, tobacco consumption among the population fell but, in 2017, this trend was observed in women, while among men there was a slight increase, highlighting a greater difference between the sexes. The percentage of people exposed to second-hand smoke at home has been declining since 2006. 14.7% of **children aged 0 to 14 years** live with someone who smokes inside the home (14.3% boys and 15.2% girls). This exposure is more frequent among boys and girls from the most disadvantaged social class (17.6% in class III and 10% in class I) and those whose mothers have a low educational level (21.5% among those whose mothers have primary or no studies and 8.3% among those whose mothers have university studies). The Camp de Tarragona Health Region shows a percentage above Catalunya, while the Girona Health Region reports a lower percentage than Catalunya. Since 2010, the trend for exposure to second-hand smoke at home has been decreasing.
- The prevalence of **high-risk alcohol use** is 3.4% among the **population aged over 15 years** (5.4% men and 1.5% women) and it is higher among people between 15 and 44 years old (4.3%). No differences were found between social classes or educational levels. The Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region has a higher percentage (7%) than the rest of Catalunya. Since 1994, the prevalence of high-risk alcohol use has not shown a clear trend.
- 79.4% of the **population aged over 15 years sleep between 6 and 8 hours daily** (81.2% men and 77.7% women). This proportion decreases according to age (especially over 65 years old), and it is higher among people from more affluent social classes (87.8%) as well as people with university studies (87.3%). No differences were found between health regions. This indicator has remained more or less stable since 2002, although there was a slight increase two years ago. 76.4% of **children between 0 and 14 years old sleep at least 9 hours per day**. This proportion is higher among boys and girls from more advantage social classes, as well as those whose mothers have a higher educational level.
- Eight out of ten **people between 15 and 69 years old** maintain a **healthy level of physical activity** (82.8% in men and 78.5% in women). The percentage is higher among men from more advantage social classes (87.8%). The Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region has a population with a healthy level of physical activity (86%) higher than in Catalunya, while the Girona Health Region (76.2%) is lower than Catalunya. The prevalence of healthy levels of physical activity increased from 2010 to 2017, and has now levelled off. 31.2% of the **population aged 3 to 14** participate in **active leisure** activities, e.g. they spend at least one hour a day doing sport, or playing outside

(33.6% of boys and 28.7% of girls). No differences were found between social classes, mother's educational level or health regions. The upward trend observed from 2010 ended in 2015-2016, and has since been decreasing among both boys and girls.

- Regarding **mobility**, the most frequent type of transport used for daily commuting by men **aged 15 and over** is a car or motorcycle (50.6%). Among women, the percentages of vehicle use (37.1%) and walking (36%) are similar. In terms of age group, young adults use a car or motorcycle most often, while people over 65 years old tend to walk more. The use of **car safety equipment** (car seats, booster seats and seat belts) is 94.5% among **people from 0 to 14 years old**, with no differences found between the sexes, social classes, level of education or health region. This figure has increased slightly since 2015. **The most commonly used means of transport to go to school** among the **population aged 3 to 17 years** is walking (62.3%), followed by private car (28.1%), public transport (7.8%), and cycling (1.1%). Walking is most frequently used by boys and girls from disadvantaged social classes and those whose mother has no formal education or primary studies. The use of a vehicle is most frequent among people from advantage social classes and those whose mothers have university studies.
- 61.1% of the **population aged 15 years and over** follow the recommendations regarding the **Mediterranean diet** (56.6% men and 65.3% women). The prevalence of following a Mediterranean diet increases with age and is higher among people from the most advantaged social class (68.5%) as well as among people with university studies (68.5%). The Alt Pirineu i Aran (74.7%), Lleida (70.5%), Barcelona (67.6%) and Girona (66.2%) health regions all report a higher percentage than Catalunya. The trend in following a Mediterranean diet has been increasing since 2015. A third of the **population between 3 and 14 years old frequently consumes high-calorie products** (29.8% boys and 34.8% girls). This percentage is higher among those from disadvantaged social classes (36.6% in class III and 25.5% in class I) and those whose mothers have a lower educational level (48.3% among those whose mothers have primary or no studies and 26.3% among those whose mothers have university studies). The Girona Health Region (21.1%) has a lower percentage of children who frequently consume high-calorie products than Catalunya, while the Lleida Health Region (45.3%) reports a higher prevalence. Since 2014, there has been an increase in the percentage of children consuming high-calorie products.
- Nine out of ten **women between 50 and 69 years old** gets regular **mammograms** and almost eight out of ten **women between 25 and 64 years old** have a regular **smear test**. The percentage of women having regular smear tests is higher among women from the most advantaged social classes (87.8%) and lower among women with primary level or no studies (66.8%). No differences were found between health regions. The prevalence of mammograms and smear tests carried out on priority groups increased between 1994 and 2010, after which it has remained stable.

- 46.2% of the **population between 50 and 69 years old** have taken a **faecal occult blood test** for prevention purposes (47.6% men and 44.9% women). No differences were found between social classes and educational levels. This percentage is higher in the Lleida and Alt Pirineu i Aran health regions than Catalunya, and lower in the Camp de Tarragona and Barcelona health regions. This percentage remained stable between 2012 and 2015, after which it has risen sharply, probably due to the launch of the colorectal cancer early detection programme in the last trimester of 2015.
- 53.5% of the **population aged over 15 years** have their **blood pressure checked regularly** (52.5% men and 54.5% women) and 56.9% have their **cholesterol level tested regularly** (54.6% men and 59.1% women). Both preventive practices increase with age and are more frequent among people with primary or no education. The percentage of the population that regularly have their blood pressure checked is higher in the Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region than Catalunya. Regarding cholesterol testing, the Terres de l'Ebre and Camp de Tarragona health regions both have lower percentages than Catalunya. From 2010 to 2017 the trend remained stable for both preventive practices.
- 54.8% of the **population aged 5 to 14 years brushes their teeth at least twice per day** (52.1% boys and 57.7% girls). This figure is lower among boys and girls whose mothers have primary or no studies (39.2%). The Girona Health Region (44.3%) reports a percentage below total of Catalunya. The trend has remained stable during the period studied.

3. Use of health services and level of satisfaction

- 28% of the **general population** have **double health insurance coverage**, public and private (25.8% men and 30.1% women). This percentage decreases with age (18.1% of people over 74 years old) and is lower among disadvantaged social classes (16.7% in class III and 49.95% in class I) as well as people with fewer studies (9% among those with no formal studies or primary studies and 48.7% and those with university studies). The Catalunya Central (15.7%), Terres de l'Ebre (16.3%), Camp de Tarragona (21.9%) and Girona (23.2%) health regions have lower percentages than Catalunya. Double health insurance coverage increased from 1994 to 2010, after which this percentage has remained stable. Since 2012 differences between the sexes have reversed and currently a higher percentage of women have double health insurance coverage than men. In 2017, the percentage reached its peak and the difference between the sexes has increased.
- 62.5% of the **population aged over 15 years** have **taken medication** in the last two days (54.8% men and 69.8% women). This percentage increases according to age (94.3% of people aged 75 and over) and is higher among people from disadvantaged social classes (62.9% in class III and 57.2% in class I) as well as people with fewer studies (79.2% among those with primary or no studies and 53.8% among those with university studies). No differences were found between health regions. This trend remains stable.
- 93.4% of the **general population** have **visited a health professional** during the last year (90.1% men and 96.5% women). Younger people (0-14 years, 96.6%) and older people (96.6% aged between 65 and 74, and 97.7% over 75 years) are the groups that have visited a health professional most frequently. No differences were found between social classes and level of education. The Terres de l'Ebre Health Region (88.3%) has a lower percentage than Catalunya. Since 1994 this figure has remained stable.
- Almost three out of four people **have used public health services more frequently** during the last year than private services (20.4%), while 5.3% of the population have used neither. The people who used public health services more frequently were attended by general practitioners or paediatricians (91.7%), dental surgeons (38%) and nurses (38%). However, those people who used private health services more frequently were attended by general practitioners or paediatricians (63%), dental surgeons (56.4%), specialists (31.1%) and nurses (28.1%).
- The percentage of **satisfaction among public health service users** is 90%, with no differences between the sexes. Satisfaction levels are highest among the youngest (94% between 0 and 14 years old) and oldest groups (91.5% over 74 years old), and are lowest among those from disadvantaged social classes (89.8% in class III and 92.1% in class I) as well as people with fewer studies (89.4% among those with primary or no studies and 93.1% among those with university studies). The Lleida Health Region (94.1%) has a higher percentage of satisfaction than Catalunya, while the Terres de l'Ebre (81.7%) and Camp de Tarragona (86.3%) health

regions have a lower than average percentage. From 1994 to 2017 satisfaction with public health services remained stable.

- Last year, 8.2% of the **general population** were **hospitalized** for at least one night (7.7% men and 8.7% women). This figure is highest among older people, those from disadvantaged social classes and people with a lower educational level. The Lleida (5.2%) and Girona (5.8%) health regions have lower percentages than Catalunya. This indicator does not present a clear trend.
- 34% of the **general population** visited an **emergency department** last year (32% men and 35.8% women). This percentage is higher in the population aged 0 to 14 (41.9%) and those over 74 years (36.5%), as well as among those from lowest socioeconomic groups (36.5%) and those with primary or no studies (34.2%). The Lleida Health Region (28.7%) has a percentage below Catalunya. Since 2014, there has been a slight increase in this percentage.