

Health Expectancy in Estonia

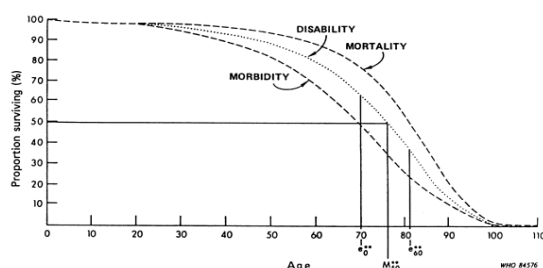
What is health expectancy?

Health expectancies were first developed to address whether or not longer life is being accompanied by an increase in the time lived in good health (the compression of morbidity scenario) or in bad health (expansion of morbidity). So health expectancies divide life expectancy into life spent in different states of health, from say good to bad health. In this way they add a dimension of quality to the quantity of life lived.

How is the effect of longer life measured?

The general model of health transitions (WHO, 1984) shows the differences between life spent in different states: total survival, disability-free survival and survival without chronic disease. This leads naturally to life expectancy (the area under the 'mortality' curve), disability-free life expectancy (the area under the 'disability' curve) and life expectancy without chronic disease (the area under the 'morbidity' curve).

The general model of health transition (WHO, 1984): observed mortality and hypothetical morbidity and disability survival curves for females, USA, 1980.



There are in fact as many health expectancies as concepts of health. The commonest health expectancies are those based on self-perceived health, activities of daily living and on chronic morbidity.

How do we compare health expectancies?

Health expectancies are independent of the size of populations and of their age structure and so they allow direct comparison of different population sub-groups: e.g. sexes, socio-professional categories, as well as countries within Europe (Robine et al., 2003).

Health expectancies are most often calculated by the Sullivan method (Sullivan, 1971). However to make valid comparisons, the underlying health measure should be truly comparable.

To address this, the European Union has decided to include a small set of health expectancies among its European Community Health Indicators (ECHI) to provide summary measures of disability (i.e., activity limitation), chronic morbidity and perceived health. Therefore the Minimum European Health Module (MEHM), composed of 3 general questions covering these dimensions, has been introduced into the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) to improve the comparability of health expectancies between countries.* In addition life expectancy without long term activity limitation, based on the disability question, was selected in 2004 to be one of the structural indicators for assessing the EU strategic goals (Lisbon strategy) under the name of "Healthy Life Years" (HLY).

Further details on the MEHM, the European surveys and health expectancy calculation and interpretation can be found on www.eurohex.eu.

What is in this report?

This report is produced by the Joint Action European Health and Life Expectancy Information System (EHLEIS) as part of a country series. In each report we present:

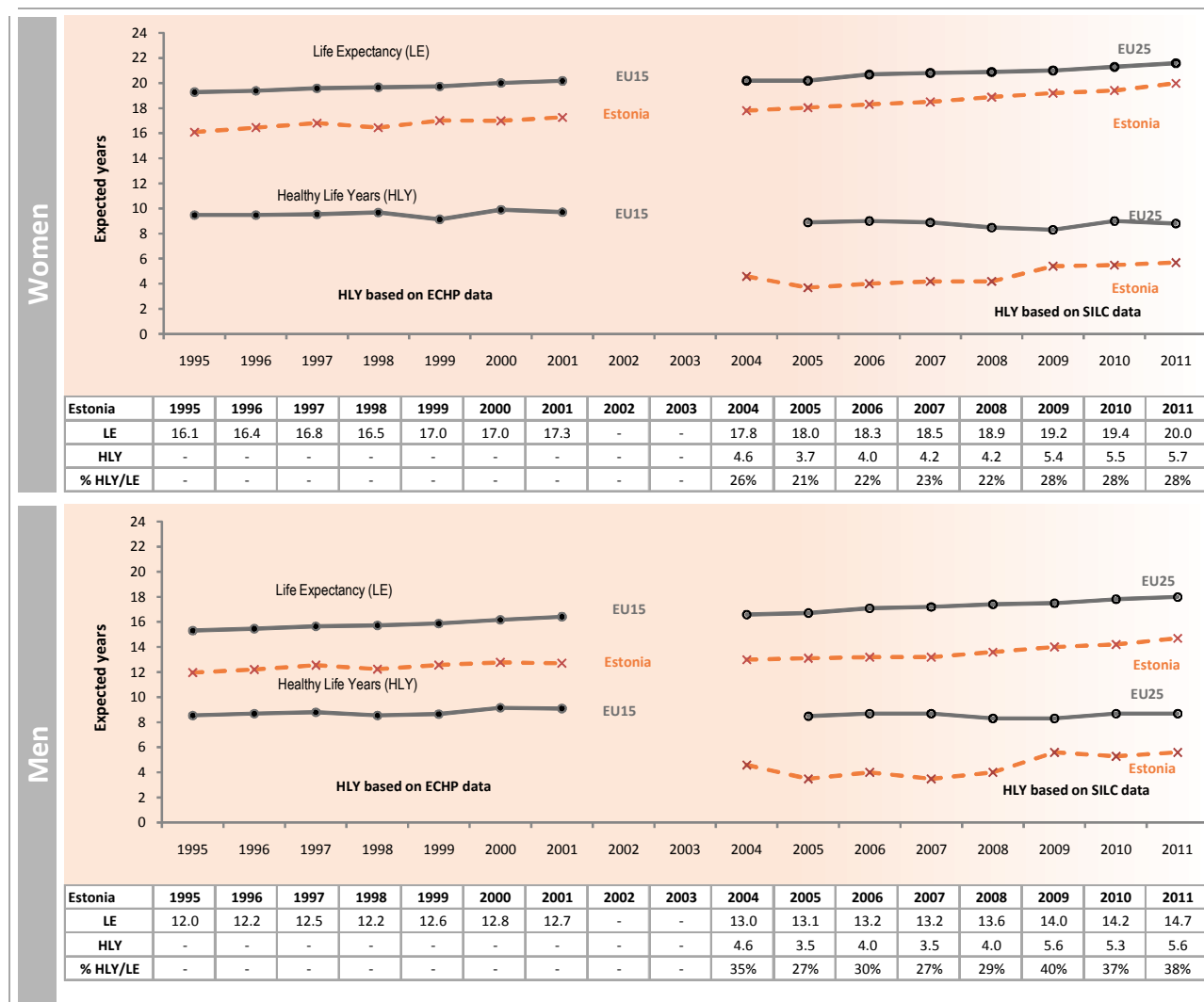
- Life expectancies and Healthy Life Years (HLY) at age 65 for the country of interest and for the overall 25 European Union member states (EU25), using the SILC question on long term health related disability, known as the GALI (Global Activity Limitation Indicator), from 2004 to 2011. The wording of the question has been revised in 2008. When available, we provide previous HLY series based on the disability question of the 1995-2001 European Community Household Panel (ECHP);
- Health expectancies based on the two additional dimensions of health (chronic morbidity and self-perceived health) for the country of interest, based on SILC 2011;
- Life and health expectancy at age 65 based on activity limitation (Healthy Life Years), chronic morbidity and perceived health for EU 27 in 2011 by gender (Health data from SILC)

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* Before the revision of 2008, the translations of the module used in some countries were not optimum (See Eurostat-EU Task Force on Health Expectancies common statement about the SILC data quality). This revision is being evaluated.

Life expectancy (LE) and Healthy Life Years (HLY) at age 65 for Estonia and the European Union (EU15 and EU25) based on ECHP (1995-2001) and SILC (2004-2011)

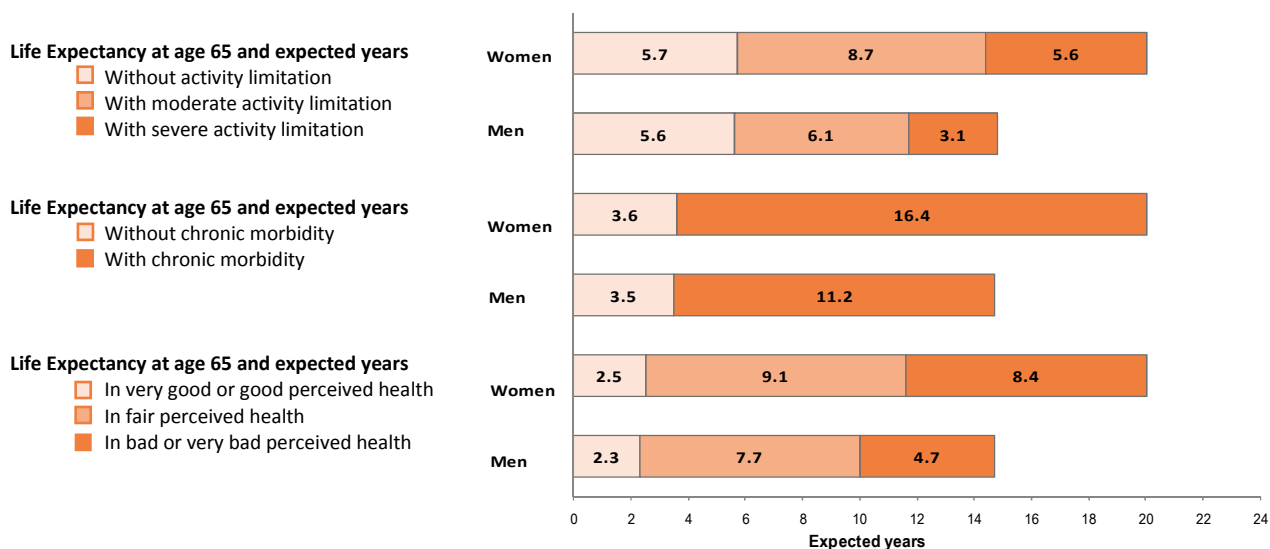


Key points:

Estonian life expectancy (LE) at age 65 has increased by 2.7 years for women and 2.0 years for men over the period 2001-2011: LE for both sexes between 1995 and 2001 was below the EU15 average and remained below the EU25 average in 2011 (21.6 for women and 18.0 for men) although the gap with the EU25 average is reducing for women.

Because Estonia joined the European Union in 2004, health expectancy based on activity limitation (HLY) over the period 1995-2001 is not available. HLY series, initiated in 2004 with the SILC data, shows that in 2011 women and men at age 65 can expect to spend 28% and 38% of their life without *self-reported long-term activity limitations* respectively. In 2011 the HLY values for Estonia are 2.9 and 3.2 years, for women and men respectively, below the EU25 average (8.6 for women and 8.8 for men). The wording of the GALI question was changed in Estonia in 2008 to better reflect the EU standard. After a strong increase in 2009, HLY remained almost stable between 2009 and 2011 for both women and men.

Life and health expectancies at age 65 based on activity limitation (Healthy Life Years), chronic morbidity and perceived health for Estonia (Health data from SILC 2011)



Key points:

In 2011, LE at age 65 in Estonia was 20.0 years for women and 14.7 years for men.

Based on the SILC 2011, at age 65, women spent 5.7 years (28% of their remaining life) without activity limitation (corresponding to HLY), 8.7 years (44%) with moderate activity limitation and 5.6 years (28%) with severe activity limitation.*

Men of the same age spent 5.6 years (38% of their remaining life) without activity limitation compared to 6.1 years (41%) with moderate activity limitation and 3.1 years (21%) with severe activity limitation.*

Although the total years lived by men were 5.3 years lower than that lived by women, the number of years lived without chronic morbidity, without activity limitation, or in good perceived health was about the same. Compared to men, women spent a larger proportion of their life with chronic morbidity, disability and/or poor perceived health and these years of ill health were more likely to be years with severe health problems.

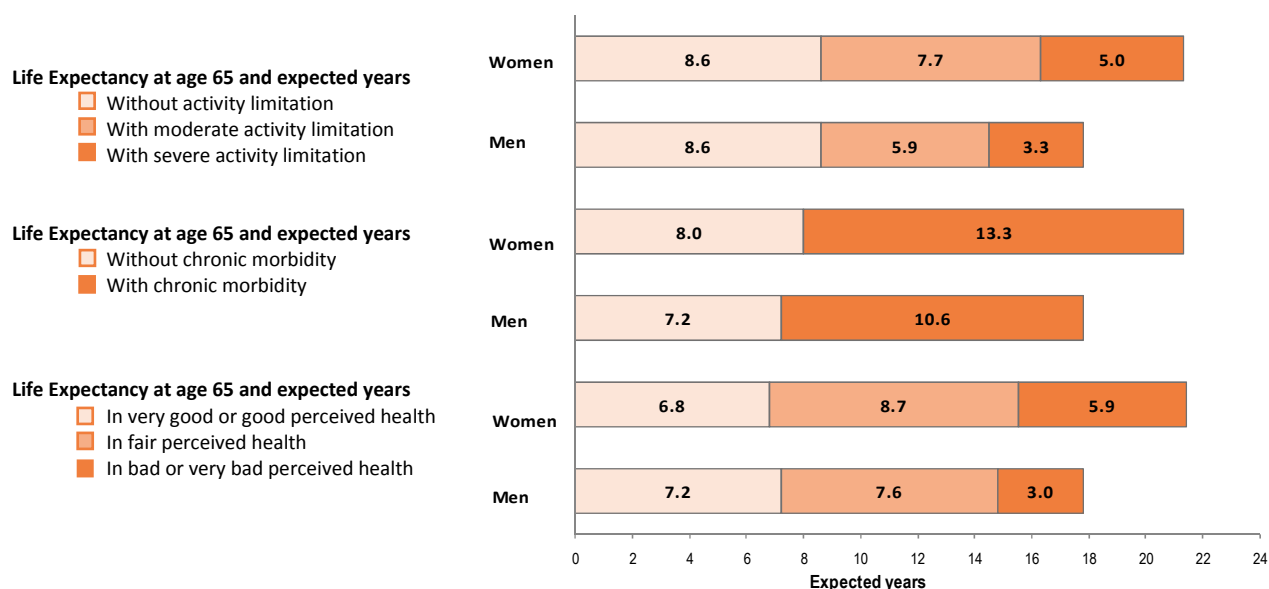
The SILC sample size for Estonia comprised 1505 women and 886 men aged 65+ years in 2011.

* These may not sum to Life Expectancy due to rounding

Publications and reports on health expectancies for Estonia

- Statistics Estonia, Statistical Database: http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/I_Databas/Social_life/05Health/05Health_status/05Health_status.asp.
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Life and health expectancies at age 65 based on activity limitation (Healthy Life Years), chronic morbidity and perceived health for EU27, in 2011, by gender (Health data from SILC)



Key points:

In 2011, LE at age 65 in the EU 27 was 21.3 years for women and 17.8 years for men.

Based on SILC 2011 data, women at age 65 spent 8.6 years (40% of their remaining life) without activity limitation (corresponding to Healthy Life Years (HLY)), 7.7 years (36%) with moderate activity limitation and 5.0 years (24%) with severe activity limitation.

Men of the same age spent the same amount of time 8.6 years (48% of their remaining life) without activity limitation compared to 5.9 years (33%) with moderate activity limitation and 3.3 years (19%) with severe activity limitation.

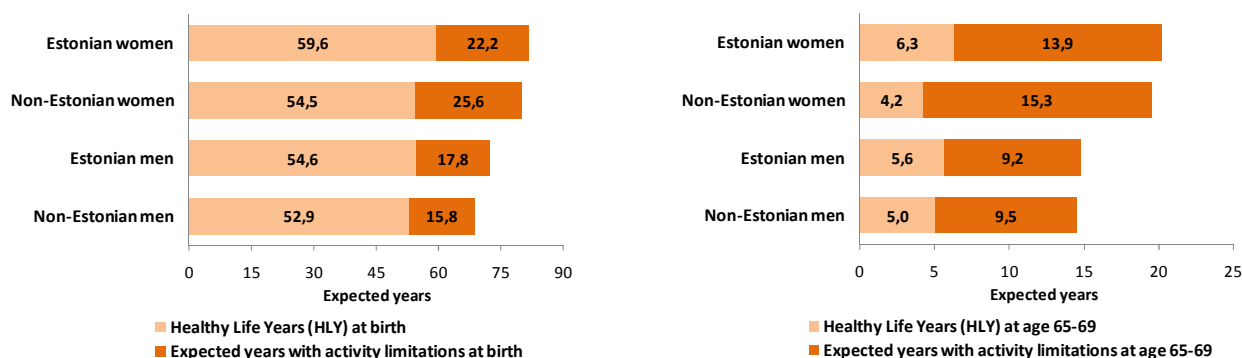
However women can expect to live a little bit longer without chronic morbidity and men a little bit longer in good perceived health.

In total, life expectancy is greater for women than for men (+3.5 years) but women spent a larger proportion of their life in ill health and these years of ill health were more likely to be years with severe health problems.

About the Joint Action EHLEIS

The current Joint Action EHLEIS (European Health and Life Expectancy Information System) and Eurohex (www.eurohex.eu) are co-funded by 11 Member States, the European Commission, DG SANCO, and two French institutions: the Ministry of Health and the National Solidarity Fund for Autonomy (CNSA). It is a collaboration between: Austria (Statistik Austria, Vienna Institute of Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, European Centre for Social Welfare), Belgium (Scientific Institute of Public Health – ISP-WIV), the Czech Republic (Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic - UZIS CR), Denmark (Danish National Board of Health - SST; Economic Council of the Labour Movement - AE; University of Southern Denmark - IPH; University of Copenhagen - UCPH), France (National Institute of Health and Medical Research - INSERM; National Institute of Demography - INED; University of Montpellier - UM2), Germany (Robert Koch Institute - RKI ; Rostock Center for Demographic Change - UROS), Greece (Hellenic Statistical Authority - ELSTAT), Italy (University La Sapienza - DSSEAD), The Netherlands (Erasmus Medical center - EMC; National Institute for Public Health and the Environment - RIVM; Statistical Office - CBS), Sweden (National Board of Health and Welfare - SoS/NBHW) and the United Kingdom (Office for National Statistics - ONS; Newcastle University - UNEW). The JA:EHLEIS and Eurohex aim to provide a central facility for the co-ordinated analysis, interpretation and dissemination of life and health expectancies to add the quality dimension to the quantity of life lived by the European populations. Further details about the Joint Action can be found on the websites: www.eurohex.eu and www.healthy-life-years.eu.

Life expectancy and Healthy Life Years (HLY) at birth and at age 65-69 by gender and nationality in Estonia (Health data from SILC 2011)



Key points:

The average life expectancy in Estonia has risen steadily from 1994. Although this suggests some progress in population health, the gain in life expectancy has not been equal for different population groups. There are still large gaps in mortality rates between genders, educational levels and ethnic groups (Leinsalu et al 2004, Rahu et al 2009). According to the results of 2011 population census Estonians formed 70% of the total population in Estonia. The biggest share of non-Estonians included Russians, Belorussians and Ukrainians. The proportion of these subgroups was slightly less than 28% of total population. Comparing self-rated general health, non-Estonians tend to report poorer health than Estonians (Leinsalu 2002). It has been found that inequalities in health behaviours underlie the ethnic life expectancy gap in Estonia, rather than inequalities in access to health care (Baburin et al 2011).

In 2011, average life expectancy was 72.4 years for Estonian men and almost four years less for non-Estonians. The difference in female life expectancies was two years. Estonian women live on average 82 years and non-Estonians 80 years. The gender gap in life expectancy (LE) is nine years among Estonians and eleven years in non-Estonian population. Estonian male population spends 75% (55 years) and female population 73% (60 years) of their average life-span without disability, i.e. without any activity limitation caused by the health problems. Given share in non-Estonian men is 77% (53 years) and in non-Estonian women 68% (55 years). Estonian men live healthy 1.7 years longer than non-Estonians. This difference is even larger among female population. Estonian women spend five years more in the state of not having any activity restrictions caused by health problems.

The variations in LE and healthy life years (HLY) diminish among older age groups. Estonian women aged 65-69 years will live 20 years and non-Estonian women slightly more than 19 years more, on average. Estonian men in the same age group may expect 14.8 years and non-Estonians 14.5 years more. The gender gap in LE has decreased to five years in both population sub-groups. Estonian women spend 31% (6 years) and non-Estonians 22% (4 years) of their remaining life-span without any activity restrictions. These proportions are higher among male population. Estonian men live about 38% of their remaining years (slightly less than 6 years) and non-Estonian men 34% (5 years) without any limitations in everyday activities caused by their health conditions. The gap in LE between two female ethnic groups is 0.6 years. The difference in HLY is more than threefold bigger. Estonian women live two years longer before the onset of disability than non-Estonians. 65-69 years old men of native background have 0.3 years more to live on average and 0.6 years longer period without disability than non-Estonian men in the same age.

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