

Life expectancy, males

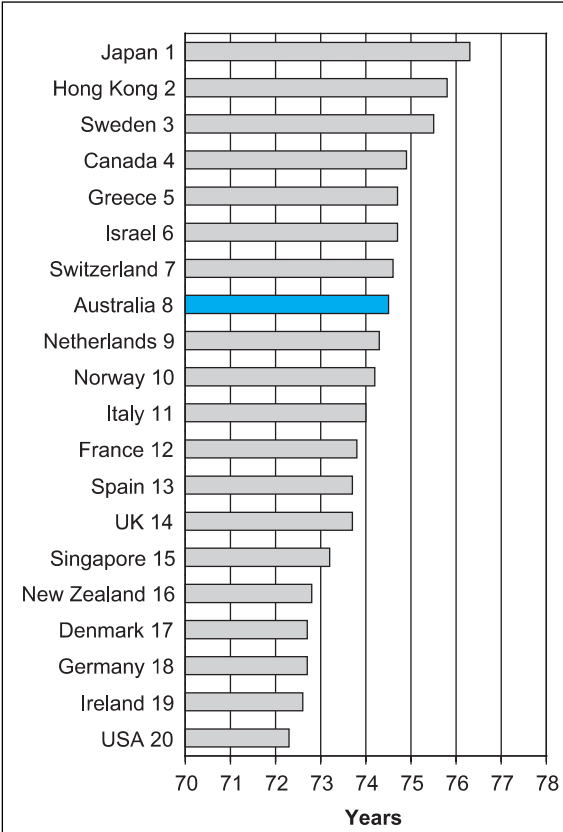


Figure 1: Male life expectancy at birth, 1992

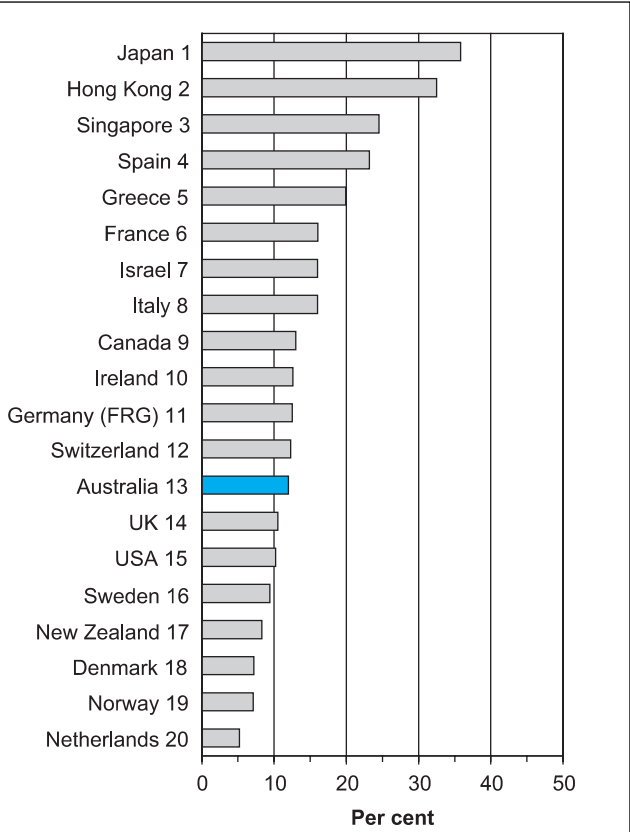


Figure 2: Rise in male life expectancy at birth, 1950 to 1992

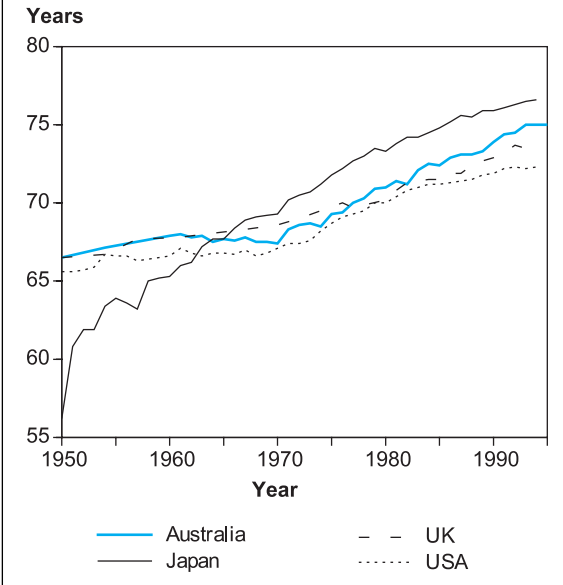


Figure 3: Trends in male life expectancy at birth, 1950 to 1995

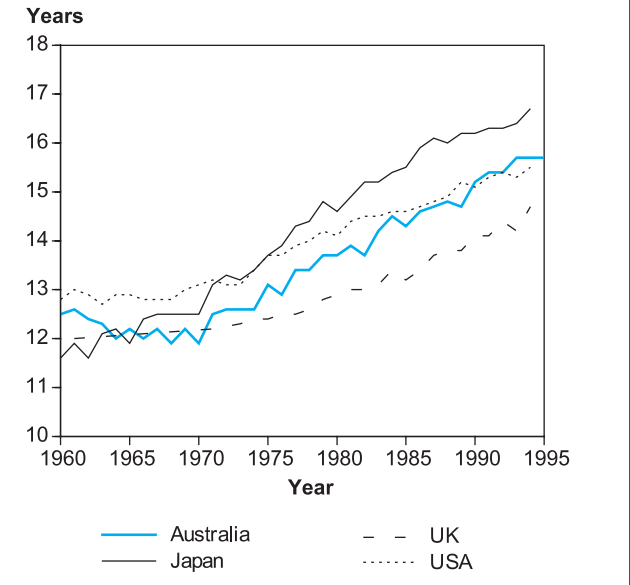


Figure 4: Trends in male life expectancy at age 65, 1960 to 1995

Life expectancy, males

Life expectancy at birth, males (years)

Country	1950	1960	1970	1980	1992	1993	1994	% change 1950 to 1992
Australia	66.5	67.9	67.4	71.0	74.5	75.0	75.0	12.0
Canada	66.3	68.4	69.3	71.9	74.9	74.8		13.0
Denmark	67.8	70.4	70.7	71.1	72.7	72.7		7.2
France	63.6	67.2	68.6	70.2	73.8	73.8		16.0
Germany (FRG)	64.6	66.9	67.4	69.9	72.7	72.8	73.0	12.5
Greece	62.3	67.3	70.1	72.2	74.7	75.0	75.2	19.9
Hong Kong	57.2	64.0	68.5	72.6	75.8	76.6	76.9	32.5
Ireland	64.5	68.1	68.8	69.5	72.6			12.6
Israel	64.4	68.1	69.6	72.1	74.7	75.3	75.5	16.0
Italy	63.8	67.2	69.0	71.1	74.0			16.0
Japan	56.2	65.3	69.3	73.3	76.3	76.5	76.6	35.8
Netherlands	70.6	71.4	70.9	72.4	74.3	74.0	74.6	5.2
New Zealand	67.2	68.7	68.3	70.0	72.8	73.3		8.3
Norway	69.3	71.3	71.1	72.5	74.2	74.2		7.1
Singapore	58.8	64.1	67.4	69.2	73.2	73.7	73.5	24.5
Spain	59.8	67.3	69.7	72.6	73.7			23.2
Sweden	69.0	71.6	72.1	72.8	75.5	75.5		9.4
Switzerland	66.4	69.2	70.2	72.3	74.6	75.0	75.1	12.3
UK	66.7	67.9	69.0	70.2	73.7	73.5	74.1	10.5
USA	65.6	66.6	67.1	70.0	72.3			10.2

Sources: United Nations 1993; WHO 1994, 1995a, 1996d.

- In 1992*, the life expectancy at birth for Australian males was 74.5 years, rising to 75.0 years in 1994. A number of countries exceed Australian male life expectancy: a baby boy born in Japan in 1992 can expect to live 76.3 years. Hong Kong (75.8 years) and Sweden (75.5 years), as well as Canada, Greece, Israel and Switzerland, also enjoyed greater male life expectancy at birth than did Australia. The United States (72.3 years) had the lowest life expectancy among the countries included here for comparison, followed by Ireland, Germany, Denmark and New Zealand (Figure 1).
- Between 1950 and 1992, the Asian nations experienced a greater improvement in male life expectancy at birth than any other of the developed countries included here. Japanese life expectancy increased by more than one-third (35.8%) during this time period. Hong Kong (32.5%) and Singapore (24.5%), as well as Spain (23.2%), also showed notable improvements (Figure 2).
- In comparison, between 1950 and 1992, Australian male life expectancy at birth increased by 12%. The improvement was only moderate, ranking 13th among developed nations. However, Australia's baseline life expectancy in 1950 was high at 66.5 years. The Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Denmark and Norway), as well as New Zealand and the Netherlands, had less than 10% increases in life expectancy. Again, their life expectancies in 1950 were comparatively high.
- The improvements in Australian post-war life expectancy can be attributed to reductions in death rates at older ages, especially from diseases of the circulatory system (AIHW 1996). Male life expectancy at birth remained stable between 1950 and 1970, but has increased steadily since, accompanied by a downturn in cardiovascular mortality rates since the late 1960s. This trend has been mirrored in the United Kingdom and United States. In Japan, however, life expectancy has continued to increase steadily since 1950 (Figures 3 and 4).

For more information, see:

WHO 1996. World health statistics annual, 1995. Geneva: World Health Organization.

Life expectancy, females

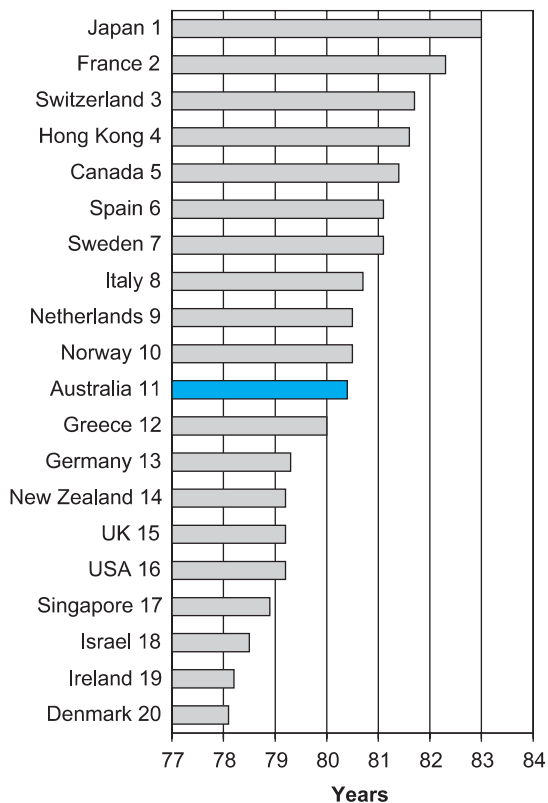


Figure 1: Female life expectancy at birth, 1992

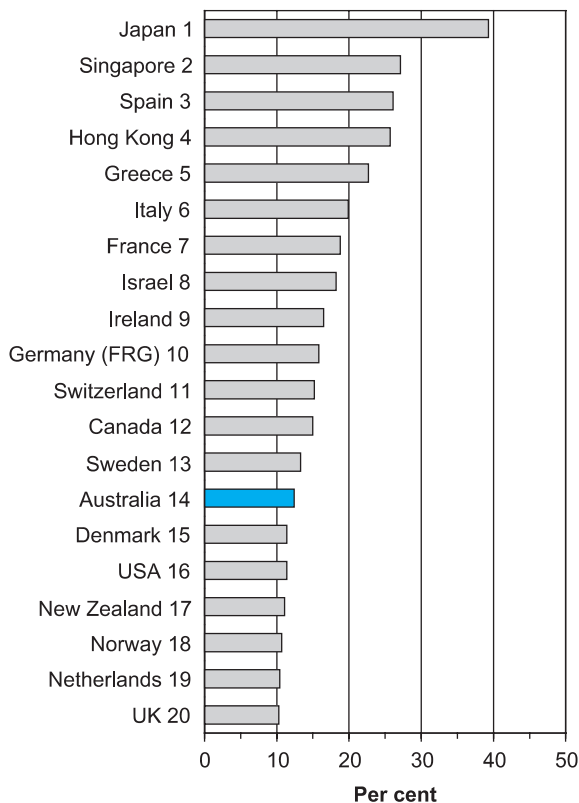


Figure 2: Rise in female life expectancy at birth, 1950 to 1992

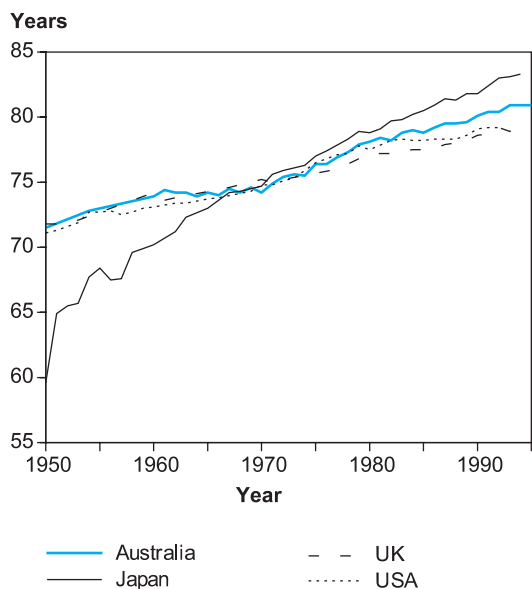


Figure 3: Trends in female life expectancy at birth, 1950 to 1995

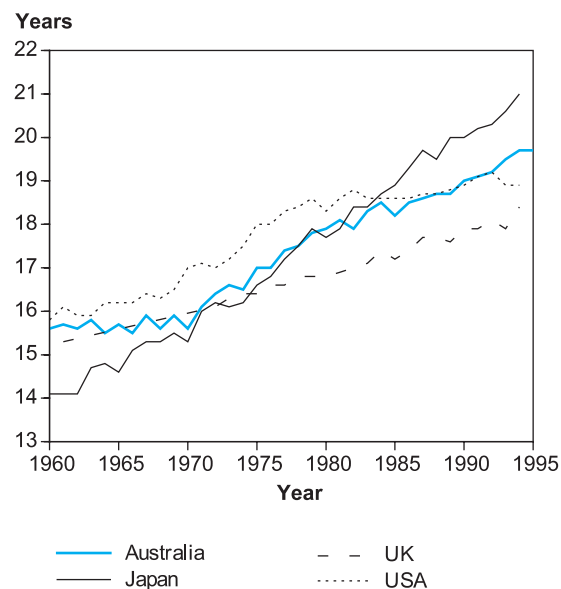


Figure 4: Trends in female life expectancy at age 65, 1960 to 1995

Life expectancy, females

Life expectancy at birth, females (years)

Country	1950	1960	1970	1980	1992	1993	1994	% change 1950 to 1992
Australia	71.5	73.9	74.2	78.1	80.4	80.9	80.9	12.4
Canada	70.8	74.2	76.4	79.0	81.4	81.0		15.0
Denmark	70.1	73.8	75.9	77.2	78.1	77.9		11.4
France	69.3	73.8	76.1	78.4	82.3	82.1		18.8
Germany (FRG)	68.5	72.4	73.8	76.7	79.3	79.3	79.6	15.8
Greece	65.2	70.4	73.6	76.4	80.0	80.4	80.2	22.7
Hong Kong	64.9	71.3	75.6	78.3	81.6	82.3	82.9	25.7
Ireland	67.1	71.9	73.5	75.6	78.2			16.5
Israel	66.4	70.7	73.0	75.7	78.4	79.1	79.4	18.1
Italy	67.3	72.3	74.9	77.8	80.7			19.9
Japan	59.6	70.2	74.7	78.8	83.0	83.1	83.3	39.3
Netherlands	72.9	75.5	76.6	79.2	80.5	80.0	80.4	10.4
New Zealand	71.3	73.8	74.6	76.3	79.2	78.9		11.1
Norway	72.7	75.6	76.8	79.2	80.5	80.3		10.7
Singapore	62.1	67.6	71.8	74.6	78.9	78.6	79.0	27.1
Spain	64.3	71.9	75.0	78.6	81.1			26.1
Sweden	71.6	75.3	77.2	78.8	81.1	80.9		13.3
Switzerland	70.9	74.8	76.2	78.8	81.7	81.7	81.9	15.2
UK	71.8	74.2	75.2	77.2	79.2	78.9	79.5	10.3
USA	71.1	73.1	74.8	77.5	79.2			11.4

Sources: United Nations 1993; WHO 1994, 1995a, 1996d.

- In 1992, the life expectancy for Australian females at birth was 80.4 years, rising to 80.9 years in 1994. Australia ranked in the lower half of the developed countries included here for comparison for female life expectancy in 1992. As in the case of males, Japan ranked first on this indicator of health—a baby girl born in Japan in 1992 can expect to live 83.0 years. France, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Canada also had comparatively higher female life expectancies. Denmark (78.1 years) had the lowest female life expectancy at birth in 1992, led by Ireland, Israel and Singapore (Figure 1).
- Girls born in Asian countries had the greatest improvement in post-war life expectancy. A Japanese girl born in 1950 could expect to live 59.6 years. By 1992, this figure had risen to 83.0 years—an improvement of almost 40%. The Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece and Italy) also showed notable improvements during this period of some 20% or more (Figure 2).
- Between 1950 and 1992, Australian female life expectancy at birth increased by 12.4%, slightly higher than that for males (12.0%). This places Australia 14th among 20 developed nations for improvement in female life expectancy. The United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway, as well as New Zealand, the United States and Denmark had smaller increases in life expectancy than Australia. Smaller improvements in life expectancy in these countries are partly due to a higher base in 1950.
- Compared to males, Australian, United Kingdom and United States females showed a steadier improvement in post-war life expectancy, both at birth and at the age of 65. This improvement accelerated further after 1970—again attributable to the downturn in cardiovascular mortality dating from this time. In Japan, this improvement has been more rapid and sustained over the same time period (Figures 3 and 4).
- Male:female differences in life expectancy vary among developed countries, from a high of 8.5 years for France in 1992, to a low of 3.7 years for Israel in the same year. For Australia, the difference between male and female life expectancy at birth was 5.9 years in 1992. In Japan, male:female differences in life expectancy have generally been increasing since the 1950s.

For more information, see:

WHO 1996. World health statistics annual, 1995. Geneva: World Health Organization.