

4 International comparison

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines certified nurses as first level (nurses who have had a minimum of three years of formal training, corresponding to registered nurses in Australia) and second level (nurses who have had between one and two years of formal training, corresponding to enrolled nurses in Australia).

Unfortunately, not all OECD countries use the same definition for certified nurses and formal training varies considerably across countries. A footnote has been used to indicate where the definitions are known to differ from the standard OECD definition.

These differences mean that comparisons with the OECD 'average' are not meaningful. However, Australia does appear to have a higher provision of nurses per 100,000 population than do most other English-speaking countries in the OECD.

Table 29: Certified nurses: OECD countries, 1995

Country	Certified nurses	Population ('000)	Proportion of population aged 65+ (%)	Nurses per 100,000 population
Australia	220,666	17,866	11.7	1,235.1
Austria	68,859	8,045	14.7	855.9
Canada (1994) (a)	262,400	29,251	11.9	897.1
Czech Republic (b)	84,255	10,263	12.6	821.0
Denmark (1993)	34,946	5,189	15.4	673.5
Finland	107,698	5,107	14.1	2,108.8
France (1994)	336,255	57,900	14.7	580.8
Greece (1993)	37,211	10,368	14.8	358.9
Hungary	49,479	10,106	14.0	489.6
Iceland (1994) (c)	1,952	267	11.0	731.1
Ireland	27,359	3,546	11.3	771.5
Italy (1992)	231,638	56,757	16.1 (1995)	408.1
Japan (1994)	862,013	124,960	14.0	689.8
Mexico	97,360	91,145	4.3	106.8
New Zealand	36,396	3,561	11.4	1,022.1
Norway (1996)	65,232	4,348	15.7	1,500.3
Portugal	33,549	9,815	14.8	341.8
Spain (1993) (d)	167,894	39,083	14.2	429.6
Sweden	90,200	8,788	17.3	1,026.4
Switzerland (1990)	93,781	6,712	15.0	1,397.2
Turkey (e)	63,900	60,838	5.1	105.0
United Kingdom (1988)	243,854(f)	57,065	15.6	427.3
United States (1992)	1,853,000	265,100	12.3	699.0
Total	4,826,043	886,080	..	544.7

(a) Registered nurses employed in nursing as well as licensed nursing assistants. Some of the licensed nursing assistants may be unemployed or not employed in nursing. The licensed nursing assistants have at least one year of formal training.

(b) Data refer to full-time-equivalent paramedical personnel.

(c) Excludes enrolled nurses who have three years of training but not at university level.

(d) Certified nurses in hospitals of the National Health Service only.

(e) Excludes midwives.

(f) Great Britain only.

Source: 1997 OECD Health Data File.