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HEALTH PERSONNEL STATISTICS
2024-2025

NEW DATA SET REVEALS THAT A THIRD OF PRACTISING DOCTORS ARE UNDER 35

With this press release, Statistics Portugal is launching a new series of statistics on doctors, based on a combination of data from the Labour Force Survey, the Personnel Tables and the Directorate-General for Administration and Public Employment, which makes it possible to obtain estimates on practising doctors that complement the traditional series on doctors registered with the Portuguese Medical Association and ensures comparability with data from the other Member States of the European Union. In 2024, the most recent year for which this information is available, the number of practicing doctors in the country was 46,131, of whom 65% were female and 32.9% were under 35 years of age. Doctors practicing as specialists represented 86.8% of the total, which s the third highest figure in the European Union.

A similar methodological approach is currently being developed for the other categories of practising healthcare professionals. For this reason, the information presented for these categories continues to draw primarily on data from the respective professional associations, which offers the advantage of a more up-to-date reference period. Thus, in 2025, the following were registered:

- in the Portuguese Medical Dentists Association - 12,796 professionally active members, three times the number registered in 2002 (4,134); the ratio of resident dentists per 1,000 inhabitants was 1.12 in 2025, with the highest ratios in the Área Metropolitana do Porto (1.72) and Viseu Dão Lafões (1.57);
- in the Portuguese Nurses Association - 87,843 professionally active members, more than twice as many as in 2002 (41,799); the ratio of professionally active nurses per 1,000 inhabitants was 7.7, reaching 14.4 in the Região de Coimbra;
- in the Portuguese Pharmacists Association - 17,301 professionally active members, which represents more than double the 2002 figure (7,962) and a ratio of professionally active pharmacists per 1,000 inhabitants of 1.5, with regional maximums observed in the Região de Coimbra and Grande Lisboa (2.4 and 2.1, respectively);
- in the Portuguese Psychological Association - 27,838 permanent members or trainees, of which 76.6% were women under 55 years of age and 27.3% held at least one specialty title. Clinical and Health Psychology was the most represented base specialty (65.6% of the specialty titles awarded).

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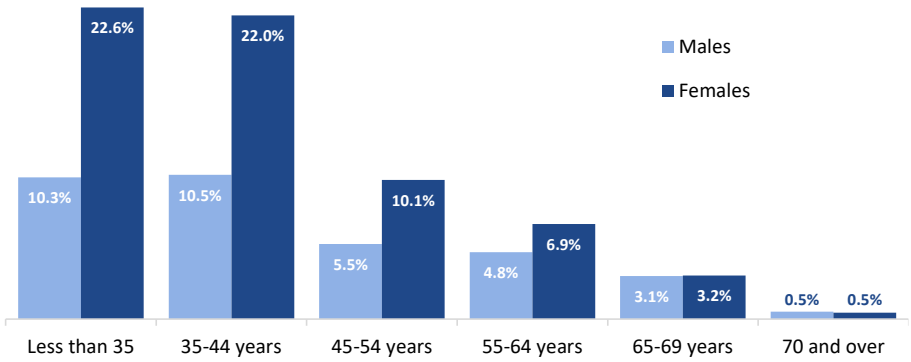
A THIRD OF PRACTISING DOCTORS IN 2024 WERE UNDER THE AGE OF 35

The number of practising doctors, excluding stomatologists and maxillofacial surgeons, was 46,131 in 2024, of whom 65% were female. About a third (32.9%) of these professionals were under 35 years of age and 7.3% were 65 years old or over.

Women under 45 years of age represented 44.6% of the total number of professionals in practice. Although the number of female professionals is higher than the number of male professionals in all age groups except the latter (70 years and over), the proportion of women decreases as the age group increases.

Figure 1

PROPORTION OF PRACTISING DOCTORS, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, 2024



In 2024, among the most common specialties in Portugal, medical specialties stood out: in particular, paediatrics, which was practiced by 9.0% of doctors practicing a specialty.

Figure 2

SPECIALTIES HELD BY MEDICAL SPECIALISTS, 2024

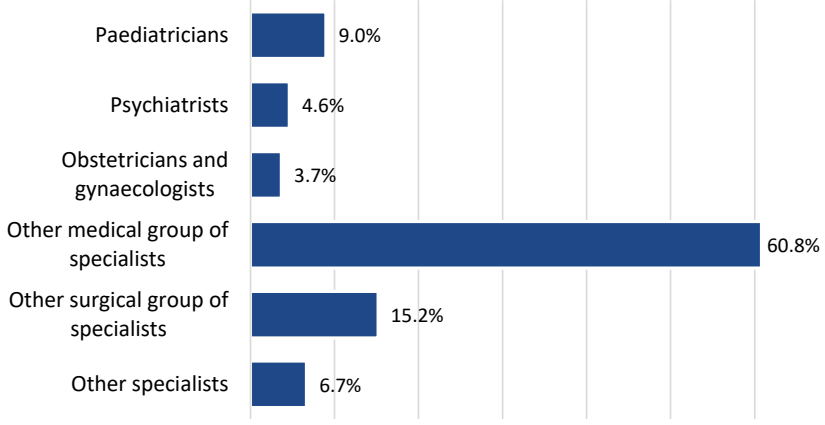
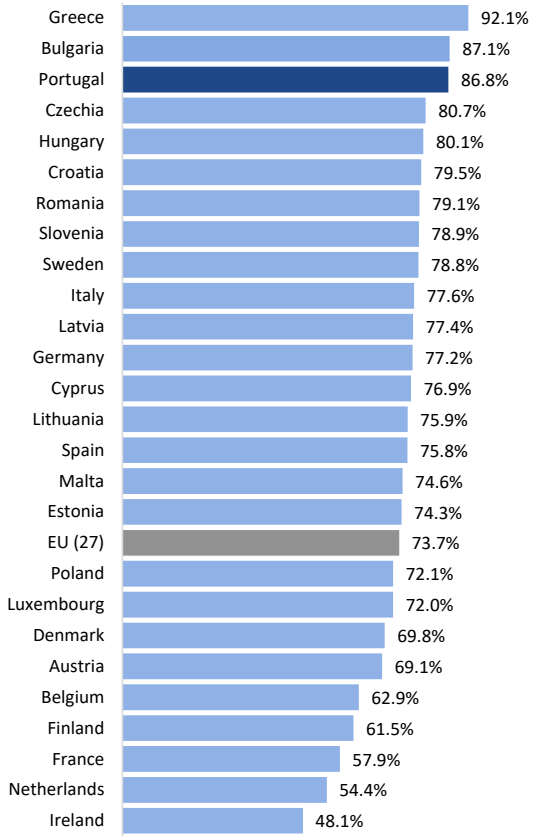


Figure 3

PROPORTION OF DOCTORS WORKING AS SPECIALISTS, BY MEMBER STATE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2024



In 2024, 86.8% of the total number of professionals practised a specialty, which represents the third highest proportion among all European Union Member States[1], only surpassed by Greece (92.1%) and Bulgaria (87.1%).

The European Union average was 73.7%, with Ireland recording the lowest proportion of doctors practicing a specialty (48.1%).

[1] Data for Slovakia is not available.

In 2025, 65,077 professionals residing in the country were registered with the Portuguese Medical Association. Between 1991 and 2025, the number of registered doctors, whether practicing or not, more than doubled (in 1991, there were 28,326), reflecting an average annual growth rate of 2.5%. During this period, the male-to-female ratio fell steadily: in 1991, there were 148.8 male practitioners registered for every 100 women; by 2025, the ratio stood at 69.7 men for every 100 women.

PROPORTION OF FOREIGN DENTISTS INCREASES COMPARED TO 2024

In 2025, 12,796 professionals living in the country were registered with the Portuguese Medical Dentists Association, which corresponds to more than three times that observed in 2002 (4,134).

In 2002, the number of male professionals was similar to the number of female dentists, but, by 2025, there were 53.2 men for every 100 women registered with the Portuguese Medical Dentists Association, following a sustained trend of a decline in the male-to-female ratio.

Figure 4

NUMBER OF DENTISTS (2002=100), 2002-2025

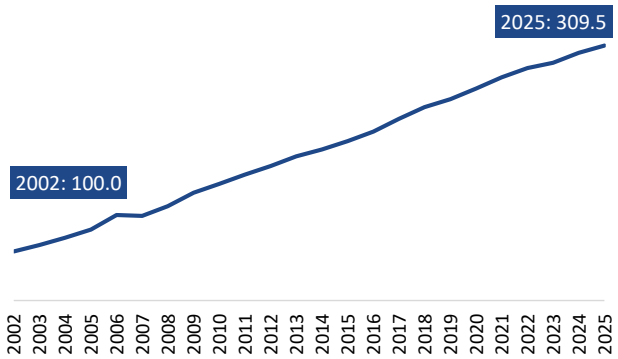
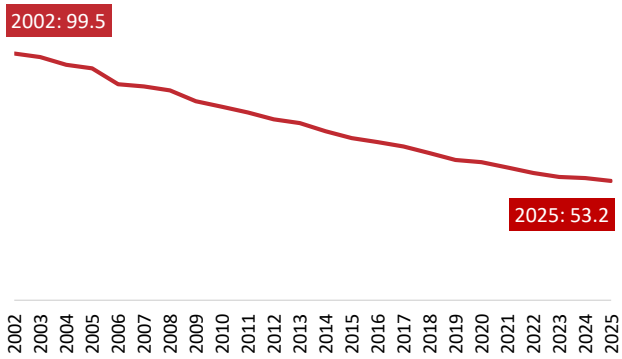


Figure 5

MALE-TO-FEMALE RATIO OF DENTISTS, 2002-2025

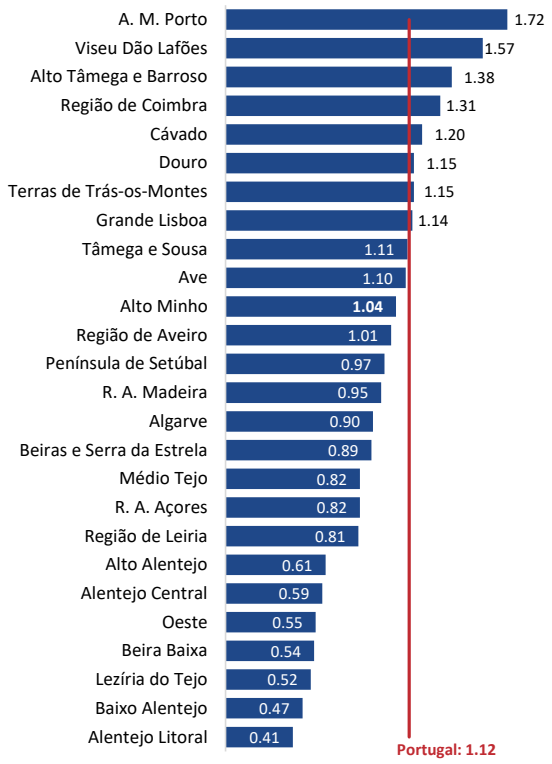


The number of dentists registered with the their professional association was, in 2025, 1.12 per 1,000 inhabitants.

The Área Metropolitana do Porto and the region of Viseu Dão Lafões had the highest ratios (1.72 and 1.57, respectively), but Alto Tâmega e Barroso, the Região de Coimbra, Cávado, Douro, Terras de Trás-os-Montes and Grande Lisboa also exceeded the national average. Alentejo Litoral and Baixo Alentejo corresponded to the lowest ratios in this indicator (below 0.5).

Figure 6

DENTISTS PER 1 000 INHABITANTS, BY NUTS 3 REGION OF RESIDENCE, 2025



The proportion of foreign professionals increased from 8.9% in 2024 to 9.5% in 2025, with the most represented nationalities among foreign professionals being Brazilian (53.6%), Italian (17.5%) and Spanish (6.0%).

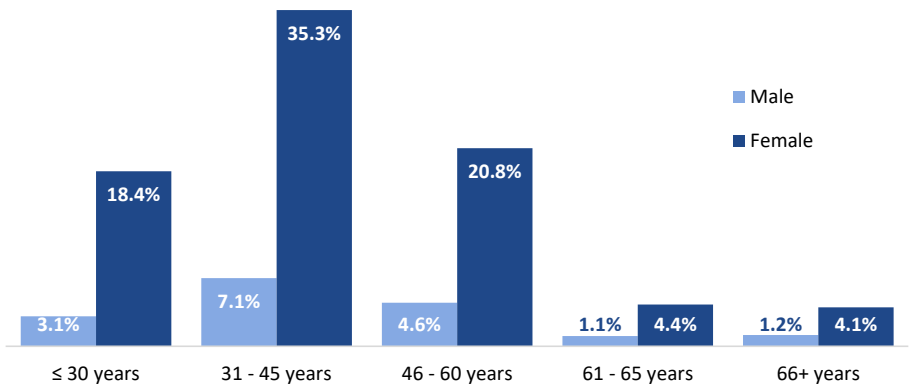
29% OF NURSES REGISTERED WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION ARE SPECIALISTS

In 2025, 87,843 professionally active members were registered with the Portuguese Nurses Association, which is more than double the number registered in 2002 (41,799). About 83% of the nurses registered with the Association were women and, in particular, 35.3% were women aged 31 to 45.

The number of female professionals was higher than the number of male staff in all age groups, with the proportion of women decreasing as the age group increases, as observed for practicing doctors.

Figure 7

PROPORTION OF NURSES, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, 2025



Of the total of 87,843 nurses, 29.4% were specialists. Of the 25,843 specialist nurses, 1,203 had two to four specialties, making a total of 27,143 specialty titles.

Among the existing specialties, the most represented were *Medical-Surgical Nursing* and *Rehabilitation Nursing*, which together accounted to 40.6% of all specialties. These two specialties, together with *Community Health and/or Public Health Nursing, Maternal Health and Obstetric Nursing*, *Child and Paediatric Health Nursing,* and *Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing,* accounted for 90.5% of the total specialties.

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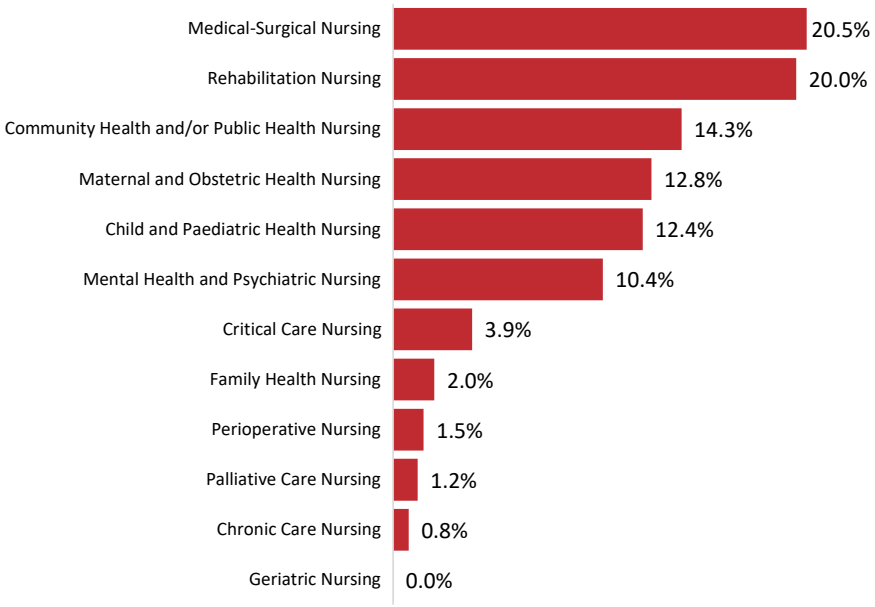
Figure 8

PROPORTION OF SPECIALIST NURSES, BY SPECIALTY, 2025



The countries of nationality of nurses most represented among foreign professionals (1.6% of the total) were, in 2025:

Brazil	37.9%	France	3.8%
Spain	19.6%	Guinea-Bissau	3.1%
Cape Verde	6.6%	Sao Tome and Principe	2.9%
Angola	4.8%	Ukraine	2.6%

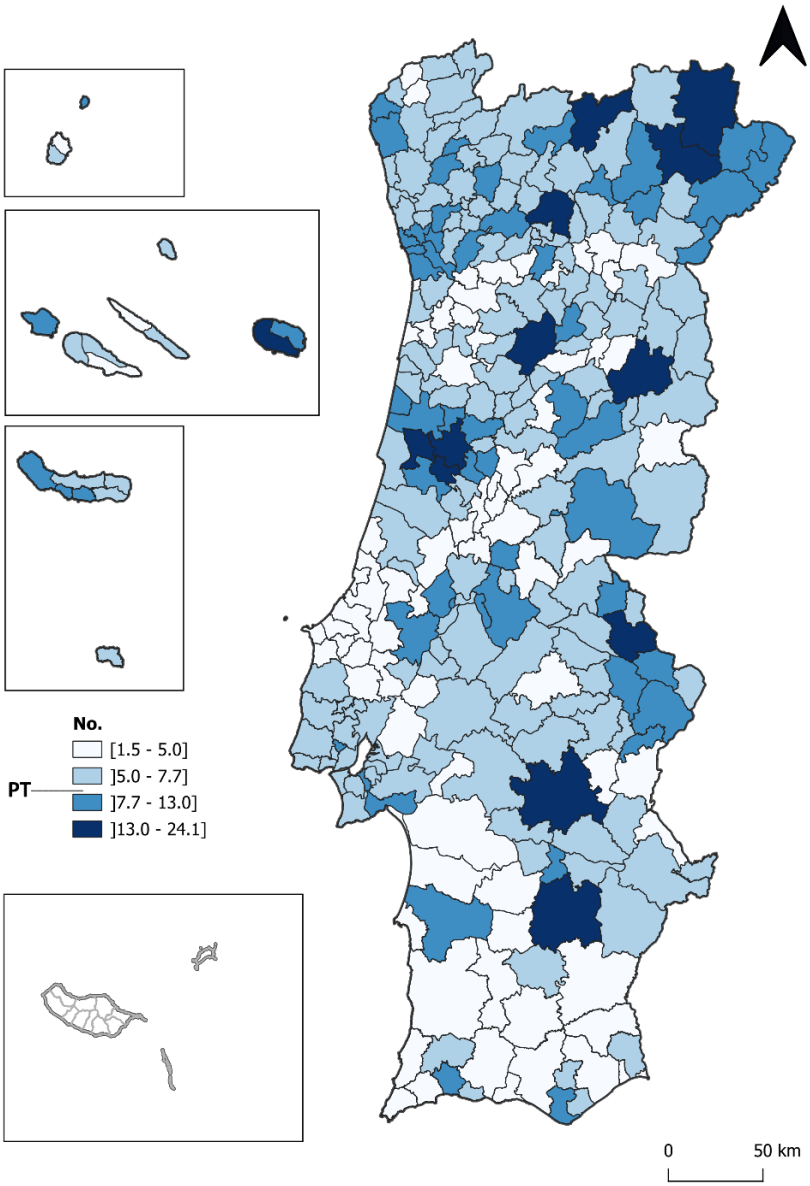
The number of professionals registered with the Portuguese Nurses Association in 2025 and working in Portugal (87,843) corresponded to 7.7 nurses per 1,000 inhabitants, higher in the Região de Coimbra (14.4) and, in particular, in the municipalities of Coimbra (24.1) and Condeixa-a-Nova (21.9).

The municipalities with the highest ratios of professionally active nurses per 1,000 inhabitants were mainly district capitals: Coimbra (which had the highest ratio in the country: 24.1), Guarda (19.2), Portalegre (18.3), Bragança (17.9), Vila Real (17.2), Beja (13.7), Viseu (13.2) and Évora (13.2). But other municipalities also stood out, such as Condeixa-a-Nova (21.9), Angra do Heroísmo (16.0), Chaves (16.0), Montemor-o-Velho (14.6) and Macedo de Cavaleiros (13.9).

Only in Castanheira de Pêra, Vila do Bispo and Vila Velha de Ródão was there a ratio of less than 2.0 nurses per 1,000 inhabitants.

Figure 9

NURSES PER 1,000 INHABITANTS, BY MUNICIPALITY OF ACTIVITY, 2025



PHARMACISTS MORE THAN DOUBLE IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

In 2025, 17,301 professionals were registered with the Portuguese Pharmacists Association, which is more than double the figure for 2002 (7,962). The proportion of women has remained relatively stable over the last two decades, at around 80%. The proportion of community pharmacists, i.e., those who worked in a pharmacy, increased from 58.7% of the total number of pharmacists in 2002 to 61.1% in 2025.

Figure 10

PROPORTION OF FEMALE PHARMACISTS AND COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS, 2002-2025

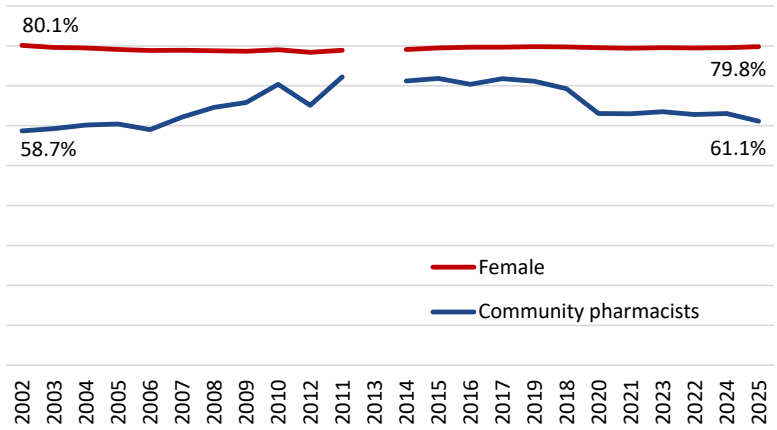
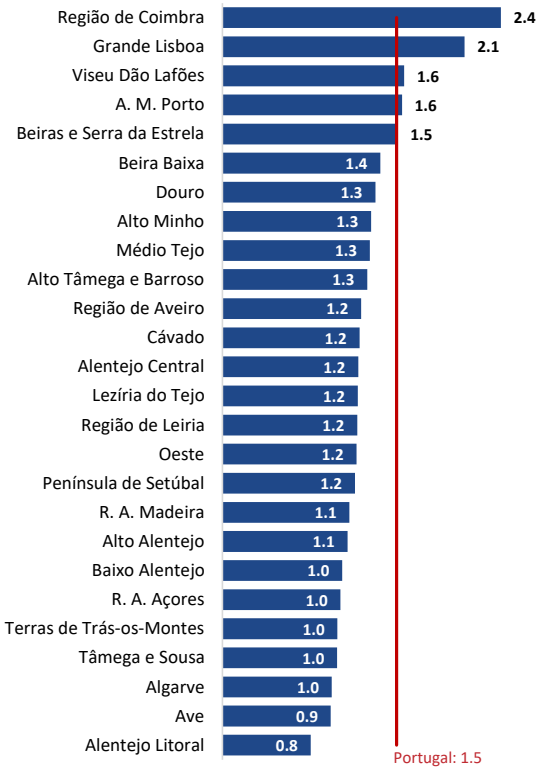


Figure 11

PHARMACISTS PER 1 000 INHABITANTS, BY NUTS 3 REGION OF ACTIVITY, 2025



In 2025, 1.5 professionals per 1,000 inhabitants were registered with the Portuguese Pharmacists Association.

Considering the place of activity, Região de Coimbra and Grande Lisboa had the highest ratios: 2.4 and 2.1, respectively.

In addition to these two NUTS 3 regions, the national average was surpassed only in three regions: Viseu Dão Lafões (1.6), Área Metropolitana do Porto (1.6) and Beiras and Serra da Estrela (1.5).

Alentejo Litoral and Ave were the regions with the lowest allocation of pharmacists in light of this indicator.

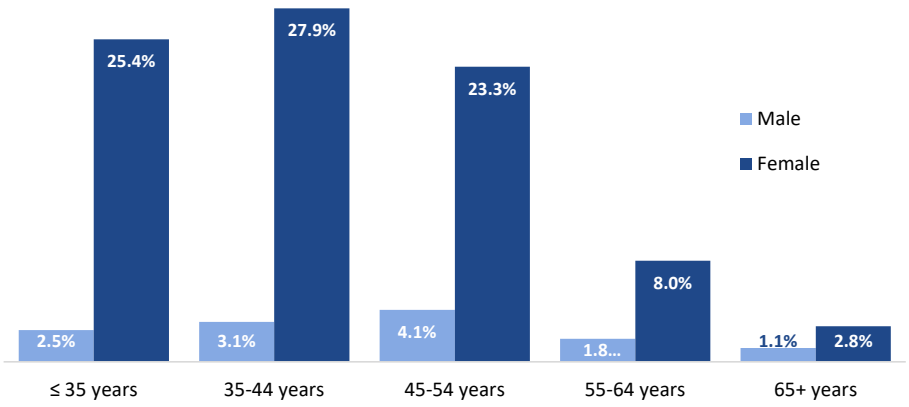
87.4% OF PSYCHOLOGISTS REGISTERED WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION ARE WOMEN

In 2025, 27,838 permanent members or trainees were registered in the Portuguese Psychological Association (in 2024, there were 26,283), of which 87.4% were women and 76.6% were women under 55 years old.

The number of female professionals was higher than the number of male staff in all age groups, with the proportion of women decreasing as the age group increases, as observed for doctors and nurses.

Figure 12

PROPORTION OF PSYCHOLOGISTS, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, 2025



The nationalities of psychologists most represented among foreign professionals (3.1% of the total) were, in 2025:

Brazil	**73.3%**	Germany	**1.6%**
Italy	**7.4%**	France	**1.3%**
Spain	**3.6%**	Switzerland	**1.0%**

Of the total of 27,838 psychologists, 27.3% held, in 2025, at least one specialty title. *Clinical and Health Psychology* was the most represented base specialty (65.6% of the specialty titles awarded), followed by *Educational Psychology* (23.6%) and *Work, Social and Organizational Psychology* (10.8%).

TECHNICAL NOTE

Health personnel statistics result from the use of the Labour Survey and several administrative data provided by several sources for statistical purposes, of which the respective professional associations.

Statistics Portugal starts a new series of statistics on doctors that presents results on practising doctors complementing the traditional series on doctors registered with the Portuguese Medical Association regardless of whether or not they are practicing medicine. The total number of **practising general practitioners and specialists** is based on the results of the Labour Force Survey, while the breakdown by categories and specialties took into account data from the Personnel Tables and the Directorate-General for Public Administration and Employment.

Information on physicians licensed to practice with the **Portuguese Medical Association** and dentists registered with **the Portuguese Medical Dentists Association** is made available geographically according to the residence declared by the health professionals, while that on nurses registered with the **Portuguese Nurses Association** and pharmacists registered with the **Portuguese Pharmacists Association** is obtained according to the place of activity of the health professionals.

DEFINITIONS

Nurse – qualified health professional with a degree in nursing and authorization of the respective professional council for the exercise of nursing.

- **Specialist nurse** – nurse qualified to practice a specialty in nursing.

Pharmacist – qualified professional with a degree in pharmacy or pharmaceutical sciences in a university higher education establishment and holder of a professional card issued in the Portuguese Pharmacists Association.

- **Community pharmacists** – pharmacist working in a pharmacy.

Medical doctor – health professional with a degree in medicine and authorization in the respective professional association for the exercise of medicine.

- **Medical specialist** – medical doctor qualified to practice a specialty in medicine.

Dentist medical doctor – health professional that has a degree in dental medicine and the respective professional association's authorization to practice dental medicine.

WEBSITE INDICATORS

This information is available specific statistical indicators of health personnel that can be consulted through the navigation in a list or tree in Statistics Portugal's database, under the theme Health / Health personnel.

Nurses (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2024) and Sex; Annual

Nurses (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2013) and Sex; Annual

Nurses (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2002) and Sex; Annual

Nurses per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2024); Annual

Nurses per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2013); Annual

Nurses per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2002); Annual

Laboratory pharmacists (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2024); Annual

Laboratory pharmacists (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2013); Annual

Laboratory pharmacists (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2002); Annual

Pharmacists (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2024) and Sex; Annual

Pharmacists (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2013) and Sex; Annual

Pharmacists (No.) by Work location (NUTS - 2002) and Sex; Annual

Medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2024); Annual

Medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2013); Annual

Medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2002); Annual

Dentist medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2024); Annual

Dentist medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2013); Annual

Specialist medical doctors (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2024), Sex and Medical speciality, subspecialty or competence; Annual

Specialist medical doctors (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2013), Sex and Medical speciality, subspecialty or competence; Annual

Specialist medical doctors (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2002), Sex and Medical speciality, subspecialty or competence; Annual

Medical doctors (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2024), Sex and Type of medical doctor; Annual

Medical doctors (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2013), Sex and Type of medical doctor; Annual

Medical doctors (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2002) and Sex; Annual

Medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2024); Annual

Medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2013); Annual

Medical doctors per 1000 inhabitants (No.) by Place of residence (NUTS - 2002); Annual