
Health Survey of Catalonia

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

ESCA 2018 main results. 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

- More than three quarters of **people aged 15 and over** have a **positive self-perceived health** (81.6% of men and 73.2% of women). This perception is worse among older age groups (especially those aged over 45) as well as among people from the most disadvantaged social classes (73.0% for class III and 87.6% for class I) and people with lower levels of education (58.8% among those with no education or with primary education and 89.6% among people with university studies). In general and for each one of these variables, women have worse self-perceived health than men (reaching a difference of 14 percentage points between males and females with no education or primary education). No differences were found by health region. From 1994 to 2012, the percentage of people reporting a positive self-perceived health has increased, from 2012 to 2016 remains stable and from this year on decrease again and enlarge the difference among men and women.
- 23.2% of **people aged 15 and over** have **high blood pressure**, with no differences between men and women. The proportion is higher in older age groups (49.1% in those aged 65 to 74 and 61.5% in those aged 75 and over), among people from the most disadvantaged social classes (25.2% in class III and 13.5% in class I) and those with a lower level of education (41.3% of those with primary or no studies and 13.5% with university studies). No differences were found by health region. The prevalence of high blood pressure shows an increasing trend from 1994 to 2013, after which it has remained stable until 2018 which shows a light decreasing.
- Near of 8% of **people aged 15 and over** suffer from **diabetes**, without differences between men and women. The proportion is higher among older age groups (23.3% among people aged 65 to 74), among people from the most disadvantaged social classes (9.1% in class III and 3.5% in class I) as well as people with lower levels of education (18.3% in people with primary or no education and 2.8% with university studies). No differences were found by health region. The prevalence of diabetes has remained stable since 2010, although in 2018 the difference between men and women is shorter than in previous years.
- More than half of **people aged 18 to 74** have **excess body weight** (overweight or obesity), 59.3% of men and 43.2% of women. 36.3% are **overweight** (43.6% men and 29.1% women) and 14.9% are **obese** (15.7% men and 14.0% women). All of these indicators increase with age as well as among people from the most disadvantaged social classes and those with lower levels of education, in both men and women but especially in women. No differences were found by health region. From 2010 to 2014, prevalence of obesity is growing and from 2015 to 2018 remains steady. In spite of this, in the past two years (2017 and 2018), differences among men and women have enlarged, especially affecting male populations. However, prevalence of overweight remains steady from 2006 to 2017 but in the present edition it shows an increase, in both men and women.

- 7.6% of **people aged 15 and over** suffer from **major depression or severe major depression** (3.9% men and 11.2% women). This percentage increases in older age group (especially those aged 75 and over, reaching 13.9%), and is higher among people from the most disadvantaged social class (8.5% in class III and 4.6% in class I) and people with the lowest level of education (11.5% among those with primary or no studies and 3.4% of those with university studies). No differences were found by health region. The percentage of people with major depression or severe major depression has increased in the past year in more than 1 percentage point, especially among women.
- 38.4% of **people aged 15 years and over** suffer from a **long-term condition or chronic illness or health problem** (35.2% men and 41.4% women). This prevalence grows as age groups get older (especially in people aged 65 years and over, reaching over 60%), and increases among people from the most disadvantaged social class (over 40.9% among class III) as well as those with lower a level of education (57.3% among those with primary or no education). In general and for each one of these variables, women have a higher percentage than men (reaching a difference of 10 percentage points between males and females with no education or primary education). The Lleida Health Region (32.2%) and Terres de l'Ebre Health Region (30.2) have both a lower percentage of people with a long-term condition than Catalonia, especially among women. The proportion of people suffering from a chronic condition or health problem rose between 2010 and 2013, from 2014 to 2015 decreased slightly and from that point on remains steady. The **main health problems** reported are those related to the circulatory system (high blood pressure and high cholesterol) and the musculoskeletal system (rheumatic diseases, chronic lower back, dorsal and cervical pain), as well as migraine or frequent headaches, chronic allergies, and depression or anxiety. Morbidity in men is firstly related to the circulatory system (high blood pressure and high cholesterol) followed by the musculoskeletal system (rheumatic diseases, chronic lower back or dorsal pain and arthrosis, arthritis or rheumatism) and finally chronic allergies; while morbidity in women is related firstly to the musculoskeletal system (arthrosis, arthritis or rheumatism and chronic lower back, dorsal and cervical pain) followed by the circulatory system (high blood pressure) and finally migraine or frequent headaches. Moreover, a higher percentage of women than men suffer from depression or anxiety.
- The prevalence of **people aged 15 years and over having limited ability to perform activities of daily living** due to a health problem is 14.1% (11.6% men and 16.6% women). This percentage is highest among people aged 75 and over (41.3%), people from the most disadvantaged social class (15.3% for class III and 9.2% for class I) and those with the lowest level of education (30.2% among those with primary or no education and 7.5% among those with university studies). In general and for each one of these variables, women have a higher percentage than men (reaching a difference of 17 percentage points between older males and older females and a difference of 15 percentage points between men and women with no education or primary education). No differences were found by health region. From 2010 to 2014, this percentage shows a decrease trend and from that time until 2016 remained steady. An

upturn was recorded in 2017 among both men and women, but in 2018 it shows a light decrease and its position is similar than in 2012. From 2010 to 2013, women have a higher percentage than men, whereas from 2014 to 2017 this difference disappears. In 2018, the said difference seems to increase again.

- Almost 14.0% of **people aged 15 years and over** have a **disability or impairment** (11.2% men and 16.5% women) and 8.8% **lack personal autonomy**, i. e. require the help of other people in order to perform activities of daily living due to a health problem (6.5% men and 11.0% women). Both prevalences increase with age group, being higher among people from the most disadvantaged social classes as well as people with a lower level of education. Regardless of age group, social class and level of education, women have a higher prevalence than men. The Catalunya Central Health Region has a prevalence of disability (18.2%) above Catalonia, and women from Lleida Health Region (10.7%) have it below women prevalence of Catalonia as a whole. The percentage of people with a disability or lack of personal autonomy is decreasing.
- 8.1% of **people aged 15 years and over** have **deficient or poor social support** (6.7% men and 9.5% women), particularly people from the most disadvantaged social class (9.7% class III and 4.8% class I) and those without studies or primary studies (10.2% without studies or primary studies and 4.8% with university studies). The Lleida (3.5%), Catalunya Central (5.4%) and Girona (5.5%) health regions have their prevalence below that of Catalonia. From 2017 to 2018, this indicator has shown a significant increase among men and women and the difference by sex has widened.

2. Health-related behaviours

- The prevalence of **tobacco consumption** (daily and occasional) in **people aged 15 years and over** is 25.6% (30.9% men and 20.5% women), and 9.0% of people are exposed to **second-hand smoke at home** (without differences among men and women). Tobacco consumption is higher in the youngest age groups, among people from disadvantaged social classes and those with secondary education. In general and by age group and level of education, men have higher percentage than women (reaching a difference of 12 percentage points between men and women aged 15 to 44 and a difference of 10 percentage points between men and women with secondary studies). No differences in tobacco consumption were found by health region, but the prevalence of exposure to second-hand smoke at home in the Terres de l'Ebre Health Region (13.8%) is above that for Catalonia. From 1994 to 2017, tobacco consumption among the population fell. In 2017, this decreasing trend was only observed in women and in 2018 there is a slight increase in both men and women. The percentage of people exposed to second-hand smoke at home has been declining since 2006.
- The prevalence of **at-risk alcohol consumption** among **people aged 15 years and over** is 4.0% (6.4% men and 1.7% women) and is higher among people aged 15 to 44 (6.2%). The Alt

Pirineu i Aran Health Region has a higher percentage (8.1%) than Catalonia as a whole. Since 1994, the prevalence of high-risk alcohol consumption has not shown a clear trend.

- 78.9% of **people aged 15 years and over sleep between 6 and 8 hours daily** (80.3% men and 77.6% women). This proportion decreases with age group (especially aged 65 years and over: 59.2%), and it is higher among people from the best-off social class (85.4%) as well as people with university studies (88.8%). Women from Terres de l'Ebre Health Region (67.2%) have lower percentage than women from Catalonia. This indicator has remained more or less stable since 2002, although there was a slight increase in the last few years.
- Eight out of ten **people aged between 15 and 69** maintain a **healthy level of physical activity** (84.5% in men and 81.1% in women). The percentage is higher among people aged 15 to 44. No differences were found by social class. Men with university studies (85.1%) have the highest prevalence. The Terres de l'Ebre (75.2%), Catalunya Central (76.4%) and Girona (77.9%) health regions have the proportion of people with a healthy level of physical activity lower than Catalonia as a whole. The prevalence of healthy levels of physical activity increases from 2010 to 2016 and in the past two years remains steady.
- 62.6% of **people aged 15 years and over** follow the recommendations regarding the **Mediterranean diet** (57.7% men and 67.2% women). The prevalence of Mediterranean diet adherence increases with age group and it is higher among people from the most advantaged social class (73.0%) as well as among people with university studies (69.7%). In general and for by age and level of education, women have higher percentage than men (reaching a difference of 9 percentage points between men and women aged 65 to 74 and a difference of 5 percentage points between men and women with university studies). The Camp de Tarragona (55.7%) Health Region has a lower percentage than Catalonia, whereas Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region (70.6%) has it higher. From 2015 to 2017, Mediterranean diet adherence shows a decrease trend and in 2018 seems to increase slightly.
- Nine out of ten **women aged 50 to 69** get regular **mammograms** and almost three quarters of **women aged 25 to 64** have a regular **smear test**. The percentage of women having regular smear tests is higher among women from the most advantaged social classes (82.2%) and lower among women with primary level or no studies (62.5%). The Terres de l'Ebre Health Region (59.5%) has a lower percentage of women with regular smear test than that of Catalonia as a whole whereas the Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region (79.0%) has it higher. The prevalence of mammograms and smear tests carried out on priority groups increased between 1994 and 2010, after which it has remained stable.
- A little more than half of **people aged 50 to 69** have taken a **faecal occult blood test** for prevention purposes, without differences by sex, social class and level of education. This percentage is higher in the Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region (64.8%) than that of Catalonia as a whole, and lower in the Camp de Tarragona Health Region (30.8%). From 2012 to 2014, this

percentage remains stable, to sharply increase since then probably due to the launch of the Colorectal Cancer Early Detection Programme in the last trimester of 2015.

- 51.5% of **people aged 15 years and over** have their **blood pressure checked regularly** (without differences by sex) and 53.6% have their **cholesterol level tested regularly** (51.5% men and 55.7% women). Both preventive practices increase with group age and are more frequent among people with primary or no education. The percentage of population that regularly have their blood pressure checked is higher in the Alt Pirineu i Aran (64.1%) and Lleida (57.6%) health regions than Catalonia as a whole. Regarding cholesterol testing, the Camp de Tarragona (44.7%) and Terres de l'Ebre (45.6%) health regions both have lower percentages than Catalonia and Alt Pirineu i Aran (66.6%) and Catalunya Central (63.1%) health regions have higher than Catalonia as a whole. From 2010 to 2018, the trend remained stable for both preventive practices, although cholesterol testing has shown a slight decrease in the past two years.

3. Use of health services and level of satisfaction

- 28% of **general population** have **double health insurance coverage**, public and private (without differences by sex). This percentage decreases with age group (13.3% of people aged over 74) and is lower among the most disadvantaged social classes (46.9% in class I and 16.9% in class III) as well as people with the lowest level of education (47.9% among those with university studies and 8.5% with primary or no education). The Terres de l'Ebre (17.5%), Girona (21.9%), Catalunya Central (22.2%) and Camp de Tarragona (22.2%) health regions have lower percentages than Catalonia as a whole. Double health insurance coverage increased from 1994 to 2010, from 2011 to 2016 remained stable, then this percentage increased slightly and the difference by sex is now widening. In 2018 it stabilises again and this difference disappears.
- 53.9% of **population aged over 15 years** have **taken prescribed medication** in the last 15 days (48.7% men and 58.8% women). This percentage increases according to age group (95.5% of people aged 75 and over) and is higher among people from disadvantaged social classes (56.2% in class III and 45.5% in class I) as well as people with fewer studies (74.6% among those with primary or no studies and 43.1% among those with university studies). In general and for each one of these variables, women have higher percentage than men (reaching a difference of 11 points of percentage between males and females from social class III and a difference of 14 points of percentage between men and women without studies or primary 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 2018.
- 94.6% of **general population** have **visited a health professional** during the last year (92.0% men and 97.1% women). Younger people (aged 0-14, 96.4%) and older people (98.6% aged 75 and over) are the groups that have visited a health professional most frequently. No differences were found by social classes nor level of education. The Terres de l'Ebre Health Region (90.9%) has a lower percentage than Catalonia as a whole. Since 1994 this figure has remained stable

even though in the last edition the number of professionals being asked for has changed, going from 22 to 14.

- Last year, 8.3% of **general population** were **hospitalised** for at least one night, without differences by sex. This figure is highest among older people (18.4% those aged over 74), those from the most disadvantaged social classes (8.8% class III) and people with a lower level of education (13.9%). The Girona Health Region (6.2%) has a lower percentage than Catalonia as a whole and the Catalunya Central Health Region (11.3%) has it higher. This indicator does not present a clear trend.
- 38.2% of **general population** visited an **emergency department** last year (35.5% men and 40.8% women). This percentage is higher in people aged 0 to 14 (46.4%) and those aged 75 and over (41.4%), as well as among those from the lowest socioeconomic groups (40.3%) and those with primary or no education (41.1%). The Lleida Health Region (32.8%) has a percentage below Catalonia as a whole. Since 2014, there has been a slight increase in this percentage.
- Almost three out of four people **have used public health services more frequently** during the last year than private services (used by 20.2%), while 5.0% of the population have used neither. The top five specialties consulted by people who used public health services more frequently are: general practice or paediatrics (90.4%), secondary care (54.7%), nursing (44.9%), dental surgery (39.1%) and optics / optometrist (27.1%). The top five specialties consulted by people who used private health services more frequently are the same but in different order: general practice or paediatrics (59.0%), dental surgery (58.4%), secondary care (57.9%), optics / optometrist (34.1%) and nursing (28.8%). Nine of ten persons who used more frequently **public health service** are **satisfied**, with no differences by sex. Satisfaction levels are highest among the youngest (92.4% aged 0 to 14) and oldest groups (95.0% aged 75 and over). No differences were found by health region. Satisfaction with public health services remained stable in the period analysed.

4. Population aged 0 to 14 (2017-2018)

- 96.6% of **people aged 0 to 14 years** have a positive self-perceived health without differences by sex, social class, mother's level of education or health region. This figure remains stable from 1994 to 2018.
- Regarding **people aged 6 to 12**, 35.6% have **excess body weight**, with 25.0% being **overweight** and 10.6% **obese**. To have excess body weight and being overweight are equally common among boys and girls, but obesity is higher among boys (13.6%) than girls (7.2%). The prevalence of obesity is higher among those from the most disadvantaged social classes (14.1% in class III and 3.9% in class I), especially in boys (18.8% in class III and 4.0 in class I). No differences were found by health region. From 2006 to 2013-2014, the prevalence of overweight decreases. Since then and until 2016-2017 it has shown an increase trend and in the latest

period studied (2017-2018) it remains steady. However, the prevalence of obesity continues decreasing among both boys and girls.

- Almost 6.0% of **people aged 4 to 14** (7.0% boys and 4.8% girls) are **at risk of developing a mental disorder**. No differences were found by sex, social class, mother's level of education or health region. However, boys and girls whose mother has secondary studies (7.6%) or those whose mother has no studies (7.4%) have a higher prevalence of developing a mental disorder than those whose mother has university studies (1.9%). The risk of developing a mental disorder by this population has been increasing since 2014, especially among boys.
- Among **people aged 0 to 14**, 13.0% suffer from a **long-term or chronic condition or health problem** without differences by sex, social class or mother's level of education. The most frequent problems are: recurrent bronchitis (11.6%), chronic skin problems (9.9%), chronic allergies (7.5%), recurrent otitis (7.0%), and enuresis (5.1%). Boys suffer more frequently from recurrent bronchitis than girls (12.8% and 10.4% respectively), while girls suffer from chronic constipation (1.5% boys and 3.2% girls). The Alt Pirineu i Aran Health Region (6.4%) has a lower percentage of children with a chronic condition or health problem than Catalonia as a whole. From 2010-2011 to 2013-2014, this indicator shows an increase trend. Since then until 2015-2016 it decreases but emphasizing differences between boys and girls. The prevalence among girls continues to decrease, whereas it increases among boys. In the last period studied (2017-2018), it is just the opposite effect; it decreases among boys, whereas it increases among girls and differences by sex become smaller.
- Prevalence of **people aged 0 to 14 years having limited ability to perform activities of daily living** due to a health problem is 3.5% without differences by sex, mother's level of education or health region. However, children from the most disadvantaged social class have the highest percentage (3.9% for class III and 0.9 for class I). From 2010-2011 to 2013-2014, this percentage showed an increase trend to decrease in 2014-2015. During 2015-2016 it continues decreasing among girls but increasing among boys, and since then up to now it remains increasing among both sexes.
- The percentage of **people aged 0 to 14** suffering from a **disability or impairment** is 2.3% (2.7% boys and 1.9% girls). No differences were found by sex, social class, mother's level of education or health region. The evolution of this indicator shows considerable variability throughout the years studied.
- 11.6% of **children aged 0 to 14 years are living with someone who smokes at home indoors**. This exposure is more frequent among boys and girls from the most disadvantaged social class (8.3% in class I and 13.5% in class III) and those whose mothers have a low level of education (6.2% to mothers with university studies and 18.6% to mothers with primary or no studies). The Camp de Tarragona Health Region (22.5%) shows a percentage above Catalonia as a whole. Since 2010-2011, the trend in exposure to second-hand smoke at home has been decreasing year by year.

- 35.1% of **people aged 3 to 14** participate in **active leisure** activities, e.g. they spend at least one hour a day doing sport, or playing outside (38.2% of boys and 31.9% of girls). No differences were found by social class or mother's level of education. The Girona Health Region (43.9%) shows a percentage above Catalonia as a whole. The upward trend observed since 2010 ended during 2015-2016, and it has since then decreased. During 2016-2017 it remains steady and increases in 2017-2018.
- The use of **car safety equipment** (car seats, booster seats and seat belts) is 96.8% among **people aged 0 to 14 years old**, with no differences by sex, social classes, level of education or health region. This percentage has increased slightly since 2015-2016. **The most commonly used means of transport to go to school** among **people aged 3 to 14 years** is walking (63.6%), followed by private car (27.0%), public transport (7.9%), and cycling (0.7%). Walking is most frequent by boys and girls from the most disadvantaged social class and those whose mother has no formal education or primary studies. The use of a car or motorcycle is most frequent among people from the most advantaged social class and those whose mothers have university studies.
- Almost a third of **people aged 3 to 14 frequently consumes high-calorie products** (27.0% boys and 32.9% girls). This percentage is higher among those from the most disadvantaged social classes (23.4% in class I and 34.4% in class III) and those whose mothers have a lower level of education (21.6% to mothers with university studies and 40.5% to mothers with primary or no studies). In general as well as by social class and mother's level of education, girls have a higher percentage than boys (reaching a difference of 7 percentage points between boys and girls from social class III and a difference of 5 percentage points between those boys and girls with mothers with no studies or primary studies). The Girona Health Region (20.5%) has a lower percentage than Catalonia as a whole. From 2006 to 2011-2012, this indicator decreases, from that time to 2013-2014 remains steady and it increases in the next two periods studied. During 2015-2016 the percentage of children consuming high-calorie products increases among girls and decreases among boys and therefore differences by sex are widened. In the last period studied (2017-2018), this percentage decreases both in boys and girls, but differences by sex are still present.
- 59.4% of **people aged 5 to 14 years brushes their teeth at least twice per day** (54.5% boys and 64.6% girls). No differences were found by social class, mother's level of education or health region. From 2006 to 2013-2014 this indicator increases, from this time to 2016-2017 it remains steady and it increases during the latest period studied. In spite of this increase, differences by sex have widened and boys show the lowest increase.