UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

POPULATION DIVISION
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

*United Nations Database on the Households and
Living Arrangements of Older Persons 2019*

ABOUT

This *Database on the Households and Living Arrangements of Older Persons 2019* presents a compilation of indicators on the household composition and living arrangements of persons aged 60 or over, estimated using both tabulated data and household roster micro-data from censuses and household surveys. The estimates are based on 738 unique data sources from 155 countries or areas, representing approximately 97+ per cent of persons aged 60 or over globally, with reference dates ranging from 1960 to 2018.

Standard estimation procedures were used across the data sources so that estimates may be compared both across countries and over time.[1] The present database builds on work previously carried out by the Population Division, published in: United Nations (2005), *Living Arrangements of Older Persons Around the World,* and United Nations (2017), *Living Arrangements of Older Persons: A Report on an Expanded International Dataset.*

The database was developed by Sara Hertog, Yumiko Kamiya, Mun Sim Lai, Camille Dorion and Ivan Prlincevic of the Population Division, in collaboration with a team of researchers at the Center for Demographic Studies of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, led by Professor Albert Esteve and including: Marc Ajenjo, Joan Garcia, Pinar Koksel, Antonio López-Gay, Antonio José Medina, Rocío Treviño and Anna Turu.

The database is accessible on the website of the Population Division:
https://population.un.org/LivingArrangements/index.html

Suggested citation:

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). *Database on the Households and Living Arrangements of Older Persons 2019.* Copyright @ 2019 by United Nations, made available under a Creative Commons license (CC BY 3.0 IGO) http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/igo

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[1] Older persons residing in collective quarters—such as nursing facilities, dormitories or prisons—are not reflected in the database. Analyses of data reported to the Demographic Yearbook (DYB) of the United Nations indicate that in most countries, only a small fraction of older persons resided in collective quarters: of 80 countries or areas with data available in the DYB, the percentage of persons aged 60 or over residing in collective quarters was less than one per cent in 33 countries and less than 2 per cent in 43 countries. The percentage of older persons in collective quarters exceeded 5 per cent in 13 countries or areas (Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, Isle of Man, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland). It exceeded 10 per cent in only two countries: Japan (18 per cent in 2005) and Qatar (21 per cent in 2010).

DEFINITIONS

The *United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*[2] classifies a household in one of two categories: a) a one-person household, in which one person makes provision for his or her own food or other essentials for living without combining with any other person; or b) a multi-person household of two or more persons living together who make common provision for food or other essentials for living. Persons in a multi-person household may pool their incomes and have a common budget to a greater or lesser extent; they may be related or unrelated persons or a combination of persons both related and unrelated. The principles and recommendations note that an alternative definition used in many countries exemplifies the so-called household-dwelling concept, wherein a household consists of all persons living together in a housing unit. By both definitions, households are distinguishable from families in that: a) a household may consist of only one person, but a family must contain at least two members; and b) the members of a multi-person household need not be related to each other, while the members of a family must be related. Thus, a household may contain more than one family or no families at all, as in one-person households and households consisting of unrelated members.

Where guidance is offered in the principles and recommendations, the indicators selected for the 2019 *United Nations Database on the Households and Living Arrangements of Older Person*s are defined accordingly. The set of indicators used to describe household patterns for a country in a given year include:

Average household size is the average number of usual residents (household members) in older persons' households.

Distribution of older persons by household size is the percentage of older persons living in households of various sizes, described in four size classes: 1 member, 2-3 members, 4-5 members and 6 or more members.

Distribution of older persons by household type is the percentage of older persons living in distinct household configurations, described in seven mutually exclusive categories:

> **one-person households** comprised of only one member;
>
> **couple only households** comprised of a married or in-partnership couple and no one else;
>
> **couple with children households** comprised of a married or in-partnership couple and their children (biological, step, and adopted/foster children), irrespective of children's ages, and no one else;
>
> **single parent with children households** comprised of a single parent and his or her children (biological, step, and adopted/foster children), irrespective of children's ages, and no one else;
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> **extended family households** that include one or more members outside of the nuclear family unit (see below), and no members who are not related to each other;

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[2] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/Series_M67rev3en.pdf

non-relative households that include two or more members who are not related to each other;

unknown households that include one or more members whose relationship to the head is unknown or not reported.

Distribution of older persons by living arrangement is the percentage of older persons in households with different configurations of family members, described in five mutually exclusive categories:

alone in a one-person household;

with spouse only in a two-person household with a spouse or partner and no one else;

with children under 20 years of age, including sons, daughters, children-in-law, step-children, adopted children and foster children, wherein the oldest co-resident child is aged 0 to 19 years;

with children aged 20 years or over, including sons, daughters, children-in-law, step-children, adopted children and foster children, wherein the oldest co-resident child is aged 20 years or over;

other household living arrangement not among the four categories defined above.

Additional indicators describe the **percentage of older persons residing:**

with their **spouse** or partner, irrespective of the number or relationships of other household members;

with a person **under 20 years of age**, irrespective of the number or relationships of household members;

in a **nuclear household,** comprising those living in a couple only household, couple with children household, or single parent with children household;

in a **multigeneration household** that includes two or more generations of related members aged 20 years or over;

in a **three generation household** that includes three or more generations of related members, irrespective of age;

in a **skip generation household** consisting of grandparents and their grandchildren, but none of the parents of the grandchildren.

DISAGGREGATION

Where possible, given the available data, estimates were disaggregated by sex and broad age group (60 years or over, 65 years or over, and 80 years or over).

DATA SOURCES

The four types of sources of data on the households and living arrangements of older persons reflected in the database include:

1. **Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) (**https://dhsprogram.com/**)**
   ICF. 2004-2019. Demographic and Health Surveys (various) [Datasets]. Funded by USAID. Rockville, Maryland: ICF [Distributor].

   Indicators are estimated from 274 DHS household rosters, representing 74 countries or areas and with reference years ranging from 1985 to 2018. Household members are restricted to usual residents of the household, excluding visitors.

2. **IPUMS-International**
   Minnesota Population Center. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, International: Version 7.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2019. http://doi.org/10.18128/D020.V7.0.

   Indicators are estimated from the household rosters of 298 IPUMS-I samples, representing 98 countries or areas and with reference years ranging from 1960 to 2015. As with the DHS, household members identified in IPUMS-I samples are restricted to usual residents of the household, excluding visitors. Group quarters or other non-household arrangements and their residents are not considered.

   For both DHS and IPUMS-I, estimation of the prevalence of various household types relies on information about the relationship of each household member to the head of household reported on the household roster portion of censuses and surveys.[3] The set of relationship types recorded in DHS household rosters is highly standardised across countries or areas and over time and provides sufficient detail to estimate the prevalence of each of the various household types and living arrangements described above. The sets of relationship codes associated with the census and survey samples from IPUMS-I are less standardised and for some countries or areas and samples, the set of relationship codes reported lacks sufficient detail to estimate the prevalence of some household types.

   Specifically, for those IPUMS-I samples with relationship codes that do not distinguish children of the head from children-in-law of the head, it was not possible to estimate the prevalence of couple with children households, single parent households, nuclear households and extended family households.

   Furthermore, for IPUMS-I samples that did not distinguish grandchildren of the head from other relatives, it was not possible to estimate the prevalence of multi-generation,

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[3] See United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). Patterns and trends in household size and composition: Evidence from a United Nations dataset. (ST/ESA/SER.A/433).

three generation and skip generation households. For IPUMS-I samples that used the combined relationship code "other relatives or non-relatives", the prevalence of extended family households and non-relative households, respectively, could not be estimated. Lastly, for IPUMS-I samples that did not distinguish children-in-law from the "other relative" category, older persons' co-residence with children and membership in intergenerational household types could not be estimated.

3. **Demographic Yearbook (DYB) of the United Nations**
   (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb_Household/dyb_household.htm**)**
   The Demographic Yearbook compiles data on households reported to the United Nations by national statistical offices. The living arrangements of older persons were estimated based on data contained in Table 7: Population in households by type of household, age and sex, 1995-2016. The percentage of older persons living "alone" was calculated as the number of older persons residing in "one-person" households as a percentage of the total number of older persons in households of any size. The percentage of older persons living "with spouse only" was calculated as the number of older persons residing in "couple without children" households as a percentage of the total number of older persons in households of any size. Data compiled in the DYB did not permit estimation of the percentage of older persons co-residing with their children or living in the various inter-generational household types. Estimates based on DYB records for 74 countries or areas are included in the database with reference years ranging from 1995 to 2016.

4. **Labour Force Surveys (LFS) of the European Union, Eurostat**
   (http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey**)**

   The microdata from the collection of European Union Labour Force Surveys, were processed during the assembly of the release of the United Nations Database on the Living Arrangements of Older Persons in 2017, which included fewer indicators than this extended 2018 release. The subset of living arrangement indicators from the LFS that were published in the 2017 database are reproduced here as well, but no additional processing has yet been completed to produce estimates for the extended set of indicators. The database includes estimates from 47 LFS, representing 24 countries and with reference years 2001 and 2011.