

Israel's Elderly

Facts and Figures

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מאירס - ג'ינט - מכון ברוקדייל
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MASHAV
Planning for the Elderly - A National
Data Base



JDC-ESHEL
The Association for the Planning and Development
of Services for the Aged in Israel



Facts and Figures

Facts and Figures provides basic data on the elderly population in Israel with regard to demography, health, socio-economic status, and services for the elderly. It contains the latest figures and indicates noteworthy changes that have taken place over the course of time. Further information on the topics covered, can be found on the Mashav website: www.jdc.org.il/mashav.



General notes

- ◆ All data refer to 2007, unless otherwise stated.
- ◆ The term “elderly” refers to the 65+ age group, unless otherwise stated.

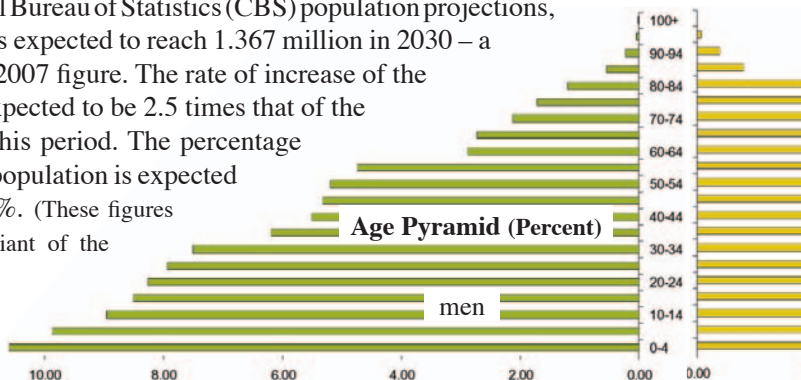
The elderly population today and in the future

At the end of 2007, Israel had a population of 7,244,000. The elderly population (65+) was 708,000 – 10% of the general population. One in four households in Israel included someone aged 65 or over.

The 65+ population has grown by an average of 10,700 per year (statistics for 2004–2006). This figure was calculated on the basis of demographic fluctuations, as follows: 40,200 persons who had reached the age of 64 at the beginning of the year, plus 900 new immigrants aged 65+, minus 30,400 deaths in the 65+ age group.

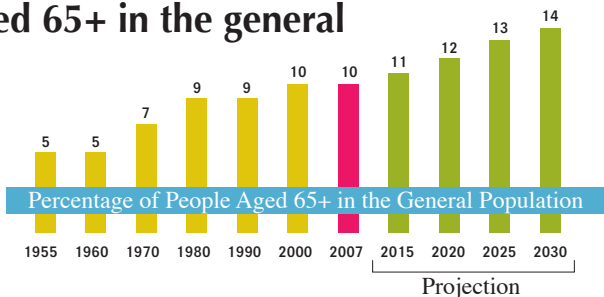
Elderly Arabs (Muslims, Christian Arabs, and Druze) make up 7% of the elderly population. The Arab population is relatively young and the proportion of elderly stands at 3%, compared with 11% in the population of “Jews and others” (Jews, non-Arab Christians, and persons not classified by religion).

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) population projections, the elderly population is expected to reach 1.367 million in 2030 – a 93% increase over the 2007 figure. The rate of increase of the elderly population is expected to be 2.5 times that of the general population in this period. The percentage of Arabs in the elderly population is expected to rise from 7% to 12%. (These figures relate to the medium variant of the population projections.)



Percentage of persons aged 65+ in the general population

For 13 years (since 1994), the elderly population has constituted 10% of the general population. To put this in a historical context, the figure has doubled since the 1950s and is expected to reach 14% by 2030.



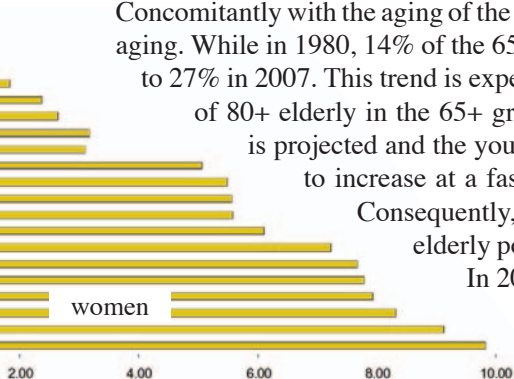
However, Israel has a lower proportion of elderly in the population than other developed countries. In Japan, Italy, and Germany, the proportion of elderly in the general population (20% on average) is double that in Israel, while in Europe as a whole, it is 16%. The reason for this is that Israel has a higher fertility rate than other developed countries. However, as in other developed countries, the fertility rate in Israel is declining.

Percentage of 80+ elderly in the 65+ age group

Concomitantly with the aging of the general population, the elderly population itself is aging. While in 1980, 14% of the 65+ group were aged 80+, the percentage had risen to 27% in 2007. This trend is expected to continue until 2010, when the percentage of 80+ elderly in the 65+ group will reach 28%. After 2010, a reverse trend is projected and the young elderly population (79 and under) is expected to increase at a faster rate than the older elderly population (80+).

Consequently, the proportion of the 80+ age group within the elderly population is expected to decline (to 23% in 2025).

In 2030, the proportion of those aged 80+ is expected to return to the level of 2010 (28%).



Percentage of women by age

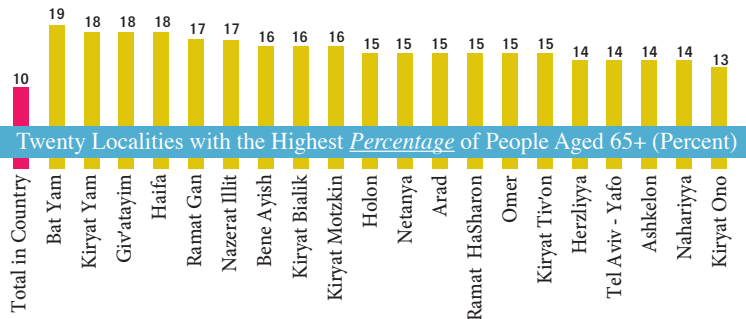
The proportion of women in the population varies by age. Overall, women represent 51% of the population. However, in the younger age groups (up to age 24), women account for less than half the population. In the 25+ age groups, the percentage of women rises, reaching 61% in the 80+ age group. The greater proportion of elderly women in the elderly population is reflected in the “sex ratio” of men per 1,000 women. The sex ratio for the 65+ age group (i.e., the number of men aged 65+ for every 1,000 women aged 65+) is 749; the figure drops to 637 for the 80+ age group.

Birthplace

Fifteen percent of elderly Jews and others (non-Arabs) were born in Israel, in contrast to nearly two-thirds (65%) of the general population. The percentage of Israeli-born elderly is growing and this may have ramifications for the characteristics of the elderly population in the future. A quarter of the elderly population immigrated to Israel in the last 18 years (since 1990), the majority from the former Soviet Union.

Geography

Although Jerusalem is a relatively “young” city (the elderly constitute 8% of the population), the fact that it is the largest city in the country means that it is home to more elderly persons than any other city. Furthermore, in 2007, Jerusalem registered the greatest increase in the number of elderly: approximately 800



persons. In contrast, there was a negative growth of about one thousand elderly in Tel Aviv-Yafo.

Type of locality

Ninety-four percent of the elderly population live in urban localities (with a population of at least 2,000), similar to the percentage for the general population (92%). About one third of the elderly population lives in Israel's five largest cities: Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Haifa, Rishon Leziyyon, and Ashdod. One quarter of the general population lives in these five cities.

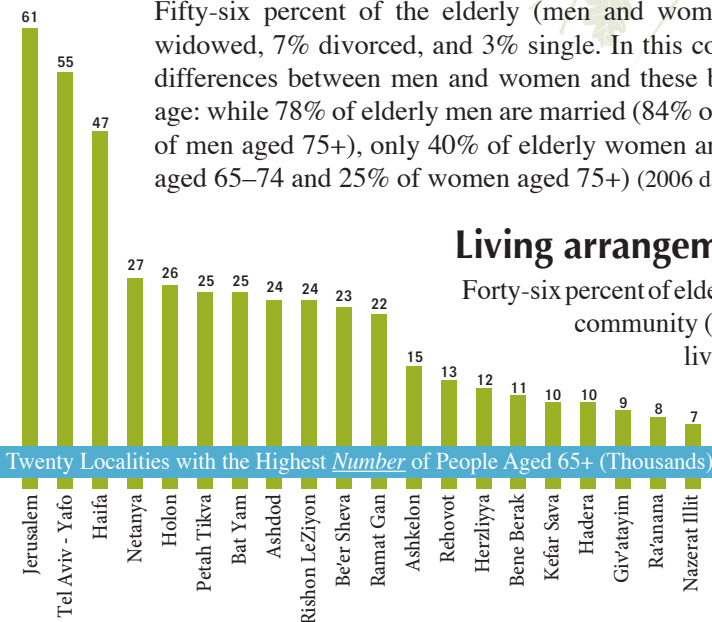
Family status

Fifty-six percent of the elderly (men and women) are married, 34% are widowed, 7% divorced, and 3% single. In this context, there are significant differences between men and women and these become more marked with age: while 78% of elderly men are married (84% of men aged 65–74 and 70% of men aged 75+), only 40% of elderly women are married (55% of women aged 65–74 and 25% of women aged 75+) (2006 data).

Living arrangements

Forty-six percent of elderly persons who reside in the community (96% of the elderly in Israel)

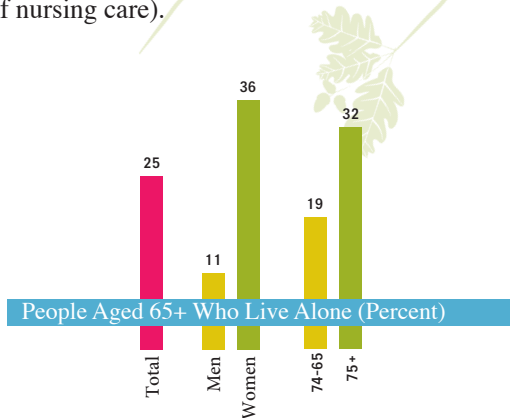
live in households consisting of couples without children. A quarter of elderly persons live alone, 10% live in a household comprising a couple with children,



5% live in a household comprising a single parent and his or her children, and 14% live in other types of arrangement. The elderly who do not live in the community (approx. 4% of the elderly population) reside in long-term care institutions (homes for the aged, hospitals for the chronically ill, or various forms of nursing care).

Elderly who live alone

Twenty-five percent of the elderly in Israel live alone (both sexes). The percentage is higher in industrialized countries (e.g., in the Scandinavian countries it is at least 35%) and lower in developing countries (e.g., in Morocco, Ethiopia, and India, it is below 6%). The proportion of elderly who live on their own increases with age and more elderly women than elderly men live alone.



Holocaust survivors

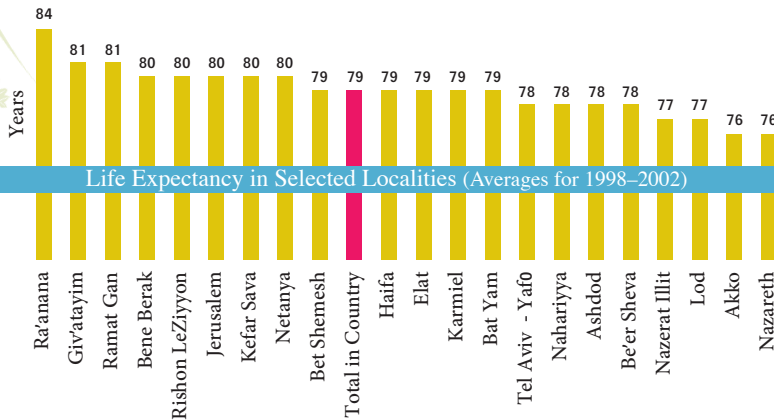
According to 2008 end-of-year revised estimates, approximately 233,700 Holocaust survivors live in Israel, constituting 32% of the 65+ age group. Holocaust survivors are older than the general elderly population in Israel and 45% of them are 80+.

Life expectancy in Israel

Together with Japan, Australia, and Sweden, Israel has the highest life expectancy for males at birth in the world (79 years). Life expectancy for females at birth in Israel is 4 years less than that of Japan, which has the highest rate in the world – 82 and 86 years respectively (2006 data). At age 65, life expectancy is 20 years for women and 18 years for men; at age 80, it is about 9 years for women and men.

Life expectancy by locality

The national life expectancy reflects a weighted average of various areas and localities with their diverse populations. A number of studies have found a connection between demographic, social, and economic characteristics and life expectancy. Differences in these characteristics from one locality to another will therefore impact on the differences found in life expectancy in different localities.



Disabled elderly

It is estimated that there are 117,000 disabled elderly (i.e., those in need of assistance with activities of daily living [ADL] such as washing and dressing), constituting 16% of the elderly population. Four out of five disabled elderly live in the community and one in a long-term care institution (home for the aged or hospital for the chronically ill). Twenty-two percent of the elderly who live in the community need assistance with mobility outside of the home.

Health perception

The data reveal that elderly men are more likely than women to consider themselves to be in good health (46% of men compared with 37% of women defined their state of health as “good” or “very good”). As expected, with the rise in age, the percentage of elderly who consider they are in good health declines (33% of elderly aged 75+ defined their health as “good” or “very good” compared with 48% of elderly aged 65–74).

Health Perception: 65+ Age Group and 20+ Age Group

	Total	Very good	Good	Not so good	Not at all good
65+	100%	6%	35%	38%	21%
20+	100%	42%	37%	15%	6%

Use of health services

The elderly make greater use of health services than younger age groups. For example, the average rate of hospitalization for the elderly is 3.4 times higher than that of the general population (516 per 1,000 people among the elderly compared to 154 per 1,000 in the general population). Elderly men are more likely than elderly women to be hospitalized. On average, those in the 65+ age group visit a family physician 16 times a year and a specialist eight times a year, while members of the 21+ age group visit a family physician eight times a year and a specialist five times a year (2003/4 data).

Health promotion

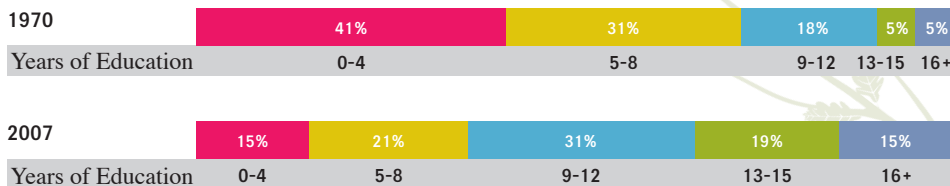
Physical exercise is one of the most important factors in health promotion. In recent years, there has been increasing awareness and acknowledgement in every sector of society of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. Forty-one percent of the 65+

age group engage in physical exercise three times a week or more, in comparison to 29% of the 21+ age group (2003/4 data).

Education

The level of education of the elderly is constantly rising. The elderly population maintains a more traditional lifestyle than younger age groups do and this is reflected, inter alia, in a considerable disparity between the level of education of men and that of women. In recent decades, however, elderly women have increased their level of education at a much higher rate than elderly men have and, as a result, the educational gap between men and women in the elderly population has been reduced.

Years of Education of the Elderly: 1970 and 2007



Employment

Employment among Persons Aged 65+ (Percent)

	Total	Men	Women
1970	18.1	31.1	4.7
1990	12.9	20.0	6.9
2007	10.0	16.2	5.1

Since the 1970s, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of employed people in the elderly population, stemming from the decline in the employment rate among elderly men. The employment rate among elderly women is relatively low and has been quite steady over the years. The last three years (2005–2007) have witnessed stability in the employment rate among men.

Income

Average net income per standard capita (which takes into account the number of persons in the household) in households of the elderly* is not significantly different from the average net income per standard capita of households in the general population. Income for households of single elderly persons is lower, and income for households of couples is higher.

Income support

Since 1980, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of elderly* eligible for income support benefits. In 1980, the figure was 45%, which had fallen to 26% in 2007, due, in part, to the rise in the proportion of elderly receiving retirement pensions. In the past seven years, the number of elderly receiving such pensions has risen, even though the majority do not receive them. Currently, 35% of the elderly population (45% of elderly men and 29% of elderly women) receive retirement pensions.

Poverty

In 2006, 84,500 households headed by an elderly person* were living below the poverty line. In 2007, there were 92,100 such families. The prevalence of poverty

* In this context, “elderly” refers to men aged 65+ and women aged 60+.

in households headed by an elderly person was 21.5% in 2006 and 22.6% in 2007. Old-age pensions and income support benefits (transfer payments) help to prevent a significant number of elderly from falling into the poverty cycle. The decrease in the prevalence of poverty following transfer payments is 60%.

Average Net Income per Standard Capita by Type of Household (NIS)

Total households that include elderly persons	3,965
Total households of elderly persons (single or couple)	4,230
Single elderly persons	3,564
Total households of couples, at least one of whom is elderly	4,645
Total households of couples, both of whom are elderly	4,420
Other households with at least one elderly person	3,649
All households in Israel	3,843

Satisfaction with life

According to the Social Survey, 78% of elderly people reported they were generally satisfied with their lives (16% were very satisfied and 62% were satisfied). In contrast, 85% of the 20+ age group reported they were generally satisfied with their lives (30% were very satisfied and 56% were satisfied).

Life Satisfaction: 65+ Age Group compared to 20+ Age Group

	Total	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Not so satisfied	Not at all satisfied
65+	100%	16%	62%	16%	5%
20+	100%	30%	56%	12%	3%

Feelings of loneliness

Twenty percent of persons aged 65+ often feel lonely, compared to 9% of the 20+ age group. The proportion of elderly women who often feel lonely is double that of elderly men (25% and 13%, respectively). The increase in age (among the elderly) also increases feelings of loneliness.

Use of computers and the Internet

The elderly population is rapidly making increasing use of technology, notably computers. While 10% of the elderly were using a computer in 2002, the figure had risen to 21% in 2007. The 20+ age group obviously uses computers more: 47% and 62% in the respective years. Use of the Internet is also rising among the elderly population. In 2002, 60% of those who used a computer also used the Internet. In 2006, 83% of those who used a computer also used the Internet (an increase of 38%).

Volunteering

Volunteering among aged 65+ and 20+ (Percent)

	65+ age group	20+ age group
Volunteers:	11.5	14.2
Volunteers who volunteer for over 10 hours a month (2006)	62.7	49.9

Volunteering is one of the main forms of occupation of the elderly. It enriches those who volunteer and those who receive their help. Men tend to be more involved in volunteer work than women. The proportion of volunteers among the elderly is somewhat lower than for the 20+ age group, but elderly volunteers devote more hours to volunteering activities.

Selected Services for the Elderly

Persons aged 65+ registered at social service departments:	237,400
Percentage of persons registered in the 65+ population:	33.6%
Elderly* persons eligible under the terms of the Long-term Care Insurance Law:	128,100
Percentage of eligible persons in the elderly* population:	15.1%
Elderly* receiving heating allowance:	37,400
Percentage of elderly* receiving heating allowance:	4.4%
Day-care centers for the elderly (2008):	172
Clients registered at day-care centers:	15,500
Percentage of clients in the 65+ population:	2.2%
Supportive communities for the elderly:	178
Members of supportive communities:	36,800
Percentage of members in the 65+ population:	5.2%
Long-term care institutions:	403
Total number of beds:	30,200
For frail and semi-independent elderly:	10,300
For nursing and mentally frail elderly:	19,900
Rate of total beds per thousand persons aged 65+:	43

* Men aged 65+ and women aged 60+

In addition to the universal services for which the elderly, like every other age group, are eligible (e.g., community health services and hospitalization), there is a unique system of special services for them. The system is divided into community services, which are provided in the home of the elderly person or at various day-care facilities, and institutional long-term care services, which are provided in residential facilities where the elderly go to live. Since the 1980s, there has been a significant development of services provided within the community, and new services designed to preserve the quality of life of the elderly have been added to longstanding services.

Sources: Central Bureau of Statistics, National Insurance Institute, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services, ESHEL, Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, US Census Bureau.

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