

21 December 2009

European Survey of Health in Spain
Preview of results in the second and third quarters of 2009
(*Provisional data*)

Seven out of 10 Spaniards aged 16 years old and over consider that their state of health is good or very good

17.1% of persons aged 18 years old and over are obese and 36.7% are overweight

According to the results of the preview with partial data collected between April and October 2009, **seven out of 10 persons aged 16 years old and over stated that their state of health had been good or very good in the last 12 months**, whereas only one in 10 considered it bad or very bad.

The percentage of men who stated that their state of health was positive (74.8%) was greater than that of women (64.9%). This difference was to be found in all age groups, but it was among **persons aged 65 years or over in which the greatest gap was to be found in the perceived state of health between the two sexes.**

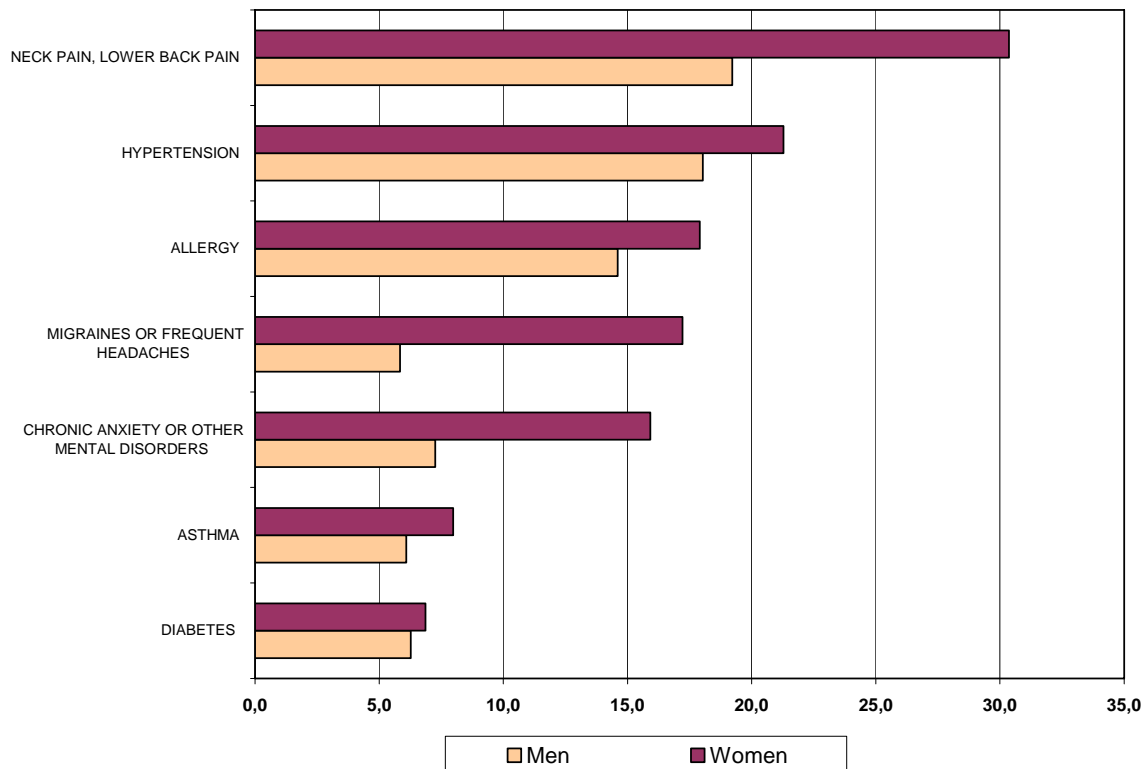
Age was a determining factor in worsening health. Whereas 65.1% of persons aged 45 to 64 years old defined their health as good or very good, this percentage fell 36.7% in the group aged 65 years old and over. Conversely, those who considered their health to be fair increased from 24.7% to 37.5% years old, and those who perceived it to be bad or very bad went from 10.2% to 25.9%.

Back pain is the most commonplace chronic health problem, followed by hypertension and allergies

According to the results of the Survey, the most commonly-diagnosed chronic illnesses among the population aged 16 years or over were **lower back or neck pain**, as indicated by almost 9.8 million persons (24.9% of the population), **high blood pressure**, which affected 6.6 million persons (19.7%) and **allergies**, affecting 5.5 million persons (16.3%). Next were **depression, chronic anxiety or other mental disorders** (11.7%), **migraines or frequent headaches** (11.6%), **asthma** (7.1%) and **diabetes** (6.6%).

All were more commonplace in women than in men, particularly in the case of migraines and mental problems, the prevalence of which among the female population was more than double that found among the male population.

Most commonplace chronic illnesses (% over the population aged 16 years and over)



Four out of five persons have visited the doctor in the last year

In the four weeks prior to the interview, **one in three persons aged 16 years old and over had visited the family doctor or a specialist**. Women went to the doctor more than men (40.9% as compared with 28.6%), and this difference was most notable in intermediate age groups (34.2% of women aged 25 to 44 years of age as compared with 19.9% of men).

53.3% of persons aged 16 years and over stated that they had **taken medicine** in the two weeks prior to the survey. This proportion was higher in women (60.9%) than in men (45.4%). The difference between sexes occurred in all age groups, but particularly among the youngest ones.

Consumption of medicine was also age-related. While 27.6% of persons aged 16 to 24 years old had taken medicine during the two weeks prior, the percentage increased to 87.3% for persons aged over 64 years old.

9.2% of the population aged 16 years old and over stated that **they had been admitted to hospital** in the last 12 months, representing 3.5 million persons (8.3% of men and 10.1% of women).

27.3% of the employed population have missed work due to health problems in the past 12 months

Five million persons aged 16 years old and over (27.3% of the population) indicated that they had not been able to go to work due to a health problem at some point during the last 12 months.

This situation was more commonplace in women (29.7% as compared with 25.4% of men), particularly in the groups aged 16 to 24 years old (31.2% of women as compared with 21.8% of men) and in those aged 45 to 64 years old (28.6% as compared with 19.8%), whereas there was barely any difference between those aged 25 years old and those aged 44 years old (30.3% of women as compared with 29.5% of men).

Regarding the accident rate, **one in 10 persons stated that they had suffered an accident in the 12 months prior to the interview.** The most typical profiles were of persons who had suffered an accident were those of a **man aged 16 to 24 years of age** (18.8% as compared with 8.4% of women in that age bracket) and of a **woman aged 65 years old and over** (16.1% as compared with 6.0% of men).

Preventive action. Two out of three persons have annual blood pressure and cholesterol check-ups

68.5% of the population stated that they had had a **blood pressure** reading and 67.5% had had a **cholesterol level** reading in the last 12 months. In the case of persons aged 65 years and over, these percentages increased to 88.6% and 82.1% respectively.

Regarding gynaecological prevention practices, **56% of women aged 20 years old and over had at some point had a mammogram** (43.3% less than three years ago). This percentage increased to 88.6% in the group aged 45 to 64 years old (81.6% in the last three years).

In the case of **vaginal cytology**, **74.8% of women** had at some point had the aforementioned test (55.5% in the last three years), and in the 25 to 64 years old age range, this percentage reached 84.2% (67.5% in the last three years).

There is a slight upturn in tobacco consumption

According to the provisional results of the Survey, **31.5% of the population aged 16 years and over had smoked daily or occasionally in the last year**, representing an increase of two points as compared with the latest available data.

27.3% over smoked daily (0.8% more), 4.2% were occasional smokers, 20.5% stated that they were ex-smokers and 48.4% had never smoked. By sex, the percentage of smokers was 32.5% among men and 22.2% among women.

Regarding, more than a third of the population aged 16 years and over had not drunk in the last year. Of those who **consumed alcohol**, **12.7% did so daily** (20% in the case of men as compared with 5.7% of women).

There are fewer differences in terms of regular consumption among young persons: 18.8% of men and 13.6% of women aged 16 to 24 years of age drank alcohol more than two or three times a week.

Obesity affects six million persons

17.1% of persons aged 18 years old and over were **obese** and 36.7% were **overweight**. This was more commonplace in the case of men (18.6% were obese and 44.2% were overweight) than in women (15.6% and 29.2%), and increased with age for both sexes.

At the other end of scale, of note was **insufficient weight**, which occurred in 8.2% of young persons aged 18 to 24 years of age. This problem reached 13.2% in women in this age group, whereas in men aged 18 to 24 years old insufficient weight affected 3.4%

Regarding eating habits, **71.6 out of every 100 persons aged 16 years and over stated that they ate vegetables and 62.8 that they ate fruit at least once a day**. These eating habits are consolidated with the onset of age. Thus, only five out of 10 young persons aged 16 to 24 years of age consumed vegetables daily, increasing to nine out of 10 in people aged over 64 years old. In the case of fruit, 4.5 out of 10 young persons consume it daily as compared with seven out of 10 persons aged 64 years old.

62.3% of the population aged 16 years old carried out intense or moderate physical activity during the week, 27.4% only carried out light activity and 10.3% stated that they did not carry out any activity.

The carrying out of at least moderate physical activity was similar in both sexes (63.0% in men and 61.6% in women), although differences were maintained by age: 80.8% of men aged 16 to 24 years old carried out at least moderate activity as compared with 64.9% of women. Conversely, in the 45 to 64 years old age range, women carried out more physical activity (67.6% as compared with 58.8% of men).

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Methodological note

The European Health Survey Project 2009 (EES09) is a five-yearly study aimed at households. Its main purpose is to obtain data on state of health, lifestyle and use of health services, in a harmonised manner and comparable on a European level. This information makes it possible to plan and evaluate actions regarding health matters, both in Europe and in Spain.

The EES09 aims to provide the data necessary for the European indicators on health matters agreed by the health administrations of EU member states and by the European Commission, as well as for structural and sustainable development indicators. The European Health Survey has been carried out in 18 European Union countries, Spain among them.

It is carried out by the National Statistics Institute (INE) by virtue of the Partnership Agreement established between the INE and Ministry of Health and Social Policy.

Survey scope

The research is aimed at the group of persons that reside in main family dwellings. When the same dwelling comprises two or more households, the study extends to all of them, although independently for each household.

The Survey is conducted throughout the country.

The collection period for information is throughout the year, from April 2009 until March 2010. The results presented correspond to the first 24 survey collection weeks: April 2009- October 2009

Sample design

A stratified tri-stage sample type is used. The first-stage units are the census sections. The second-stage units are the main family dwellings. Within these, no sub-sampling is carried out, investigating all dwellings that are their usual residence. One adult (16 years old or over) is selected within each household. In order to select this person, information is requested in the questionnaire on all persons resident in the dwelling. Subsequently, in light of this information, the person will be selected with the aid of selection tables.

A sample has been selected of approximately 22176 dwellings distributed among 1848 census sections. The sample is distributed between Autonomous Communities assigning a portion uniformly and another in proportion to the size of the Community.

Both national and Autonomous Community results will be provided. Furthermore, a preview of some national results is obtained, which provides statistical tables of the main sections.

Information collection

The information collection method is by personal interview with the aid of a computer.

Definitions

General state of health

This characteristic aims to measure the perception that the person has about his or her state of health in the last 12 months. There are five levels of self-evaluation of one's state of health: Very good, Good, Fair, Bad and Very bad.

Accident

An accident is defined as a fortuitous and unforeseen occurrence, which strikes the individual and causes him or her an identifiable bodily injury. This includes falls, falls, knocks, intoxications, burns suffered in the place of work or study, in the home or while pursuing leisure activities, as well as traffic accidents, whether involving the driver, passengers or pedestrians.

Vaginal cytology

This consists of taking a cell sample that is later analysed in a laboratory. It comprises one of the diagnostic methods for uterine and vaginal cancers and certain infections. It also allows us to learn about female hormonal activity.

. Physical activity

Intense physical activities are those requiring a great deal of physical effort and result in the person breathing more heavily than usual.

Moderate physical activities are those requiring a moderate physical effort and result in the person breathing faster than usual.

.Cholesterol level readings

These determine the total blood cholesterol figures.

Blood pressure reading

this is the measurement of the systolic and diastolic arterial pressure, carried out by a health professional.

Obesity and Body Mass Index

Body Mass Index (BMI) is defined as: $BMI = \text{Weight (Kg)} / \text{Height}^2 \text{ (m)}$

Persons aged over 18 years old are deemed to be overweight if their BMI fluctuates between 25 and 29.9, and obese if their BMI is greater than 30.