

Nursing homes

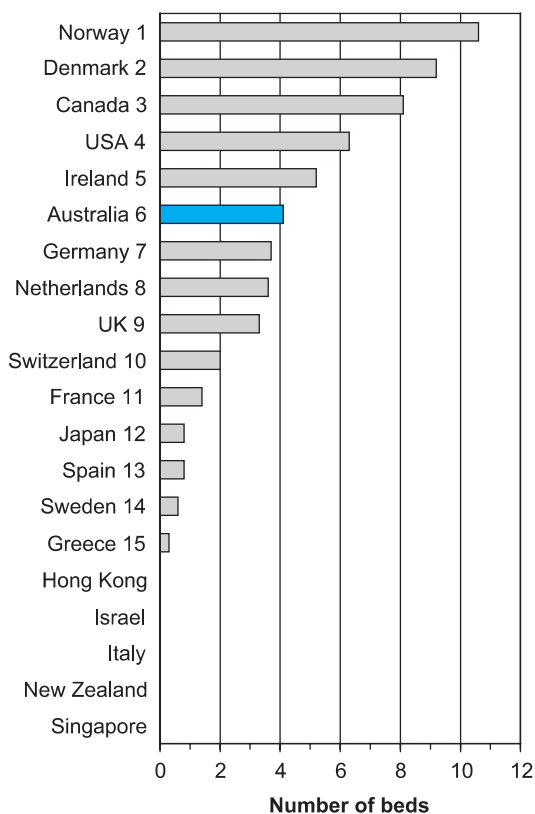


Figure 1: Nursing home beds per 1,000 population, mid-1990s

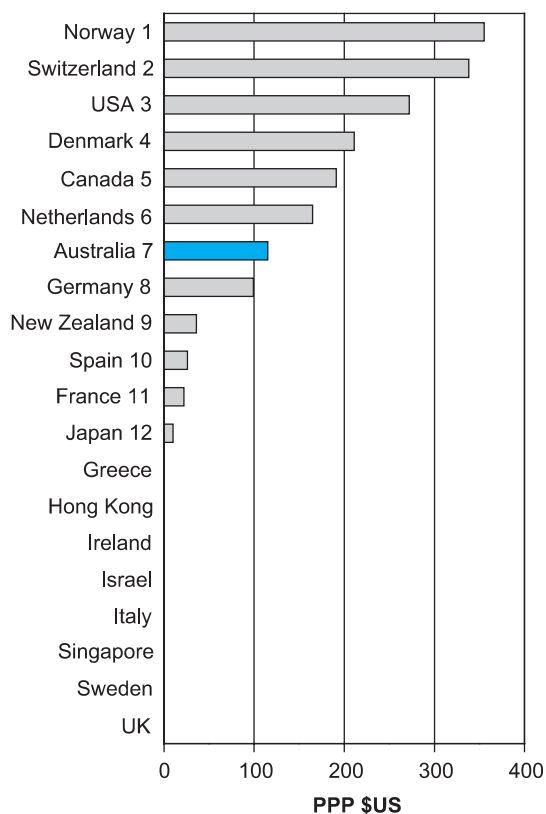


Figure 2: Expenditure per capita on nursing homes, mid-1990s

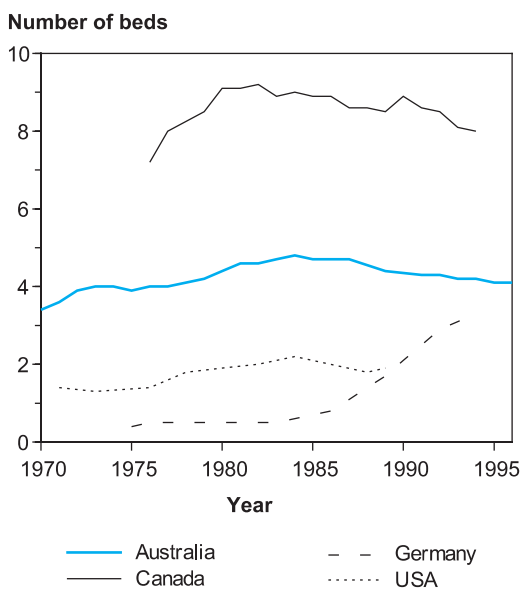


Figure 3: Nursing home beds per 1,000 population, 1970 to 1996

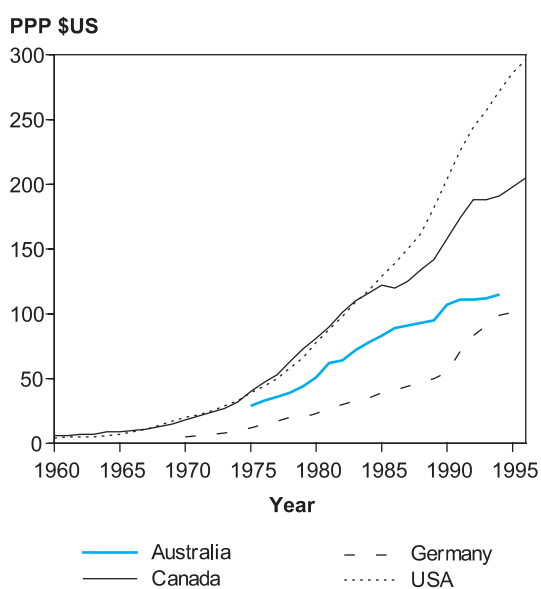


Figure 4: Nursing home expenditure per capita, 1960 to 1996

Nursing homes

Nursing home beds and expenditure

Country	Year	Nursing home beds (per 1,000 pop.)	Expenditure per capita (\$US PPP) ^(a)	% of total health expenditure	% government funded
Australia	1994	4.2	115	7.1	76.6
Canada	1994	8.0	191	9.5	69.3
Denmark	1990	9.2	211	15.5	100.0
France	1995	1.4	23	1.2	100.0
Germany	1995	3.7	101	4.7	100.0
Greece	1989	0.3	—	—	—
Hong Kong	—	—	—	—	—
Ireland	1995	5.2	—	—	—
Israel	—	—	—	—	—
Italy	—	—	—	—	—
Japan	1995	0.8	15	0.9	100.0
Netherlands	1996	3.6	180	10.2	97.0
New Zealand	1992	—	36	3.3	95.7
Norway	1993	10.6	355	20.6	100.0
Singapore	—	—	—	—	—
Spain	1994	0.8	26	2.5	19.5
Sweden	1996	0.5	—	—	100.0
Switzerland	1994	2.0	338	14.8	—
UK	1994	3.3	—	—	—
USA	1994	6.3	272	7.5	59.5

(a) Purchasing power parities (PPP) are used here to convert health expenditure. PPPs show the rate at which a given amount of one currency can be converted into the other in order to purchase the same quantity of a particular item in both countries (OECD 1998).

Source: OECD 1998.

- Different countries exhibit different methods of care for their frail and disabled aged persons. In some countries, the burden of responsibility traditionally falls upon the immediate family, who resort to home care. Other countries have well-developed frameworks of community and residential care, involving nursing homes, hostels and domiciliary care.
- In 1994, Australia had 4.2 nursing home beds per 1,000 population, ranking in the upper half of developed countries for which data were available (Figure 1). Norway had the highest bed ratio at 10.6 per 1,000 population in 1993. Sweden, Spain, Greece and Japan had much lower ratios.
- Australia's nursing home bed ratio has shown a slight increase since the mid-1970s, peaking in the mid-1980s (Figure 3). This trend is similar to those for the United States and Canada. There have been substantial increases in the United Kingdom nursing home bed ratio since 1985.
- Japan's 'Gold Plan', implemented in 1990, recognised the weak infrastructure for supplying nursing and rehabilitation services for the elderly, and devoted significant resources towards improvement (Watanabe in OECD 1994). Bed ratios have increased from 0.2 to 0.8 per 1,000 population between 1990 and 1995.
- Care for the aged accounts for a significant proportion of the health budget in several developed countries. In 1994, Australia spent US\$115 per capita, or 7.1% of total health expenditure, on nursing home care. Norway, Switzerland and the United States exhibited much higher expenditure on nursing home care at over US\$250 per capita (Figure 2). Norway, Denmark, Switzerland and the Netherlands each spent in excess of 10% of their total health expenditure on nursing home care.
- Some 77% of Australian nursing home funding is provided by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments—the balance is sourced privately. In several countries, most notably the Scandinavian countries, health care is entirely provided by government. A large proportion of nursing homes in the United States, in contrast, are privately operated.

For more information, see:

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 1997. *Australia's welfare 1997: services and assistance*. Canberra: AIHW.