8.9. Proportion of professionally active nurses aged 50 years and over (S-10)

8.9.1. Documentation sheet

Description	Proportion of professionally active nurses aged 50 years and over
Calculation	Numerator: number of professionally active nurses aged 50 years and over
	Denominator: total number of professionally active nurses
Technical definition	A nurse is considered as professionlly active when he/she is registered as self-employed person into INASTI database or registered into ONSS database with at least 0.1 full time equivalent (FTE) per year. The threshold of 0.1 FTE per year has been established by the nursing working group on nurses from workforce planning cell.[1]
	The distinction between professionally active nurses and practising nurses is the activity sector. Practising nurses are nurses who are active only on the health sector instead of on the entire Belgian market for professionally active nurses.
Rationale	Beyond the overall number of nurses, the age and gender composition of the nursing workforce also have important implications on the current and future supply of healthcare services. The ageing of nurses in industrialized countries has, for many years, raised concerns that there may not be sufficient new recruits to replace them. An additional concern is that nurses quit their job before the retirement age (see limitations for this indicator).
	This indicator gives a rough estimation of the share of nurses that will retire within 10 years (although a significant number of nurses may have already quit their job before the official retirement age). It should be analysed together with the current number of practising nurses, and the number of nursing graduates (input).
Data source	PlanCAD Nurses 2019,[1] Federal database of health care professionals, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
Limitation	A high score for this indicator can be interpreted in two ways: first, a high need to invest in new recruits, but also a sign of longer availability on the labour market (retirement at later age) which is a good sign.
International comparability	No standardized data collection available. This indicator is also monitored in UK[tt] and New Zealand[uu].
Related indicators	Number of practising nurses; Number of nursing graduates

---

[tt]   http://www.weds.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1076/rcn%20safe%20staffing%20levels.pdf

[uu]   http://www.nursingcouncil.org.nz/Publications/Reports-and-workforce-statistics

8.9.2. Results

In 2016 (31/12/2016), 143 470 nurses were professionally active on the Belgian labour market (see Table 84). Table 84 shows that there are small differences according to age groups. Professionally active nurses are well distributed between each age group: the share of professionally active nurses vary between 10% and 14% depending on age category (see Table 84 and Figure 117). The largest share of active nurses is aged between 50 and 55 years old. One third of professionally active nurses were aged above 50 years old in 2016, while 18.4% was aged 55 years or above (Table 84).

The number of professionally active nurses is higher in Flanders (87 415) than in Wallonia (40 707) or Brussels (15 224). Figure 117 shows that age distribution of professionally active nurses is quite the same between regions. In Flanders and Brussels, the largest share of active nurses is aged between 50 and 55 years old whereas in Wallonia is aged between 40 and 45 years old. In 2016, the share of professionally active nurses aged above 50 years old was 34.1% in Flanders, 31.3% in Wallonia, 35.2% in Brussels (see Table 84).

Table 84 – Professionally active nurses per age group and region of activity (2016)

	Total Belgium		Flanders		Wallonia		Brussels	
	N pers.	% pers.	N pers.	% pers.	N pers.	% pers.	N pers.	% pers.
<25	6821	4.8%	4699	5.4%	1658	4.1%	456	3.0%
25-30	16085	11.2%	9516	10.9%	4838	11.9%	1710	11.2%
30-35	15678	10.9%	9050	10.4%	4843	11.9%	1767	11.6%
35-40	18725	13.1%	11078	12.7%	5663	13.9%	1967	12.9%
40-45	19270	13.4%	11463	13.1%	5767	14.2%	2020	13.3%
45-50	18973	13.2%	11825	13.5%	5187	12.7%	1950	12.8%
50-55	21525	15.0%	13820	15.8%	5467	13.4%	2226	14.6%
55-60	19278	13.4%	11954	13.7%	5093	12.5%	2222	14.6%
60-65	6192	4.3%	3506	4.0%	1873	4.6%	809	5.3%
65+	923	0.6%	504	0.6%	318	0.8%	97	0.6%
Total	**143470**	**100%**	**87415**	**100%**	**40707**	**100%**	**15224**	**100%**
> 50 years	**47918**	**33.4%**	**29784**	**34.1%**	**12751**	**31.3%**	**5354**	**35.2%**
> 55 years	**26393**	**18.4%**	**15964**	**18.3%**	**7284**	**17.9%**	**3128**	**20.5%**

Source: PlanCAD Nurses 2019[1]; KCE calculation

Figure 117 – Number and percentage of professionally active nurses per age group and region of activity (2016)
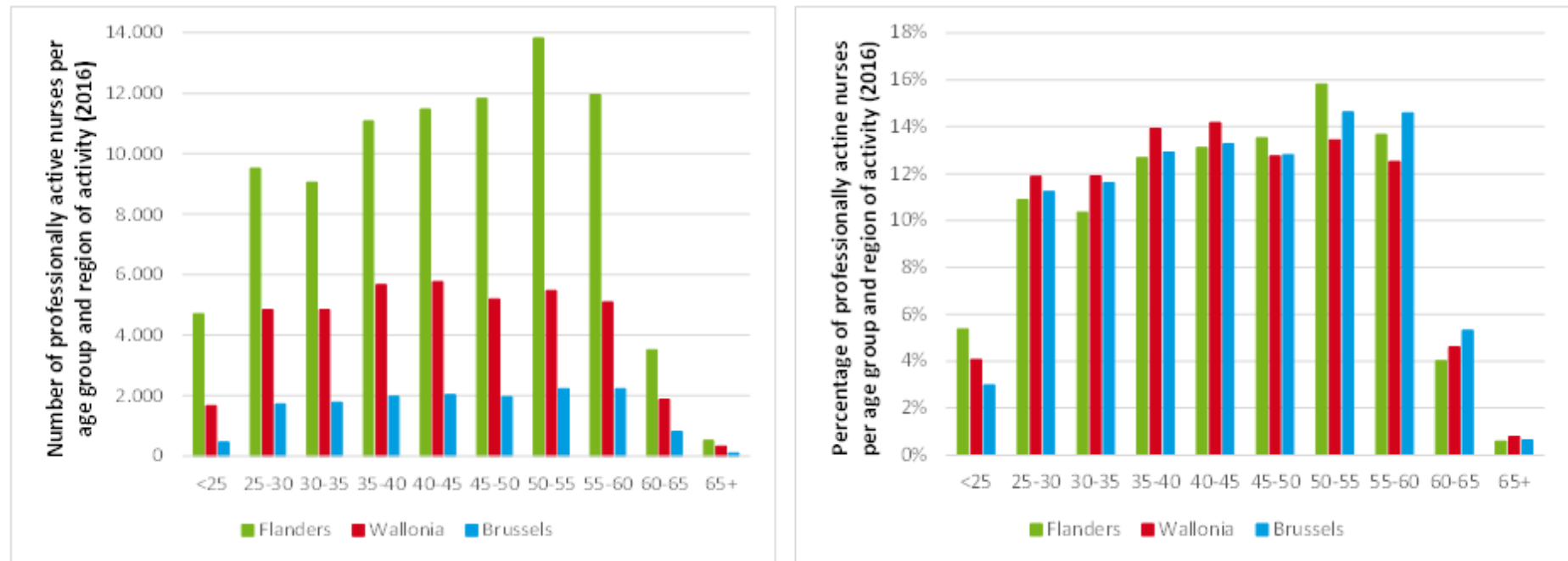
Source: PlanCAD Nurses 2019[1]; KCE calculation

In term of practising nurses **on the health sector**, results are similar and there were 105 983 female and 18 213 male nurses in 2016 (see Table 85). Figure 118 shows that the largest share of practising nurses on the health sector is aged between 50 and 55 years old.

Table 85 – Age distribution of practising nurses on the health sector (2016)

Age category	Female	Male	Belgium
<25	5 657	796	6453
25-30	12 661	2 405	15 066
30-35	12 067	2 272	14 339
35-40	13 902	2 468	16 370
40-45	14 068	2 461	16 529
45-50	14 088	2 103	16 191
50-55	15 723	2 384	18 107
55-60	13 664	2 377	16 041
60-65	3 847	905	4 752
65+	306	42	348
Total	105 983 (85.3%)	18 213 (14.7%)	124 196
Aged 50 or above	31.6%	31.3%	31.6%
Aged 55 or above	16.8%	18.3%	17.0%

Source: PlanCAD Nurses 2019[1]

Figure 118 – Age pyramid of practising nurses on the health sector (2016)
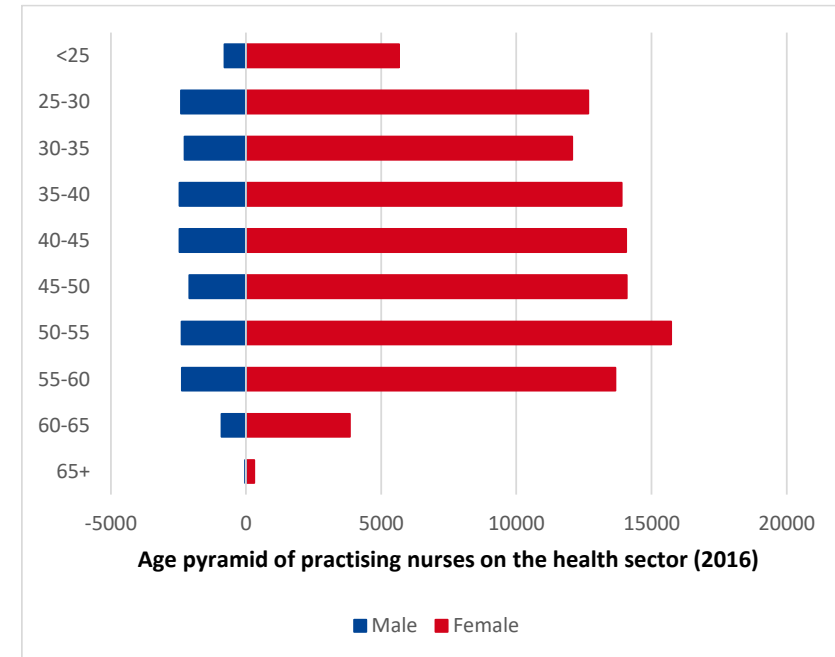
Source: PlanCAD Nurses 2019[1]; KCE calculation

Key points

- **In 2016, 33.4% of the professionally active nurses in Belgium were over 50 years of age (34.1% in Flanders, 31.3% in Wallonia, 35.2% in Brussels), while 18.4% was aged 55 years or above (18.3% in Flanders, 17.9% in Wallonia, 20.5% in Brussels).**

References

1. Vivet V, Durand C, De Geest A, Delvaux A, Jouck P, Miermans P-J, et al. PlanCad Infirmiers 2016. Rapport final sur le couplage des données PlanCad pour la profession infirmière. Bruxelles: Cellule Planification des professions de soins de santé, Service Professions des soins de santé et pratique professionnelle, DG Soins de santé, SPF Santé publique, Sécurité de la chaîne alimentaire et Environnement; 2018. Available from: https://organesdeconcertation.sante.belgique.be/sites/default/files/documents/plancad_infirmiers_2016.pdf

8.10. Share of foreign-trained nurses (S-16)

8.10.1. Documentation sheet

Description	**Main indicator:** Share of foreign-trained nurses
	Secondary indicator: Share of foreign-trained nurses professionally active on the Belgian labour market
Calculation	**Main indicator: Share of foreign-trained nurses** is defined as nurses who have obtained a recognised qualification in nursing in another country and have obtained a nursing "visa/visum" to practice in Belgium ("licence to practice" at the end of the year)
	• Numerator: Number of foreign-trained nurses (Stock)
	• Denominator: Total number of nurses licensed to practice (Belgian-trained nurse and foreign-trained nurses)
	Secondary indicator: Share of foreign-trained nurses professionally active on the Belgian labour market is defined as nurses who have obtained a recognised qualification in nursing in another country and are professionally active on the Belgian labour market
	• Numerator: Number of nurses with a foreign diploma who are professionally active on the Belgian labour market
	• Denominator: Total number of professionally active nurses on the Belgian labour market
Rationale	Nurses play a critical role in providing health care in hospitals and long-term care institutions, but also in primary care and in the home care setting. In addition, they are in most countries the largest group of healthcare professionals. Monitoring the number of foreign-trained nurses is therefore important in light of the accessibility and sustainability of the healthcare system. These are essential figures for workforce planning.[1] Some European countries also opt for strong recruitment strategy to recruit foreign-educated nurses.[1] The World Health Assembly adopted in May 2010 "The Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel"[2] to promote a more ethical recruitment of health personnel and to encourage countries to achieve greater "self-sufficiency" in the training of health workers.