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INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE ESTATÍSTICA
STATISTICS PORTUGAL
1935-2025

DIISTAQUE

PRESS RELEASE

National Health Service Day
September 15, 2025

BETWEEN 2003 AND 2023, THE NUMBER OF SPECIALIST NURSES IN HOSPITALS OF THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES TRIPLED

In 2023, there were 242 hospitals in Portugal, of which 107 were public or in a public-private partnership (PPP) with universal access, that is, they were part of the National Health Service or the regional health services of the Autonomous Regions. Between 2003 and 2023, the number of specialist nurses working in public or PPP hospitals with universal access tripled and the number of attendances at emergency services decreased by around 4%. In these hospitals, the average period of hospitalisation was, in 2023, 9.0 days. In 2023, almost 14 million external medical appointments were carried out, mainly in medical specialties (61%), with Medical Oncology, Paediatrics and Psychiatry standing out.

In recent years, the National Health Service and the regional health services of the Autonomous Regions have been the main financing agents of current health expenditure, supporting, in 2023, 55.2% of the total.

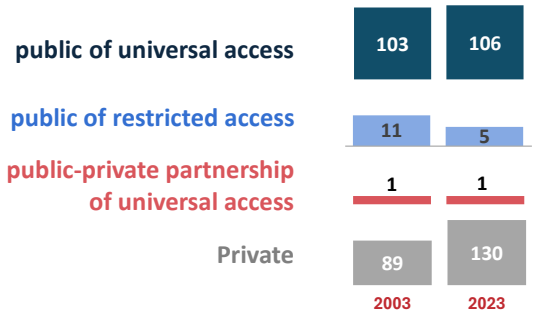
In 2023, **there were 242 hospitals in Portugal**, representing an increase of 38 compared to 2003

In the last two decades, it stands out the increase in the number of private hospitals, that have become the dominant institutional nature

In 2023, there were **107 hospitals of universal access**

106 public

5 public-private partnership

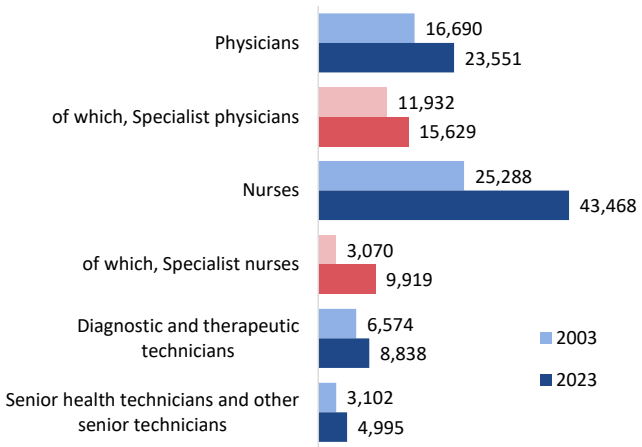


Source: Statistics Portugal, Hospitals survey (provisional 2023 data).

As of 31 December 2023, **23,551 physicians**, two-thirds of whom were specialists, and **43,468 nurses**, 23% of whom were specialists, were employed in public or in PPP hospitals with universal access

Between 2003 and 2023, the number of specialist nurses tripled

Source: Statistics Portugal, Hospitals survey (provisional 2023 data).



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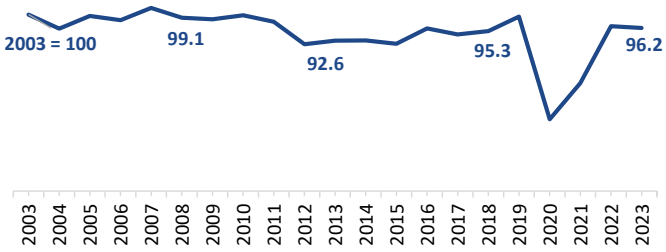
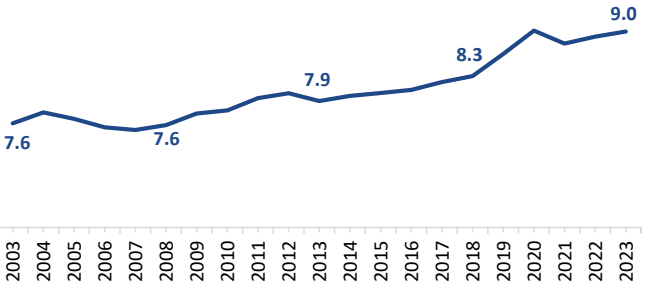
In 2023, the **number of attendances at emergency services** in public or PPP hospitals with universal access was 6.5 million, reflecting a decrease of nearly 4% between 2003 and 2023



Source: Statistics Portugal, Hospitals survey (provisional 2023 data).

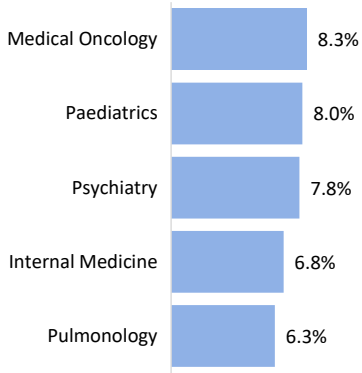
The **average period of hospitalisation** in public or PPP hospitals with universal access was 9.0 days (7.6 days in 2003)



Source: Statistics Portugal, Hospitals survey (provisional 2023 data) [internments, period of hospitalisation].

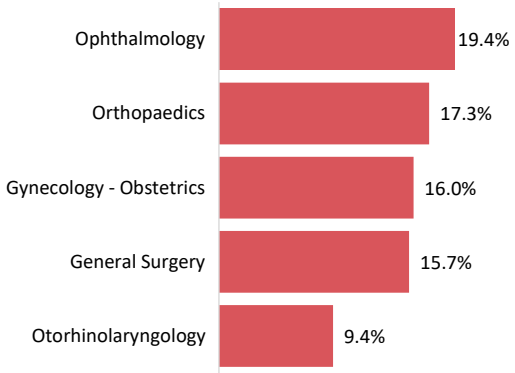
In 2023, **13.9 million external medical appointments** were carried out in public or PPP hospitals with universal access:

61% of medical specialities, of which:



Source: Statistics Portugal, Hospitals survey (provisional 2023 data).

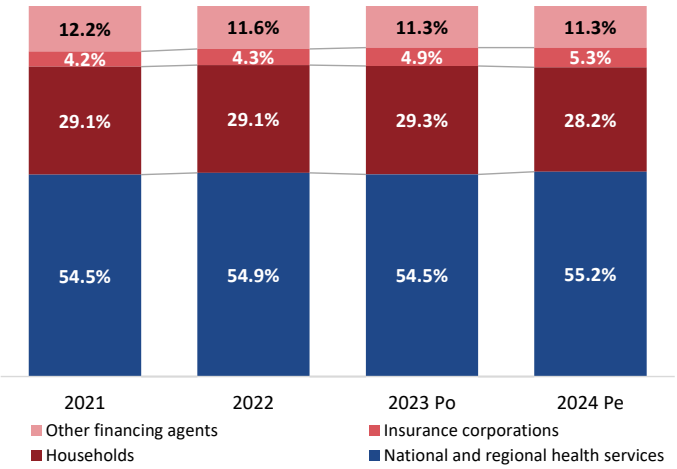
39% of surgical specialities, of which:



Source: Statistics Portugal, Hospitals survey (provisional 2023 data).

The **National Health Service** and the **regional health services** of the Autonomous Regions have been, together, the main financing agents of current health expenditure, supporting, on average in the last 4 years, 54.8% of the total; on average, 28.9% of current expenditure was borne directly by households

In recent years, the increase in the relative weight of expenditure of **insurance companies stands out**



Source: Statistics Portugal, Health Satellite Account.