

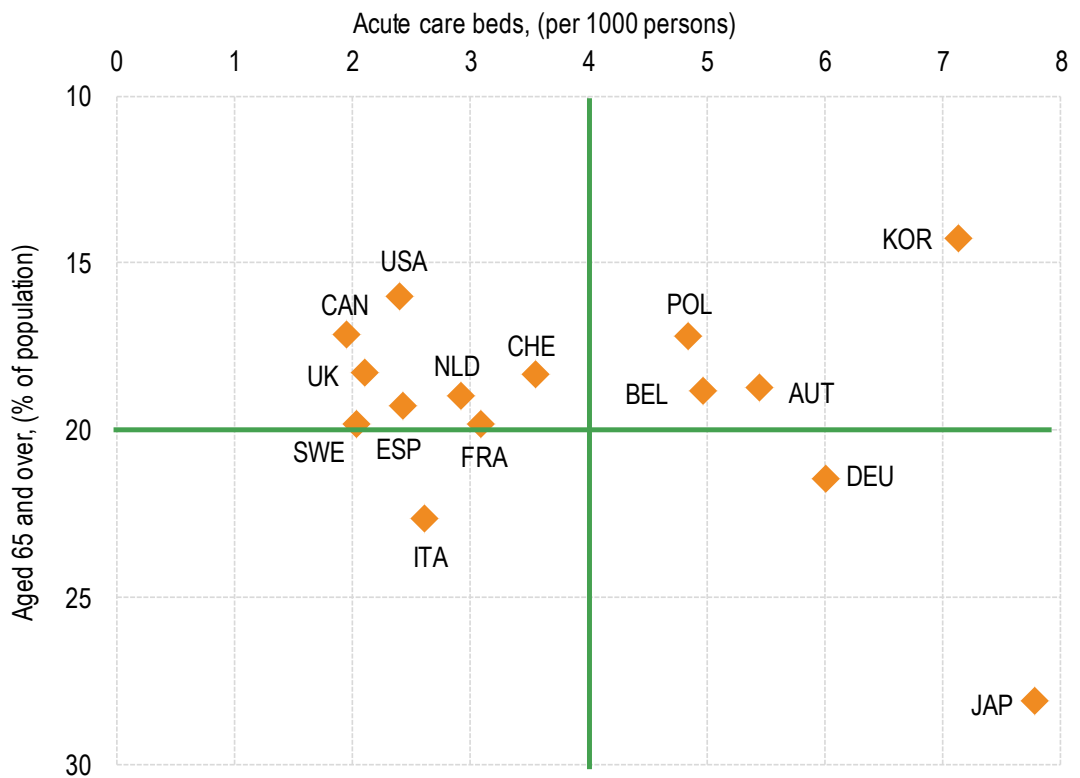


## Hospital capacity and ageing populations

Over the past decennia, hospital capacity has been gradually reduced in most OECD countries, as major health care innovations have resulted in a gradual shift towards more extra-muros care. Nevertheless, countries with the oldest populations such as Japan and Germany have maintained a large hospital capacity. In Germany, the number of acute beds is two to three times larger than in some other major countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and Italy. In that respect, South Korea is an outlier by combining a large hospital capacity with a relatively young population.

In the current Covid-19 outbreak, having a large hospital capacity is a clear advantage. Fortunately, some countries have been able to increase their capacity of intensive care beds rapidly. Moreover, hospital capacity has been better used by transporting patients from overstretched regions to those with less Covid-19 patients. Thus, Germany has been able to receive French patients to relieve the hospitals in the eastern part of France.

Hospital capacity is only one aspect of the current crisis. A country's resistance to the virus is for an important part also determined by health care policies such as the availability of personal protective equipment, testing capacity and universal access to the health system.



Source: OECD (data 2018 or earlier)