



6.8. Number of nursing vacancies in hospitals (A-7)

6.8.1. Documentation sheet

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Description | Number of nursing vacancies in hospitals |
| Calculation | Absolute number of vacancies for hospital nurses (Bachelor degree and Diploma degree): head count and Full-time equivalents (FTE) |
| Rationale | <p>For more than 2 decades nursing shortages are reported in most industrialized countries, a problem that will only accelerate by the ageing population (and the ageing nursing workforce)^{y1}. Both in Flanders as in Wallonia the nursing profession is labelled as a profession for which it is difficult to fill vacancies^z.</p> <p>Monitoring nursing shortages via the number of unfilled vacancies is therefore important in light of the sustainability and accessibility of the healthcare system. After all, the nursing workforce is the largest healthcare profession for which shortages can cause problems with the accessibility (e.g. waiting lists) or quality (e.g. to high patient-to-nurse ratios) with healthcare services.</p> |
| Data source | <p>The yearly survey of 'hospital statistics'^{aa} contains, since 2013, a question about the number of unfilled vacancies. The number of vacancies is defined as 'the number of vacancies for which a call (intern/extern) is launched'. Hospitals are asked to complete this question for 4 moments in time: 31/03; 30/06; 30/09; 31/12. The data are collected per educational degree: Master degree; Bachelor degree; Diploma degree. No data were reported in Wallonia in 2013 due to encoding problem.</p> <p>In addition to national data, more detailed data are available for Flanders (including vacancies for Dutch speaking nurses in Brussels). Every three months the number of vacancies that are reported to the VDAB are listed. It should be noted that some bias is possible for the vacancy announcements for temporary 'ad interim' jobs (e.g. 1 vacancy announcement for several temporary jobs). The advantage of these data source is the availability of data for all sectors and for several professions (nursing; care assistants or 'zorgkundigen' (since 2013); qualified carers or 'verzorgenden'; kindbegeleiders, opvoeders, physiotherapists, occupational therapists.^{bb}</p> |
| International comparability | There is no international benchmark available. |
| Dimension | Accessibility, sustainability, |
| Related performance indicators | NHPPD Medical and nursing graduates |

^y <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/nursing-and-midwifery/data-and-statistics>

^z <http://www.onem.be/fr/documentation/feuille-info/t125>

^{aa} <http://www.health.belgium.be/eportal/Healthcare/Healthcarefacilities/Registrationsystems/Hospitalstatistics/Questionnaire/index.htm>

^{bb} <http://www.ikgaervoor.be/voor-zorgprofessionals>



6.8.2. Results

Table 53 shows the number of nursing vacancies reported by Belgian hospitals between 2013 and 2016. In 2016, there were a total of 1 274 vacancies (708 in the Flemish region, 290 in the Walloon region, and 276 in the region of Brussels Capital (absolute numbers)). The distribution of nursing vacancies according to nursing level is constant over the time. Around 70% of nursing vacancies concerned nurses with bachelor degree (A1) followed by diploma A2 (≈20%) and master degree (8.7%). Figure 88 shows the evolution of the number of nursing vacancies in Belgium. The number of nursing vacancies increased between 2013 and 2015 and tended to decrease since 2016. It should be noted that it is unclear if these figures are an underestimation or if much more vacancies are reported for other sectors.

The more detailed Flemish data show that in Flanders in September 2017, 1844 vacancies were reported for the nursing profession (compared to 708 nursing vacancies in hospitals in 2016 according to SPF-FOD data, see Table 53 and Figure 88). The different methodology (survey hospitals versus vacancies reported to the VDAB; Dutch-speaking vacancies for Brussels included in VDAB-figures; hospital sector versus all sectors) make a comparison difficult. The VDAB-figures make it possible to study time trends.

Figure 88 shows that the number of nursing vacancies steadily increased between September 2006 (n=811) and September 2011 (n=1755) but is slightly decreasing since then with 1116 nursing vacancies reported in 2014. Since 2014, the number of nursing vacancies increased from 1116 to 1844 in 2017.

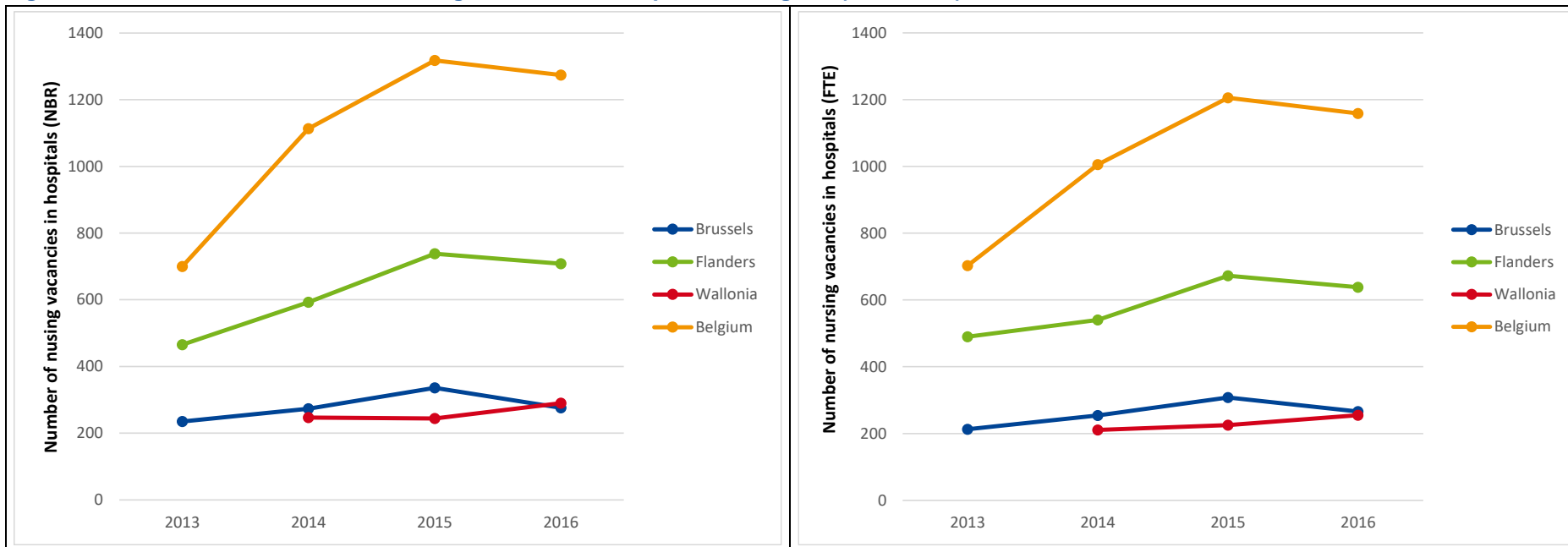
**Table 53 – Number of nursing vacancies in hospitals (2013-2016)**

| Nursing vacancies in hospitals on 31/12/2013, 31/12/2014, 31/12/2015 and 31/12/2016 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| REGION | Level | NBR (2013) | FTE (2013) | NBR (2014) | FTE (2014) | NBR (2015) | FTE (2015) | NBR (2016) | FTE (2016) |
| Brussels | Bachelor (A1) | 192.0 | 173.6 | 229.0 | 214.2 | 298.0 | 268.2 | 251,0 | 241.3 |
| | Master (A1+master/licence) | 24.0 | 22.4 | 23.0 | 23.0 | 27.0 | 32.0 | 15.0 | 16.3 |
| | Diploma (A2) | 19.0 | 17.2 | 21.0 | 17.3 | 11.0 | 7.5 | 10.0 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 235.0 | 213.1 | 273.0 | 254.5 | 336.0 | 307.7 | 276.0 | 265.6 |
| Flanders | Bachelor (A1) | 261.0 | 307.0 | 337.0 | 306.5 | 418.0 | 374.7 | 441.0 | 392.3 |
| | Master (A1+master/licence) | 46.0 | 45.4 | 53.0 | 49.0 | 85.0 | 81.9 | 61.0 | 58.4 |
| | Diploma (A2) | 158.0 | 137.5 | 203.0 | 185.1 | 235.0 | 215.9 | 206.0 | 187.4 |
| | Total | 465.0 | 489.8 | 593.0 | 540.6 | 738.0 | 672.4 | 708.0 | 638.2 |
| Wallonia* | Bachelor (A1) | - | - | 201.0 | 165.6 | 173.0 | 156.7 | 219.0 | 188.9 |
| | Master (A1+master/licence) | - | - | 24.0 | 24.3 | 37.0 | 36.8 | 35.0 | 33.5 |
| | Diploma (A2) | - | - | 22.0 | 21.1 | 34.0 | 31.8 | 36.0 | 32.8 |
| | Total | - | - | 247.0 | 210.9 | 244.0 | 225.3 | 290.0 | 255.1 |
| Belgium | Bachelor (A1) | 453.0** | 480.5** | 767.0 | 686.3 | 889.0 | 799.5 | 911.0 (71.5%) | 822.5 (71.0%) |
| | Master (A1+master/licence) | 70** | 67.8** | 100.0 | 96.3 | 149.0 | 150.6 | 111.0 (8.7%) | 108.2 (9.3%) |
| | Diploma (A2) | 177** | 154.6** | 246.0 | 223.4 | 280.0 | 255.2 | 252.0 (19.8%) | 228.1 (19.7%) |
| | Total | 700.0** | 703.0** | 1113.0 | 1006.0 | 1318.0 | 1205.3 | 1274.0 | 1158.9 |

Source: SPF-FOD; KCE calculations. * The number of nursing vacancies in Wallonia in 2013 are not presented in this table because of encoding error in the database. ** Total number of nursing vacancies excluding Wallonia region.



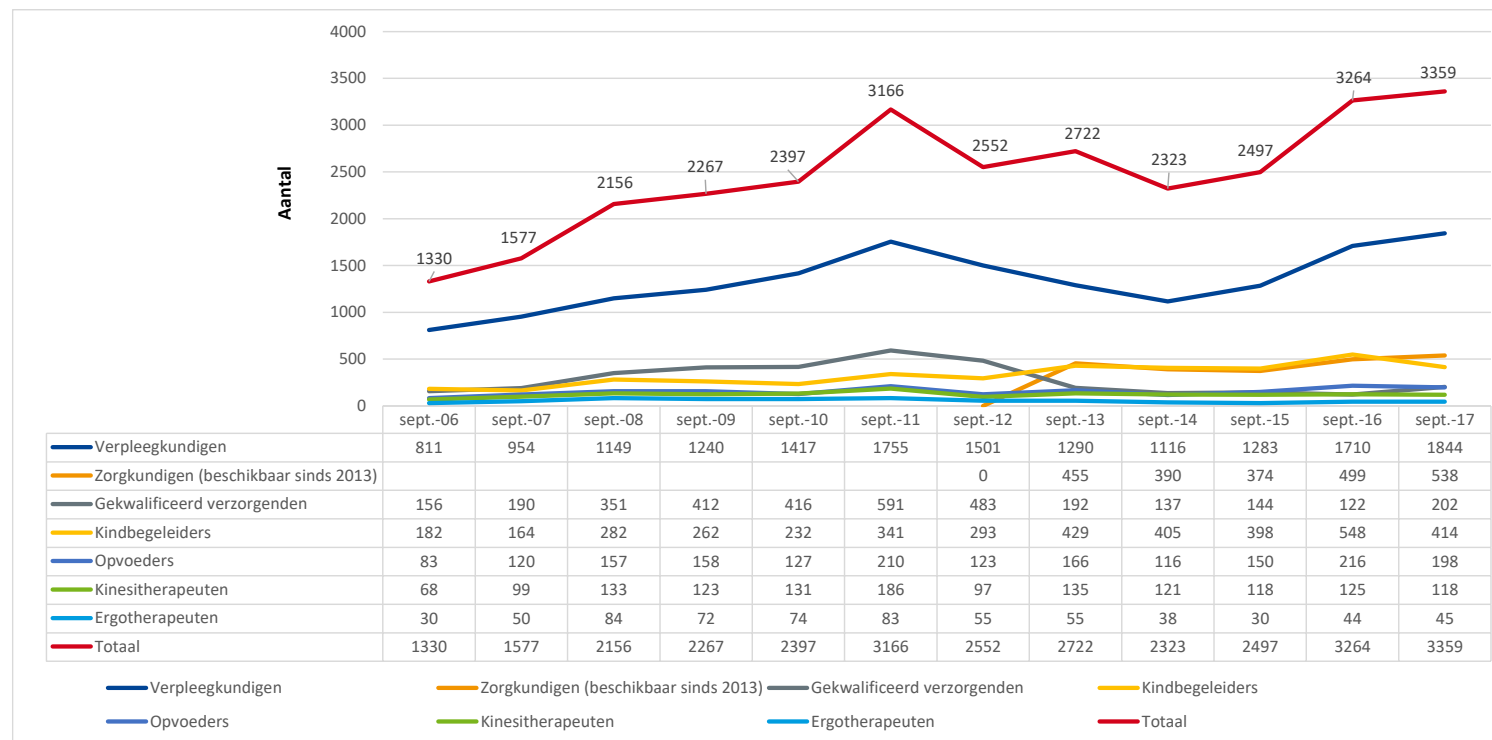
Figure 88 – Evolution of number of nursing vacancies in hospitals in Belgium (2013-2016)



Source: SPF-FOD; KCE calculations. In 2013, total number of nursing vacancies excluded Wallonia region.



Figure 89 – Vacancies in Flanders for nursing and other jobs in the (health)care sector (2006-2017)



Source: VDAB <http://www.ikgaer voor.be/voor-zorgprofessionals>



Key points

- The yearly survey of 'hospital statistics' contains, since 2013, a question about the number of unfilled vacancies. In 2016, 1274 nursing vacancies were reported in the Belgian hospitals.
- Most vacancies were reported in Flanders (n=708), followed by Walloon hospitals (n=290) and Brussels (n=276) and concerned especially nurses with bachelor degree (A1).
- The number of nursing vacancies (across settings) for Dutch-speaking nurses in Flanders and Brussels steadily increased between September 2006 (n=811) and September 2011 (n=1755), then it slightly decreased between September 2011 and September 2014 (n=1116) but it increased again in the past 3 years to reach 1844 nursing vacancies reported in September 2017.

References

- [1] OECD. Health at a Glance 2017: OECD Indicators. Paris: 2017.