

Disability

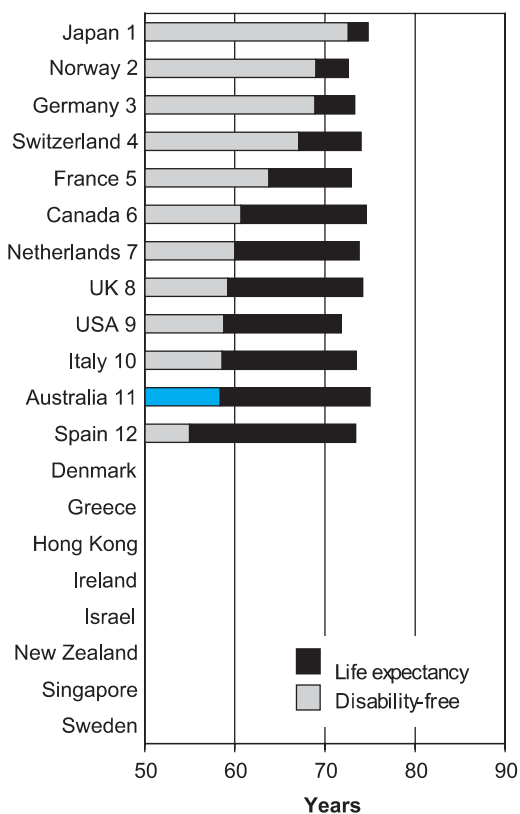


Figure 1: Disability-free life expectancy at birth, men, 1985-1995

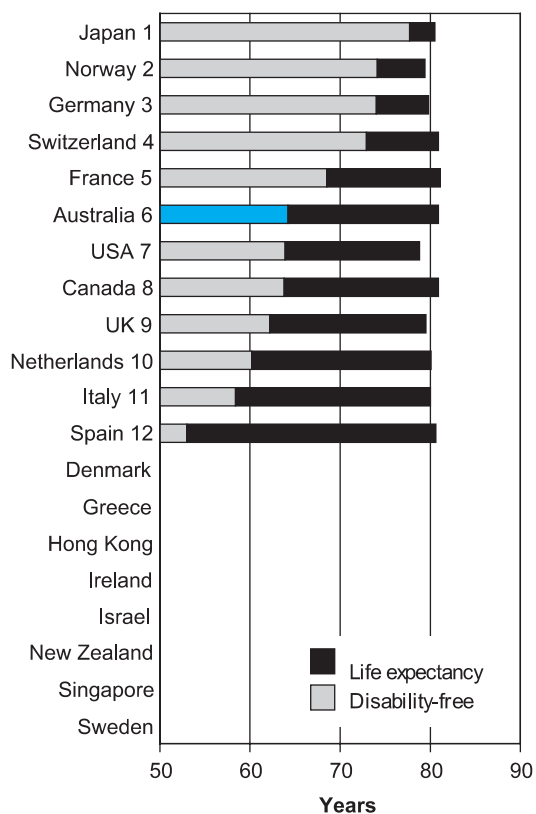


Figure 2: Disability-free life expectancy at birth, women, 1985-1995

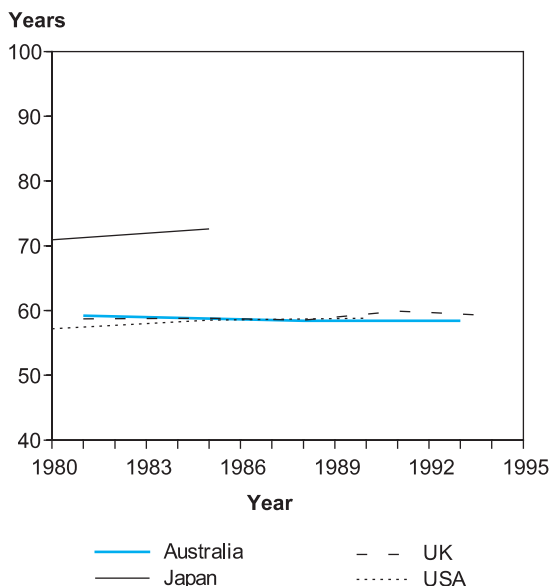


Figure 3: Trends in disability-free life expectancy at birth, men, 1980 to 1995

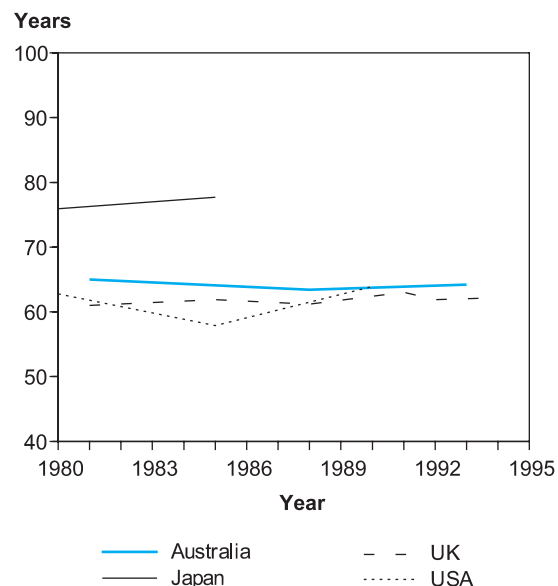


Figure 4: Trends in disability-free life expectancy at birth, women, 1980 to 1995

Disability

Disability-free life expectancy at birth

Country	Year	Men			Women		
		LE ^(a)	DFLE ^(b)	DFLE/LE (%)	LE	DFLE	DFLE/LE (%)
Australia	1993	75.0	58.4	77.9	80.9	64.2	79.4
Canada	1991	74.6	60.7	81.4	80.9	63.8	78.9
Denmark	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
France	1991	72.9	63.8	87.5	81.1	68.5	84.5
Germany	1995	73.3	68.9	94.0	78.8	74.0	92.7
Greece	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hong Kong	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ireland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Israel	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Italy	1990	73.5	58.6	79.7	80.0	58.4	73.0
Japan	1985	74.8	72.6	97.1	80.5	77.7	96.5
Netherlands	1990	73.8	60.0	81.3	80.1	60.2	75.2
New Zealand	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Norway	1985	72.6	69.0	95.0	79.4	74.1	93.3
Singapore	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spain	1991	73.4	55.0	74.9	80.6	53.0	65.8
Sweden	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Switzerland	1988–89	74.0	67.1	90.7	80.9	72.9	90.1
UK	1994	74.2	59.2	79.8	79.5	62.2	78.2
USA	1990	71.8	58.8	81.9	78.8	63.9	81.1

(a) Life expectancy.

(b) Disability-free life expectancy.

Sources: OECD 1998; Crimmins, Saito & Ingegneri 1997.

- Quality-of-life indicators are increasingly being used for programme evaluation, monitoring of population health, research and policy analysis. One of these indicators is health expectancy, which incorporates mortality and morbidity information to give a measure of expectation of life in particular health states. A commonly used example is disability-free life expectancy which estimates the expected years of life free of disability for a population.
- In 1993, life expectancy at birth was 75.0 years for Australian males and 80.9 years for Australian females. Disability-free life expectancy in comparison was 58.4 years for males, and 64.2 years for females, on average slightly under 80% of total life expectancy at birth (Figures 1 and 2).
- International comparisons are complicated by different definitions of disability and differing survey methodologies. The standardisation of definitions and methodologies will allow for better international comparisons. Generally, however, male life expectancy at birth includes a greater proportion of disability. Also, increases in life expectancy are being offset by the expected number of years with disability or handicap (Figures 3 and 4).
- The United States has set a goal of increasing the years of healthy life from an estimated value of 62 years in 1980 to 65 years by the year 2000 (US Department of Health and Human Services 1990). The World Health Organization's fourth European 'Health For All' regional target aims for a 10% increase in healthy life expectancy by the year 2000 (US Congress, Office of Technology Assessment 1993). No current targets have been set for Australia.

For more information, see:

Mathers CD & Robine JM 1998. International trends in health expectancies: a review. *Australasian Journal on Ageing* 17(1) Supplement: 51–55.

Mathers C et al. (eds.) 1994. *Advances in health expectancies: proceedings of the 7th meeting of the International Network on Health Expectancy (REVES)*, Canberra, February 1994. Canberra: AGPS.