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How do Germany and Sweden address healthcare workforce shortage caused by demographic change?

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND HEALTHCARE: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES IN GERMANY AND SWEDEN

English for Health Economics

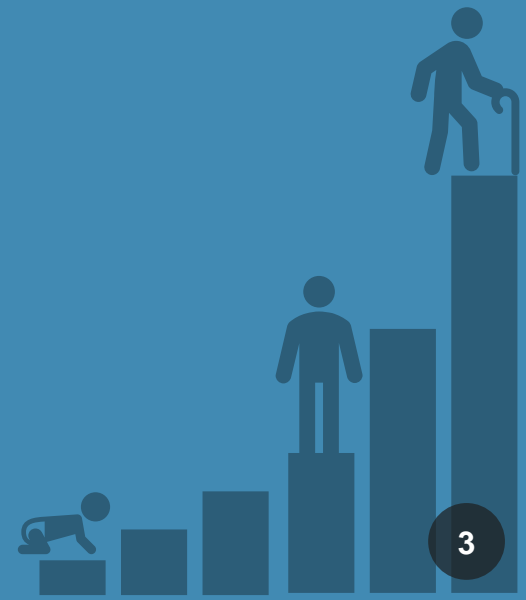
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Outline

1. Definition of Demographic Change
2. Demographic Situation in Germany and Sweden
3. Impact on the Healthcare System
4. Challenges in the Healthcare Workforce
5. Strategies
6. Comparison of Approaches
7. Conclusion

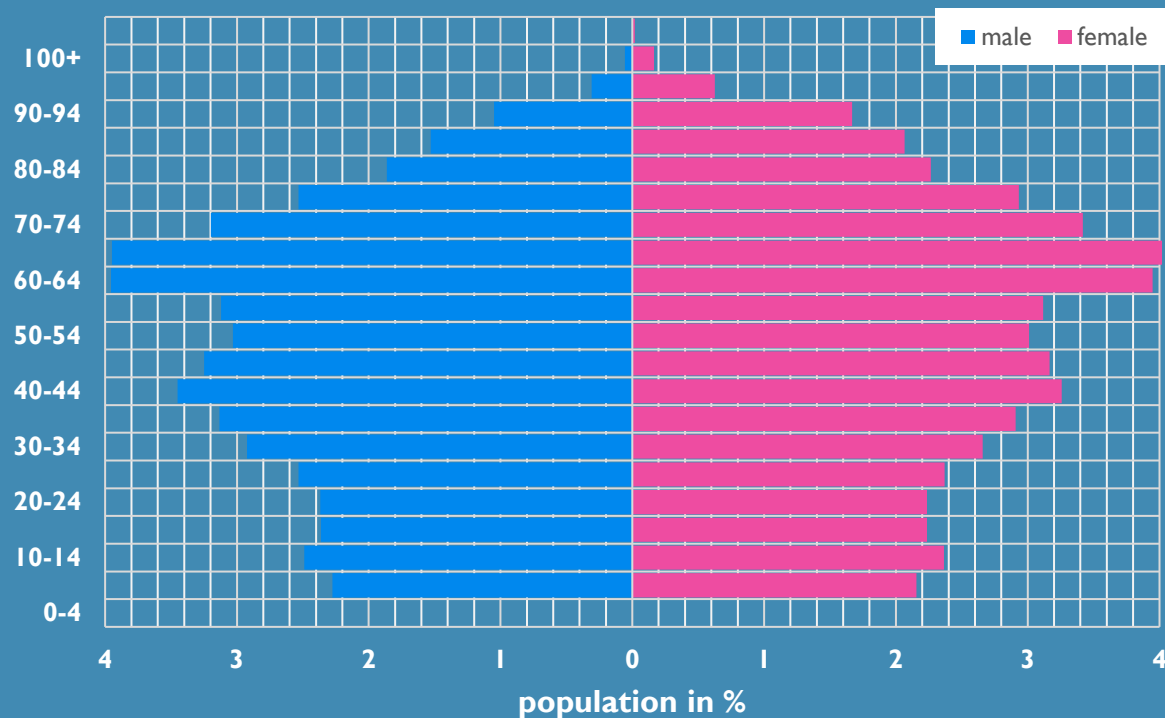


1. Definition of Demographic Change

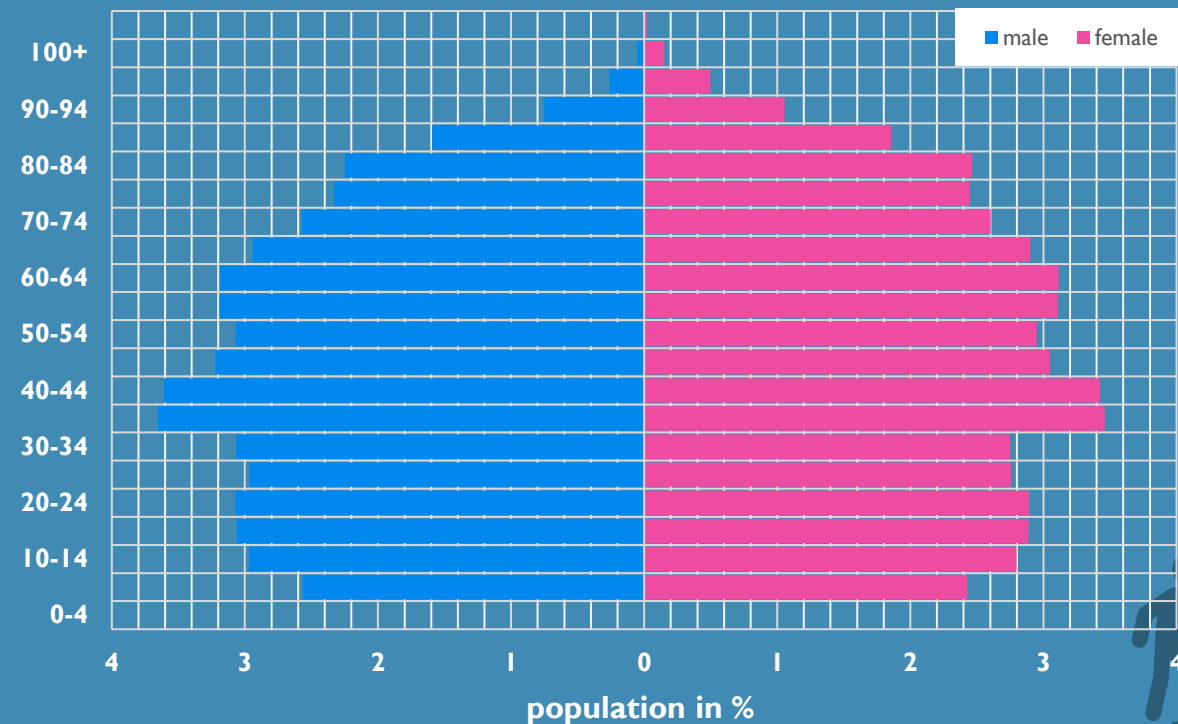
- Refers to changes in the size and structure of a population
- Caused mainly by:
 - Low birth rates
 - High life expectancy
 - Migration patterns
- In Western developed countries:
 - Birth rates are below the replacement level
 - Life expectancy continues to rise

2. Demographic Situation in Germany and Sweden

Population pyramid Germany 2025



Population pyramid Sweden 2025



	Germany	Sweden
Population:	83,6 million	10,6 million
Average age:	46,8 years	41,1 years
Life expectancy:	around 81 years	around 83 years
Birth rate:	8,8%	10%

3. Impact on the Healthcare System

- Demographic Change – Key Impacts on Healthcare
- More elderly people → higher demand for:
 - Long-term care
 - Geriatric services
 - Chronic disease management
- Fewer working-age people → staff shortages
- Financial stress on insurance systems and pension funds
- Need for reform: smarter resource use, digital tools, care innovation



4. Challenges in the Healthcare Workforce



Challenges in the Healthcare Workforce – Germany

- Rapid increase in elderly and care-dependent people
 - Many nurses leave early or are in poor health
 - Severe and growing shortage of nurses (could quadruple by 2040)
 - Long and demanding nursing education
 - Slow implementation of political reforms
 - Strong reliance on international recruitment
- ➡ Combination of aging population, tough working conditions, and slow reforms leads to serious staff shortages



Challenges in the Healthcare Workforce – Sweden

- Rapidly rising number of people aged 85+
 - Growing care needs, especially for the elderly
 - Stagnating or shrinking working-age population (especially rural/ north)
 - Significant staff shortages in elderly care
 - High share of foreign-born healthcare workers
 - Integration of migrants and more full-time work needed
- ➡ Combined, these trends are putting increasing pressure on Sweden's healthcare workforce and make sustainable solutions more urgent than ever



5. Germany strategies

- Incentives for full-time work and longer careers
- Expansion of training places and faster recognition of foreign qualifications
- Targeted international recruitment (e.g. India, Philippines, Kenya)
- Investment in digital tools, telemedicine, and AI
- Engagement of older generations (e.g. baby boomers, volunteering)



5. Sweden strategies

- Promotion of full-time positions and better working conditions
- Strong investment in eHealth, automation, and telemedicine
- Measures to extend working life of older employees
- More training places and incentives for young people
- High integration of foreign-born healthcare staff



6. Comparison of Approaches

Strategy	Germany	Sweden
International recruitment	Strong focus	High, especially assistants
Digitalization/technology	Catching up	World leader (eHealth)
Work model adaptation	Flexible hours, volunteers	Full-time focus, older staff
Training expansion	Yes	Yes
Political reforms	Yes	Yes

8. Conclusion

- Demographic change puts similar pressure on Germany and Sweden.
- Germany relies more on international recruitment and policy reforms.
- Sweden focuses on technology and adapting work models.
- There is no single solution – a broad, flexible approach is needed.
- Ongoing innovation, training, and integration of foreign-born workers will remain crucial for the future.



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