

HEALTH CONDITIONS AND USE OF HEALTH SERVICES

Year 2013

- Italy has an ageing population and chronic diseases are increasingly spreading. Compared to 2005, chronic respiratory diseases and arthrosis/arthritis decreased in 2013 - the ageing population came from healthier life experiences - while malignant cancer, Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia increased. This is also due to an improved diagnostic capability.
- The physical health status improved while the mental health status became worse than in 2005: the MHI index decreased by an average of 1.6 points, particularly among young people up to 34 years (-2.7 points), among males, and among adults 45-54 years (-2.6). The decrease is even more relevant for foreigners resident in Italy. The index reduced by an average of 4.7 points, and among foreign women the decrease was 5.4 points.
- Depression is the most common mental health problem and the most sensitive to the impact of the crisis. It affects about 2.6 million people (4.3%), and the prevalence doubles among women compared to men, in any age group.
- The proportion of people with functional limitations continues to decrease, from 6.1% in 2000 to 5.5% in 2013. The number of persons with functional limitations is estimated at over 3 million, of which over 80% are elderly people while women account for two-thirds of the total. In the South of Italy and in the Islands the proportion remained significantly higher compared to the other geographical areas.
- Households with at least one person with functional limitations are 11%. Of these, less than 20% receives public home care services. Even taking into account households that overcome the unmet need paying for private services (out of pocket expenses), more than 70% of households with at least one person with functional limitations don't receive any kind of home care service, neither public nor private.
- Heavy smokers decreased, but the proportion of young women and teenagers who start smoking before the age of 14 increased from 7.6% to 10.5%. Obese adults are 11.2%, and the percentage increases compared to 2000 (9.5%) and to 2005 (10%). In 2013, only 20.6% of population aged 5 and over practices a healthy physical activity, according to the WHO definitions, in their leisure time: 25.9% among men and 15.6% among women.
- The prevention of female cancer increased compared to 2005, thanks to the development of public screening programs. The proportion of women aged 25 years and over who had a mammography screening increased from 43.7% to 54.5%, while 73.6% had a cervical smear test, showing a sharp increase compared to 2005 (+9 percentage points). The largest growths were recorded among women aged 65 years and over, among women with lower education and for the residents in Southern Italy. The prevention increased as well among foreign women, despite the gap with Italian women persists.
- The people who consulted a medical specialist, excluding dentists, increased (11.9% in 2005 and 14.8% in 2013), while dentist visits decreased by 30%.
- The use of non-conventional therapies halved compared to 2000, from 15.8% to 8.2%. The use of homeopathic treatments dropped from 7.0% to 4.1% between 2005 and 2013.
- The level of satisfaction for public health services is very high among users (the mean scores is around 8 on a scale from 1 to 10).
- Social inequities concerning health conditions remained unchanged, as did unhealthy behaviours, and access to health care services. The disadvantage of Southern Italy persist in all considered dimensions.

GRAPH. 1 PEOPLE AGED 65 AND OVER IN BAD HEALTH CONDITIONS ACCORDING TO THE PERCEIVED ECONOMIC CONDITION. Years 2005 e 2013 (Standardized rates).

