

## **Ageing and Health in Portugal. Politics and Practise**

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Demographic ageing is one the majors challenges of our century and health a key factor of functional, financial and productivity dependence of human societies. In the last years the evolution of Portuguese population had a substantive alteration of age structure, due to a decrease of mortality and fecundity. At the same time, we had a rise of levels of high education, on both sexes- We know that in Portugal, education levels stipulate demographic behavior and personal health

Analysis on the impact of demographic ageing on health profiles should have in consideration education levels. Also, the recognition of unequal situations of health and health services use justified investigations on individual determinative factors. We can say that numerous factors are associated in these situations, besides genetic and biological variations, including social factors.

This essay highlights the foremost conclusions of “Project Ageing and Health in Portugal: policies and practice”, which study the impact on health of the ageing Portuguese population till 2031.

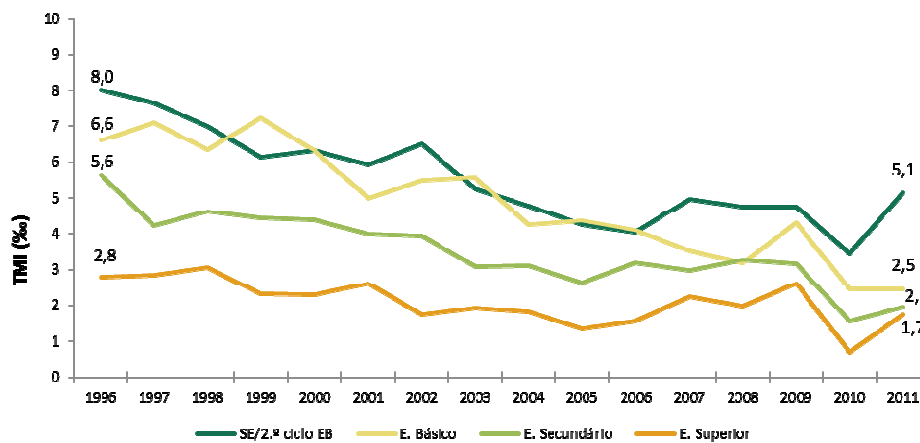
We consider five items: to appraise the effects of social and demographic changes on health; analysis of policies of health and well fare; analysis of changes of age structure, and relate them to education and health levels; to esteem and point out socioeconomic states of health; to esteem the change consequences.

Several international studies show the association between age, school level, income and personal assessment of health.

Some results:

1. Child mortality varies upon the mother level of education ( more education, less child mortality rate)

Figure 1 - Child mortality rate by mother level of education



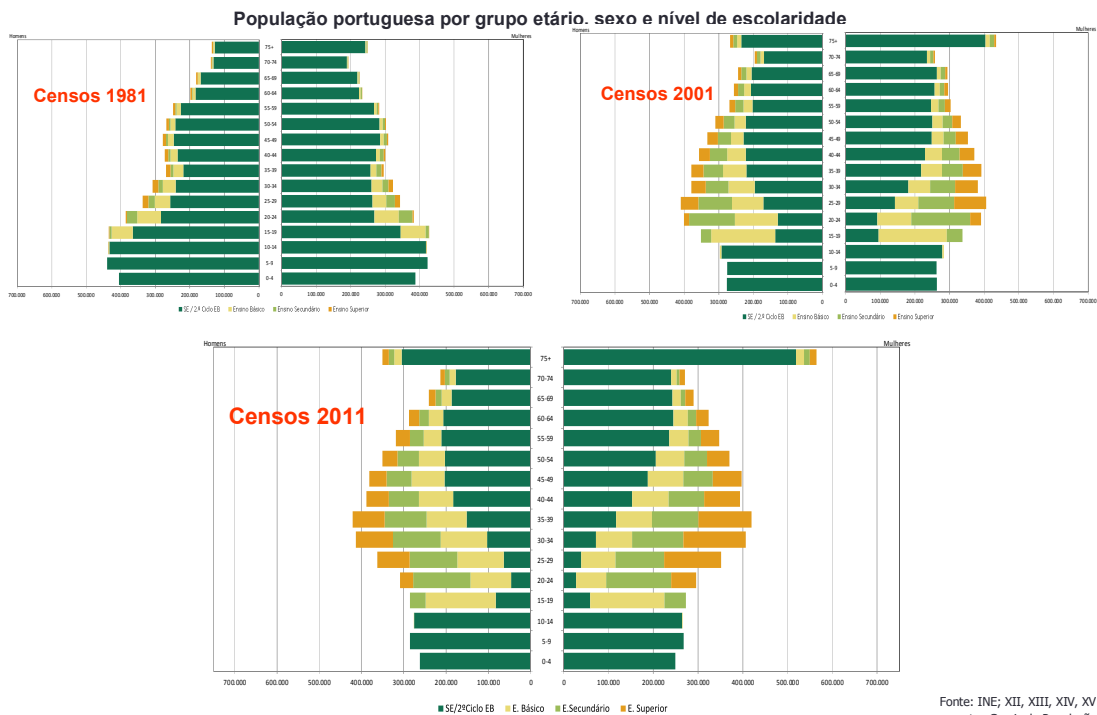
2. School level influence the number of children (mothers with intermediate schooling have less children)

Figure 2- Total fertility rate by mother level of education



In the last decades, the number of people with secondary and superior schooling increased in all age levels and gender. We hope that aged people schooling will increase also. More educated people have a more positive view of their health conditions.

Figure 3 - Portuguese population by age, sex and educational level



The results of demographic projections to 2011-2031 period, for the Portuguese population, NUT II, show a future improvement on health and the use of health services.

We considered the expected changes in the demographic structure of Portuguese population by gender, age group and educational level. The results for demographic projections by NUTS II until 2031 were used as the basis for other estimations on a set of indicators on health status and health services organization. The results point out to a future improvement of health status (particularly, health status and self reported prevalence of chronic diseases, especially among men), but also to the increased use of health services considered (doctor visits and use prescription drugs). As such, we question whether, in the coming decades, it will not be before the increased use of health services that lead to better health, so reverse the expected spending in this sector.

Three main conclusions:

1. People with more schooling will increase in all levels and gender.
2. The number of people with basic school will increase, and by 2031 more than half of the population will achieve this level.
3. In any case, there will be gender differentiations. By 2030, male population above 70 will have at least basic school, although women will surpass male population in younger ages.