

## The Arab Population in Israel: Facts & Figures December 2015

Facts and Figures provides basic data on Israel's Arab population with regard to demography, education, employment, socio-economic status, and health, including comparisons between the Arab and Jewish populations.

Source citations are listed at the conclusion of this document.

### DEMOGRAPHY

#### Total Population

In 2014, Israel had 1.72 million Arab citizens, representing 21% of the country's total population. (1)

#### Religious Composition

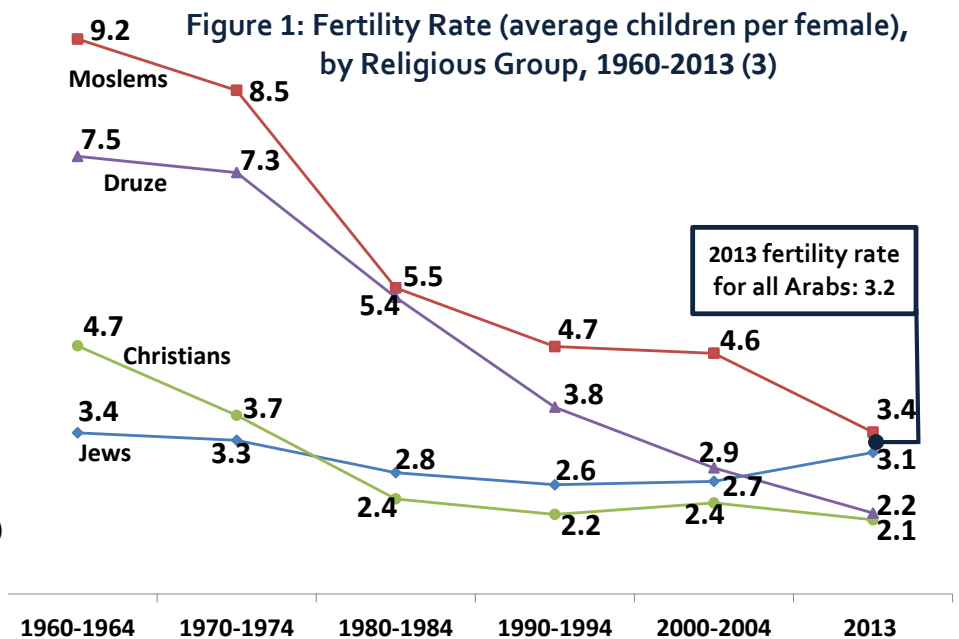
As of 2014, 83% of Arabs were Muslim (including the Bedouin). Other religious groups included Christians (9%) and Druze (8%). (2)

#### Age Structure

In 2013, 44% of all Arabs in Israel were age 18 or younger, as compared with only 32% of Jewish Israelis. (3)

#### Fertility Rates

Fertility rates have declined since 1960 among all Arab groups, and the gaps between Arabs and Jews have all but disappeared—3.2 children among Arabs and 3.1 children among Jews in 2013. Of note is that the fertility rate of both Christian Arabs and Druze is now below the rate for Jews. (3)



#### Family Size

Despite the decline in fertility, Arab families are still considerably larger, with 10% having five or more children, compared with only 3% of Jewish households in 2011. (4)

## EDUCATION

There have been significant improvements in the educational levels of Arabs, but the gaps between Arabs and Jews are still large.

### Dropping Out of High School

Dropout rates among Arab students continue to be far above the rates of Jewish students. In 2013, by age 17, 14% of Arab students had dropped out of school versus 8% of Jewish students. This makes them ineligible for most vocational training programs, and reduces their employment prospects considerably. (5)

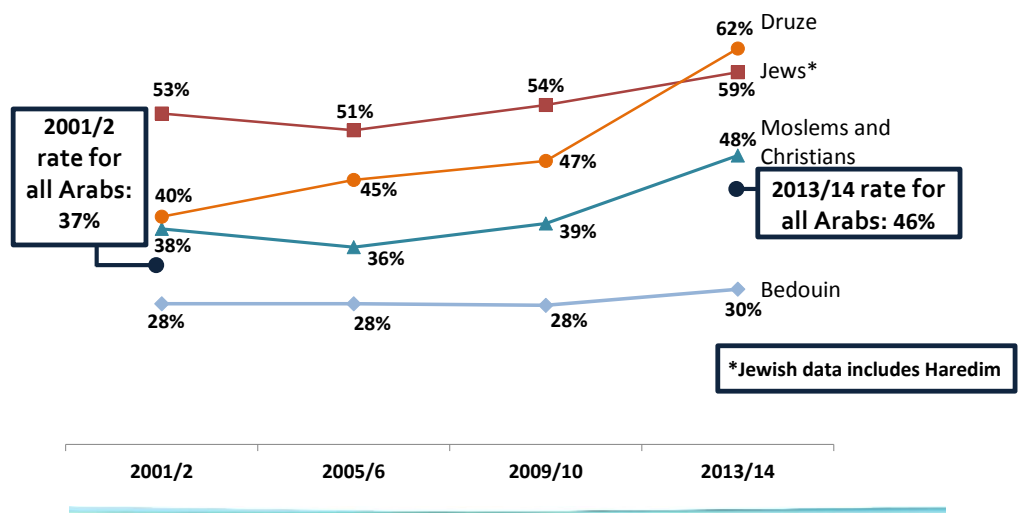
### University-bound

In Israel, high school students take a series of matriculation exams known as *bagruyot*. These exams are the primary basis for acceptance into higher education. The exam scores, therefore, are an important indicator of the trend in educational advancement and subsequent economic success.

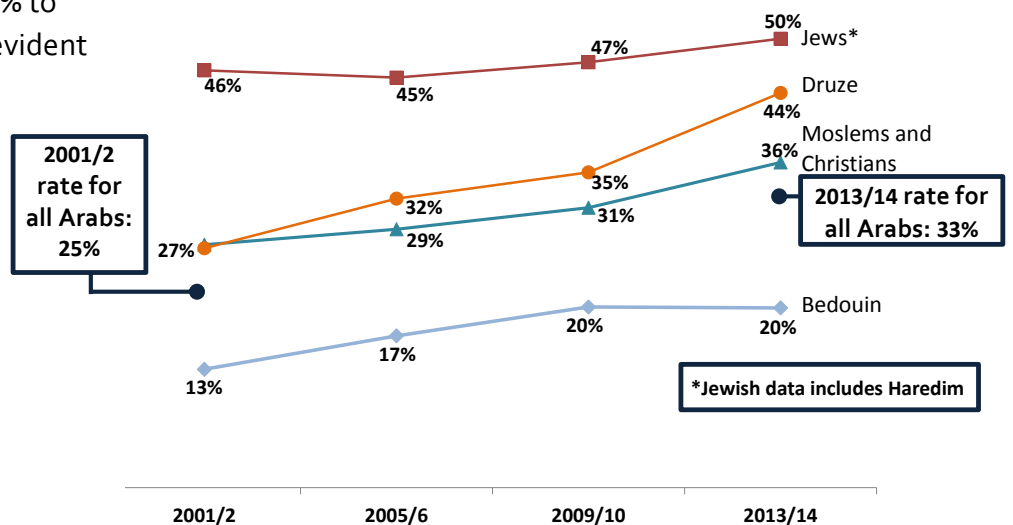
Between 2001 and 2014, university-eligible matriculation rates steadily improved among all Arab 17-year olds, from 25% to 33%. This improvement was evident in all groups. (6)

These improvements notwithstanding, university-eligible matriculation rates are still well below those of Jewish students. (6)

**Figure 2: Percentage of Arab 17-Year-Olds Receiving General Matriculation Certificate, 2001-2014 (6)**



**Figure 3: Percentage of Arab 17-Year-Olds Receiving University-Level Matriculation Certificate, 2001-2014 (6)**

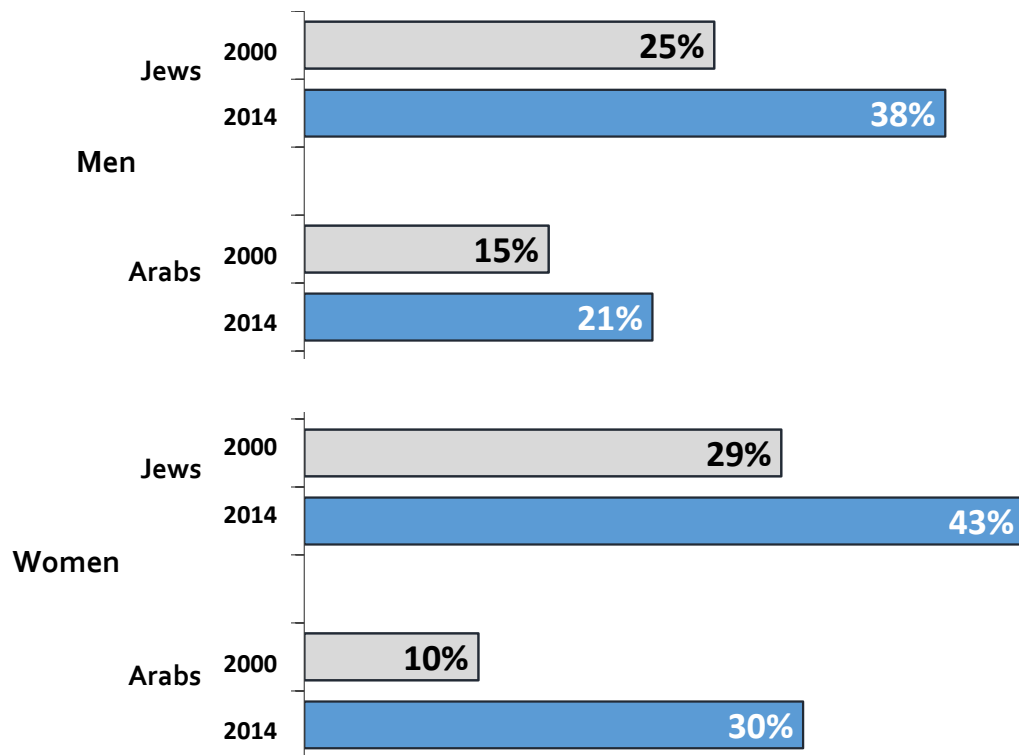


## Years of Education

Arab education levels have improved dramatically since 2000, with Arab women making the most rapid educational progress. In 2014, 30% of Arab women ages 25-34 had 16+ years of education, compared with only 10% in 2000. In fact, the rates for Arab women have now surpassed those for Arab men—30% compared with 21%. (7)

Despite these improvements, significant gaps persist between Arabs and Jews at both the lower and higher education levels.

**Figure 4: Percentage with 16+ Years of Education, Arab and Jewish Women and Men, Ages 25-34, 2000 and 2014 (7)**



## EMPLOYMENT

### Arab Women

The most significant employment gap is between Arab and Jewish women.

- Even though employment rates for Arab women have increased since 1997, only 33% of Arab women of working age were employed in 2014, compared with 71% among Jewish women. (8)
- In 2011, 27% of working-age Arab women worked part time, and the majority preferred to find full-time employment. (7)
- Education matters. In 2011, 74% of women with 13+ years of education were employed or studying, compared with only 7% of women with less than 8 years of education. (7)
- There is significant untapped potential. Of particular note is that in 2011 over half of Arab women ages 18 to 24 were neither working nor studying. 82% of these women had completed high school and only 29% had children. (7)

In general, young Arab women have unique, additional challenges that impede on their integration into the labor force.

- **Language.** A significant percentage of young Arab women do not speak or write well in Hebrew—even among those who have completed high school. Most Arabs study in schools in which Arabic is the primary language, with Hebrew studied as a second language.
- **Technical skills.** Arab women have more limited backgrounds in computers, compared with their Jewish counterparts.

Figure 5: Employment among Arab Women and All Jewish Women, Ages 25-64, 1997-2014 (8)

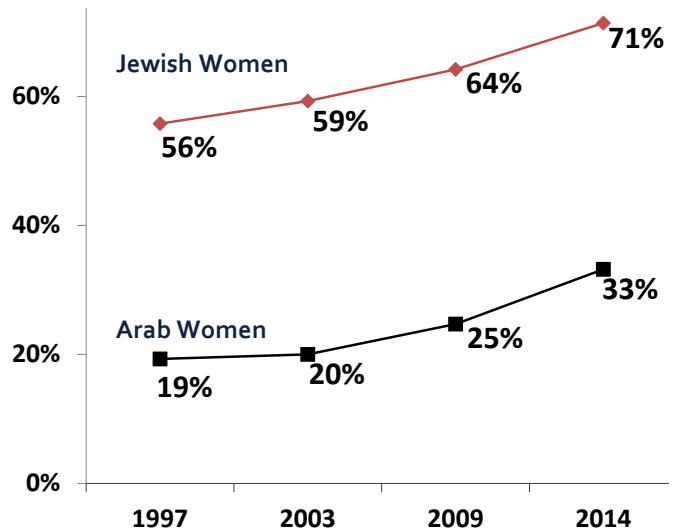
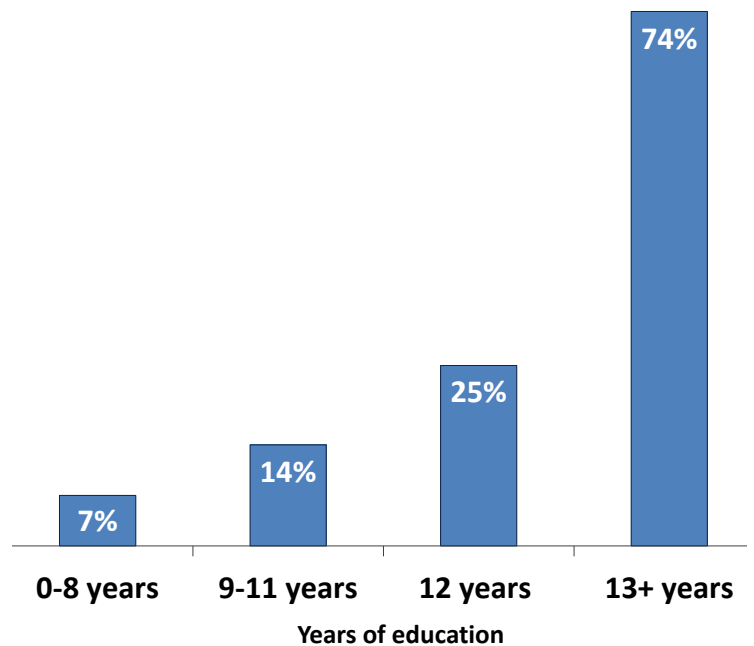


Figure 6: Percent of Arab Women Studying or Working, by Years of Education, Ages 18-64, 2011 (7)



- **Vocational training.** A 2011 study from MJB revealed that very few young Arab women have participated in any kind of vocational training program. (9)

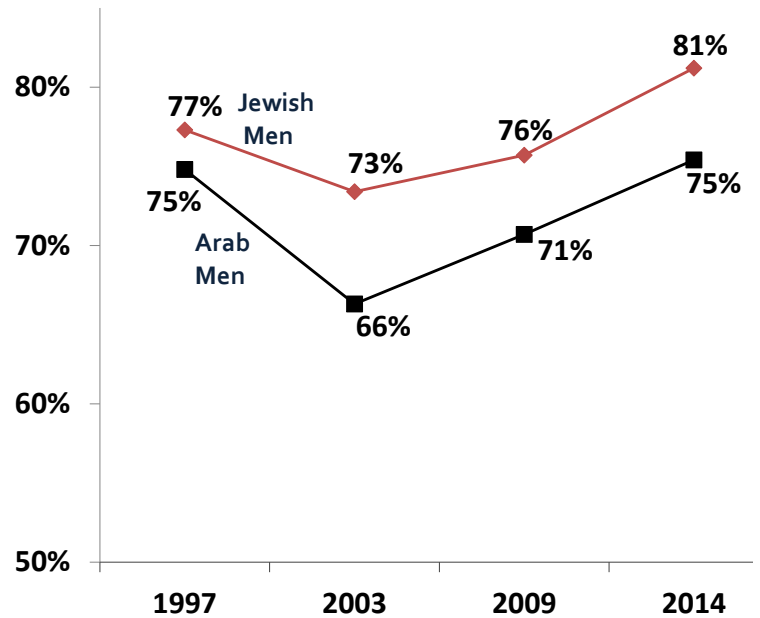
## Arab Men

The economic recession in the early 2000s hit Arab men harder than other segments of Israeli society, and their employment levels have not fully recovered.

Still, the employment gap is not large. In 2014, 75% of Arab men ages 25-64 worked, compared with 81% of the broader population of Israeli men. (8)

Differences in employment rates are due to the dramatic drop in employment rates among Arab men over age 45. (7)

Figure 7: Employment among Arab Men and All Jewish Men Ages 25-64, 1997-2014 (8)



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

The gaps in education, employment, wages, and family size have led to major gaps in economic status between Arabs and Jews.

- In 2013, 47% of Arab families lived in poverty (after taxes and transfer payments), compared with 14% of Jewish families. (10, 11)

Table 1: Poverty among Families and Children, 2013 (10, 11)

Arab Families	Jewish Families	Arab Children	Jewish Children
47%	14%	66%	20%
164,900	269,600	382,600	374,400

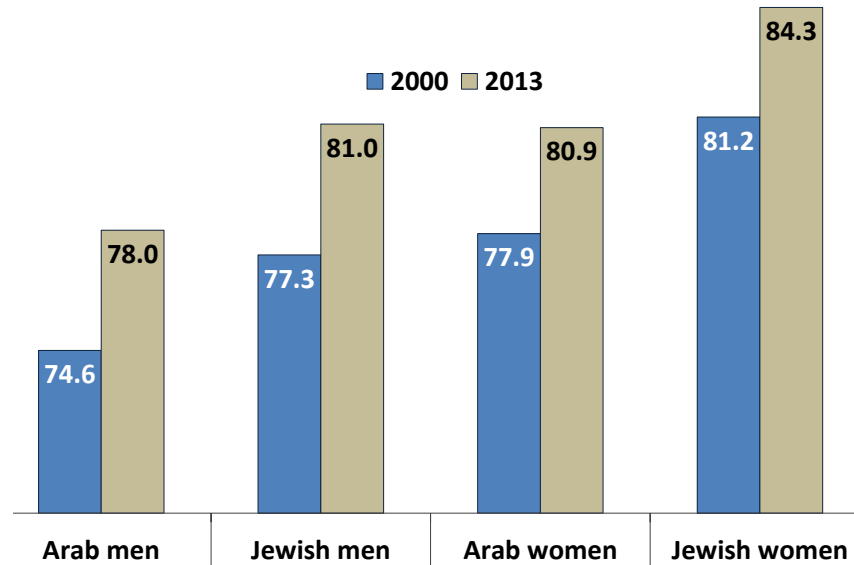
- Arab families constitute 38% of all poor families, far above their proportion of all Israeli families (15%). (10, 11)

## HEALTH

### Life Expectancy

Life expectancy has increased considerably among Arab men and women since 2000. In 2013, life expectancy for Arab men had risen to 78.0 years, and to 80.9 years for women. (12)

Figure 8: Life Expectancy in Years for Arab and Jewish Men and Women, 2000 and 2013



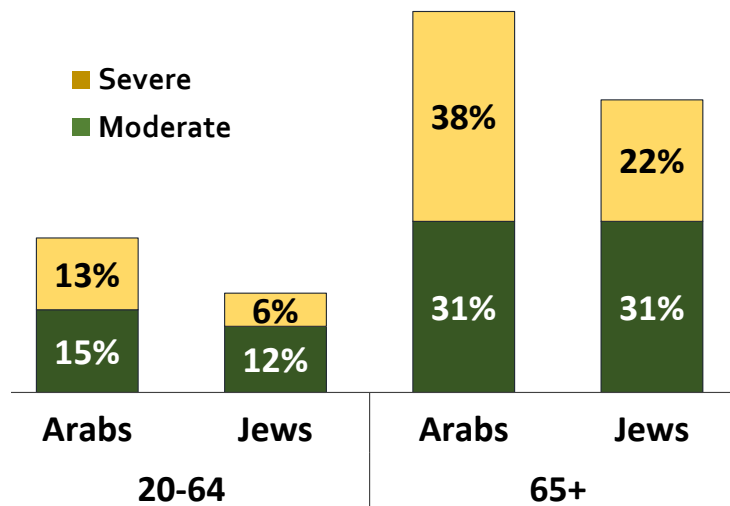
### Infant Mortality

Infant mortality rate among the Arab population have declined drastically over the years, though the 2010-12 rate of 6.6 per thousand for non-Jews is still more than double the rate among Jews (2.7 per thousand). (12)

### Disability

Disability rates among adult and elderly Arabs are significantly higher than the rate among Jewish Israelis, especially the rates of those severely disabled.

Figure 9: Disability Rates for Arabs and Jews (2013) (13)



## Health Behaviors

Gaps in health behaviors contribute significantly to differences in health status between Arab and Jewish Israelis. (Data is from 2010, except where noted.)



46% of Arab men ages 20 and older are **smokers**, compared with only 28% of Jewish men. Among women, the differences are reversed—only 9% of Arab women smoke, compared with 19% of Jewish women. High exposure to second-hand smoke is greater in the Arab population compared to the Jewish population—48% compared with 35%. (14)



**Physical activity** is much less prevalent among Arabs than it is among Jews. Only 48% of Arabs ages 20 and older report exercising, compared with 70% of Jews. (14)



69% of Arab women ages 50-74 reported having a **mammogram test** within the previous two years, compared with 76% of Jewish women. (14)



Only 16% of Arabs reported receiving a **flu shot**, compared with 25% of Jews. Among those 65 and older, the gaps are even greater—42% compared with 59%. (14)



Arabs experiencing **mental distress** are less likely to turn to professionals for help than are Jews—21% compared with 39%, in 2013. (15)

## Sources

1. Israel Monthly Statistical Abstract, February 2015.
2. Statistical Abstract of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014.
3. Statistical Abstract of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013.
4. Central Bureau of Statistics Labor Force survey, 2011.
5. CBS, Statistical Abstract of Israel, 65, 2014, Table 8.22.
6. MJB special analysis of data from the Ministry of Education, Examinations Division and Data Processing Administration, "Matriculation Exams Data 2014," Jerusalem 2015.
7. MJB special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics data, 2000 and 2014..
8. Central Bureau of Statistics special data extract from Labor Force Survey, 2014.
9. Habib, J., King, J., Ben Shoham, A., Wolde-Tsadick, A., Lasky, K. *OECD SOCIAL, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION WORKING PAPERS NO. 102 Labour Market and Socio-Economic Outcomes of the Arab-Israeli Population*. 2010.
10. National Insurance Institute Annual Report, 2013.
11. MJB special analysis of Central Bureau of Statistics 2013 Family Expenditure Survey.
12. Table 3.32, Statistical Abstract of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014.
13. Central Bureau of Statistics, General Social Survey. 2013.
14. Ministry of Health, Strategic and Economic Planning Authority, *Addressing Health Inequalities*, 2014.
15. Elroy, I.; Rosen, B., and Elmakias, I. Forthcoming. *Mental Health Services in Israel: Needs, Utilization and Barriers – General Population Survey*. Jerusalem: Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Founded in 1974, the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is Israel's leading center for applied research on social policy and services, serving Israel, the Jewish world, and the international community. MJB is an independent, non-profit partnership between the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Government of Israel, and the David and Inez Myers Foundation of Cleveland. The Institute's Board of Directors is composed of senior government officials from the ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Health, and Finance, and Israel's Social Security Administration, along with international experts, and major international Jewish lay leaders.*

*To learn more about MJB, visit [www.jdc.org.il/brookdale](http://www.jdc.org.il/brookdale) or [www.facebook.com/MJBInstitute](http://www.facebook.com/MJBInstitute).*