JQ02 – Physicians by category

Physicians data is compiled by the Department of Health as part of the Non-Monetary Health Care Statistics, administered jointly by Eurostat, OECD and WHO in fulfilment of the European regulation (EU) 2022/2294. These statistics are compiled and published on an annual basis and refer to the number of licensed-to-practice and/or practicing physicians according to their predominant category (or area) of practice during the referenced year.

Source:

Data is compiled from the annual registrations and declarations of physicians administered by Medical Council of Ireland (https://www.medicalcouncil.ie/). This registration process is a legal obligation to be fulfilled by each physician annually in order to obtain a license for medical practice.

Definitions:

Physicians licensed to practice refers to medical doctors who have graduated in medicine from medical faculties or similar institutions and are licensed with the Medical Council to practice, but not necessarily practicing during the reference year. This also includes physicians who can be conducting their practice outside of Ireland.

Practising physicians refer to medical doctors who have graduated in medicine from medical faculties or similar institutions, are licensed to practice with the Medical Council and have indicated to actively practice within the reference year. Practising physicians provide services for individual patients, families and communities. It also refers to interns and resident physicians who have graduated in medicine from medical faculties or similar institutions and who provide services under supervision of other medical doctors.

Year (or also referred to as data reference year) is taken as at end of year (i.e. 31st December).

Measure refers to the category of practicing or licensed-to-practice physicians referred to above.

Category refers to the predominant (main) area of practice of the physician upon registration, for the respective data reference year. The categories are defined and grouped as follows:

i. **General practitioners** – refer to medical doctors who assume responsibility for the provision of continuing and comprehensive medical care to individuals, families and communities.
ii. **Other generalist medical practitioners** – refers to practitioners who do not limit their practice to certain disease categories or methods of treatment, but do not work in an area of specialisation.
iii. **Generalist medical practitioners** - include physicians in the **General practitioners** and **Other generalist medical** practitioner groups above.
iv. **General paediatrician** – refers to medical doctors who deal with the development, care and diseases of children.
v. **Obstetricians and gynaecologists** – refers to medical doctors who specialise in pregnancy and childbirth and the functions and diseases specific to women and girls, especially those affecting the reproductive system.
vi. **Psychiatrists** – refer to medical doctors who specialise in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of mental illness.
vii. **Medical group of specialists** – refers to medical doctors who specialise in the diagnosis and non-surgical treatment of physical disorders and diseases.

viii. **Surgical group of specialists** – refers to medical doctors who specialise in the use of surgical techniques to treat disorders and diseases.

ix. **Other specialists not elsewhere classified** – refers to physician specialists not covered by above definitions.

x. **Special medical practitioners** – include physicians in the **General paediatrician**, **Obstetricians and gynaecologists**, **Psychiatrists**, **Medical group of specialists Surgical group of specialists** and **Other specialists not elsewhere classified** groups above.

xi. **Medical doctors not further defined** – refers to medical practitioners who cannot be classified in any of the categories listed above.

Unit refers to the unit of measure applied, which in this case refers to a numerical headcount of physicians.

Value refers to the amount of physicians falling within respective categories for the respective data reference year.

Flag indicates any particular caution or issues with the data worth of note for further data use. The following flags may be applied, along with their definition:

- **Flag M** indicates that the value is missing as it was not collected for that particular instance. This may be due to legal requirements, unavailability of data or data quality issues, among many reasons.
- **Flag B** indicates that the values from that data reference point onwards are not directly comparable with previous data points due to methodological issues which are explained in the coverage section below.
- **Flag E** indicates that the particular data point is based on an estimate and should be compares with other non-estimate data points with caution. Estimation methods applies are explained in the coverage section below.
- **Flag S** indicates that the particular data point has been supressed for confidentiality and/or quality purposes, such as; very small counts or very high variation. This should not be treated as a true zero. Whenever a value is a true zero, this has been indicated and not supressed.

Coverage:

Data up to reference year 2013 refers to all persons (including those working abroad) who have entered and maintained their name as fully registered doctors, regardless of the area in which they are engaged or whether or not they are practising medicine.

From 2014 onwards, data refers to doctors registered with the Medical Council of Ireland who, in the last 12 months, have declared themselves practicing and who have worked in Ireland either full or part-time. Prior to 2014, data refers to physicians licensed to practice, regardless of whether they have practiced at all during that year.

Estimation:

Not applicable.

Breaks in series:

For data reference years prior to 2009, specialists in training are included. From data reference year 2009 onwards, these are included under the "Specialist medical practitioners" category.

From data reference year 2011, data includes general practitioners (GPs) in training.

From data reference year 2014, data refers to physicians registered with the Medical Council of Ireland who, in the last 12 months, have declared themselves practicing and who have worked in Ireland either full or part-time.

Suppression:

Not applicable.

Contact Person	Statistics and Analytics Unit
Contact Person Email	Statistics_and_Analytics_Unit@health.gov.ie
Period of time	As at end of year from 1980-2021.