

4 – HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

Although the data may be a few years old, the statistical information regarding health and healthcare, in a period characterized by problems linked to a policy of reduced public spending, represents an essential source of analysis. In the year 2011, according to National Health Service data, in Sicily spending in this sector amounted to 8,732 million Euros, corresponding to a figure of 1,728 Euros per resident. There was an overall increase of 2.6% (over 221 million) when compared to the previous year.

Overall data regarding the health structures in Sicily showed that, in 2008, there were 133 hospital structures with a total of 16,417 available beds, representing 7.3% of the national total. In the same period there were 648,526 in-patients, for a total of 4,167,831 days in hospital; consequently the average length of hospital-stay was 6.4 days. More specifically, state hospitals lost 2 units when compared with the previous year and private hospitals 1 unit, whereas, with regard to equipment and facilities and the mode of their utilization, there were noticeable differences in the two types of management. The 69 state hospitals possessed 73.7% of the overall number of beds and, at the same time, catered for almost 79% of in-patients in Sicily. The average length-of-stay was of 6.6 days in state hospitals and 5.8 days in private institutions, and the percentage utilization of available hospital-beds (with reference to 100 available beds) was 79.8% for the former and 56.3% for the latter.

There were 45,022 dependent workers overall in hospitals (85.3% of whom were working in the state sector), a fall of over 1,000 units when compared to 2007. Of these, 24.4% were doctors, 40.2% nursing staff and the remaining persons were employed in other hospital services, including administrative staff. As in the previous year, the Region in 2008 could count on 2.2 doctors for every 1000 inhabitants (in line with national figures) and 3.6 nurses (against 4.5 for the country as a whole).

In the four-year period 2005/2008, the number of hospitals fell by 2 units, whilst there was a 5.2% fall in the number of hospital-beds available. When compared to 2005 the number of in-patients also fell by 7.3%, as did the length-of-stay (-3%). It should be noted that the afore-mentioned losses are to be ascribed exclusively to the state sector; in fact, in the private sector, despite the loss of one structure, there was an increase in the number of beds (+8.2%), admissions (+4.9%) and days of hospitalization (+7.6%).

In the same period the state sector underwent a notable reduction in the number of employees (-5.3%) whilst the figures for the private sector remained stable. In particular, typological scrutiny of personnel showed that in the state sector there was a -2.6% fall in the number of doctors, a -5.2% reduction in nursing staff, and -6.9% fall in the number of those employed in other hospital

duties. In the private sector, the number of doctors remained stable, the number of nurses rose by +2.9% whilst other functions fell by a little (-3.2%). Lastly, the utilization-rate over the four-year period showed a rising trend in state institutions (from 75.9% in 2005 to 79.8% in 2008), whereas the private sector experienced a falling trend (from 60.6% to 56.3%).

The Regional distribution of hospitals depends basically on population size, and so the year 2008 again saw the most significant concentration of public and private hospitals in the Provinces of Catania, Palermo and Messina, which together accounted for almost two thirds of the Regional total, and consequently had a greater flux of in-patients and concentration of employees.

At the end of 2009 there had been 7,261 voluntary terminations of pregnancy involving resident Sicilians, which amounted to 6.3% of the national total. Classification by age reveals that 40.7% of voluntary terminations involved women aged 25 to 34 years, and 27.2% those aged 35-44. As regards those under the age of 19, the figure was quite high: 840 cases, equivalent to 11.7% of the total.

Over the five-year period in question, recourse to voluntary termination of pregnancy fell by 6.9% overall, with more or less similar reductions per age-group. At the Provincial level the highest percentages were obviously to be found in the large cities, Palermo (1,831 abortions), Catania (1,631) and Messina (950).

As regards mortalities in Sicily in the year 2009 (last data available), these totalled 48,884 (down by -3.3% when compared to 2008), of which 41.8% were the result of circulatory failures and 25.3% tumours. Data showed that certain types of disease result in death more frequently in men than in women. Among these, throat, bronchial and lung cancer caused 81 out of 100 deaths in men, deaths from circulatory failures 62 out of 100. On the other hand deaths from circulatory failures, from diabetes mellitus and diseases of the nervous system caused more deaths among women (55% for the first typology, and 57% for the other two).

Glossary

Auxiliary medical personnel: hospital personnel consisting of nursing staff and personnel with rehabilitation duties.

Hospital: any residential structure equipped to take in and give full-time care to patients for diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative purposes. Each institute possesses an identifying code (in accordance with the guide-lines of the

Ministry for Health - D.M.6/9/1988). By hospital or clinic one of the following specific typologies is intended:

- Directly managed hospital (transformed into a business enterprise by the bill: art.4, comma 1 of D.L. 502/92);
- Hospital run directly by the local health centre;
- University general hospital (art.39 law 833/78);
- Scientific hospital (art.42 law 833/78);
- Hospital classified or assimilated in accordance with the norms (art.1, last comma, law 132/68; art.41 law 833/78);
- Nursing home (provisionally accredited or not);
- Psychiatric hospitals still remaining (art.64 law 833/78);
- Private health care institute qualified as local health centre (art.43, comma 2, Law 833/78 and DPCM 29/10/1988);
- Research institute

Infectious diseases: any diseases that can be spread by contact, directly or indirectly, and grouped into five classes:

- Any disease attracting particular interest and thus requiring immediate attention.
- Any disease considered serious because it is very frequent and/or subject to control.
- Any disease requiring specific documentation.
- Any disease which, on being reported by a doctor as a single case, needs to be forwarded to the local health authority only in the event of a local epidemic
- Any infectious and diffusive disease reported to the local health authority and Not included in the categories above.

In-patient: hospitalized person, i.e. a person who occupies a bed for a certain period of time (hospital stay) in order to be subjected to appropriate medical-surgical treatment, and for whom a case study has to be compiled.

Utilization-rate per 100 hospital beds: is the ratio between the days of actual hospitalization and the total potential number of days (hospital beds available for the whole survey period) multiplied by 100.

Voluntary termination of pregnancy: an operation by a specialized surgeon that aims to remove the product of conception and associated matter with an interruption of pregnancy. It must take place on the express wishes of the woman for therapeutic reasons or other reasons that might provoke damage to the physical or mental health of the woman

Further reading

Publications

Preliminary Estimates for Causes of death in the Italian Regions– Years 2004 - ISTAT
Causes of death – year 2002 - ISTAT
Italian Statistical Yearbook 2012 - ISTAT
Statistical Yearbook for National Health Service – 2007 – Ministry of Health
Annual Report 2009 – INAIL

Internet

<http://www.istat.it>

Health for All – Italy – Territorial informational system for Healthcare
Regional Socio-sanitary Indicators
Resident Population Mortality-rate tables - 2006
Hospital structures and activities – 2007
Voluntary interruption of pregnancy in Italy – 2007
Hospital discharges in Italy – 2001-2002
Causes of death – 2009
Italian Statistical Yearbook 2012 – Chapter 3: “Health and Healthcare”

www.disabilitaincifre.it

Statistical information system for disabilities

www.iss.it

Reported cases of acute viral hepatitis
Surveillance systems of bacterial meningitis
National AIDS register
Register of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and correlated syndromes

www.simi.iss.it

Infectious disease computerized system

www.ministerosalute.it

Healthcare geographical atlas – 2004
National health-care plan – 2006-2008
National plan for alcohol and health 2007
Plan of action for women’s health
Drug-use and public service activities for drug-addiction (SERT)
Report on the state of health of the nation — 2007-2008
Hospitalization, diagnoses, operations carried out and length of hospital-stay of all hospitals
Epidemiological data research
Informational system for transplants

Certificate for child-birth assistance (CeDAP). Analysis of giving birth – 2007

www.simi.iss.it/bollettini.htm

Higher Health Institute AIDS Register

www.starnet.unioncamere.it

(thematic areas – healthcare – analysis and data)

Use of medicines in Italy

Alcohol and Young People Project