

Exploring Value in Healthcare: Patient Satisfaction in Spain Before and After the Pandemic

Carlos Sanchez-Piedra^{1,2,3}, Francisco-Javier Prado-Galbarro⁴, Montserrat Carmona^{1,2,3}, Esther-Elena Garcia-Carpintero^{1,2,3}, Lucía Pedrosa Pérez^{1,2,3}, Tasmania del Pino Sedeño^{2,3,5}, Carlos Martin-Saborido^{1,3}

1. Health Technology Assessment Agency. Instituto de Salud Carlos III. Madrid, Spain / 2. Network for Research on Chronicity, Primary Care, and Health Promotion (RICAPPS). Madrid, Spain / 3. Spanish Network of Agencies for Health Technology Assessment for the National Health Service (RedETS). Madrid, Spain / 4. Hospital Infantil de México Federico Gómez, México DF, Mexico / 5. Evaluation Unit of the Canary Islands Health Service (SESCS), Canary Islands Health Service. Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain

INTRODUCTION

Patient satisfaction is a key indicator of healthcare performance, shaping outcomes, resource allocation, and public trust. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted services and strained the system, with potential effects on satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics is essential to guide policies that improve responsiveness, equity, and confidence in the Spanish National Health System (NHS).





OBJECTIVE

To identify individual and contextual factors associated with satisfaction with the Spanish NHS, and to assess changes in satisfaction levels before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODS

- Cross-sectional analysis using **Spanish Healthcare Barometer** data (2018, 2019, 2022, 2023; n=29,146 adults).
- **Satisfaction** classified into three levels: low, moderate, and high.
- **Multinomial logistic regression** assessed associations with sociodemographic, health, service use, and regional factors.
- Variables were selected based on theoretical relevance and model fit using the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC).
- Final models were assessed for multicollinearity.

RESULTS

-  **Sample:** 29,146 adults (2018–2023)
 - Mean age ≈ 50 years | 51.5% women
 - 88% born in Spain | 75% good/very good health
 - 39% chronic condition | Avg. satisfaction = 6.46/10
-  **Overall satisfaction** declined after the pandemic (6.66 → 6.26; p<0.001).
-  **Changes after COVID-19**
 - ↑ Chronic conditions: 32.1% → 45.8%
 - ↑ Hospital admissions & emergency visits (esp. private/both sectors)
 - ↑ Waiting times for General Practice consultations (same/next day ↓)
 - ↑ Healthcare expenditure & physician density | Poverty & life expectancy stable
-  See **Figure 1A** and **Figure 1B** for full adjusted odds ratios.

RESULTS

Figure 1A. Adjusted Odds Ratios for Reporting Moderate Satisfaction With the Spanish Public Healthcare System (Reference: Low Satisfaction).

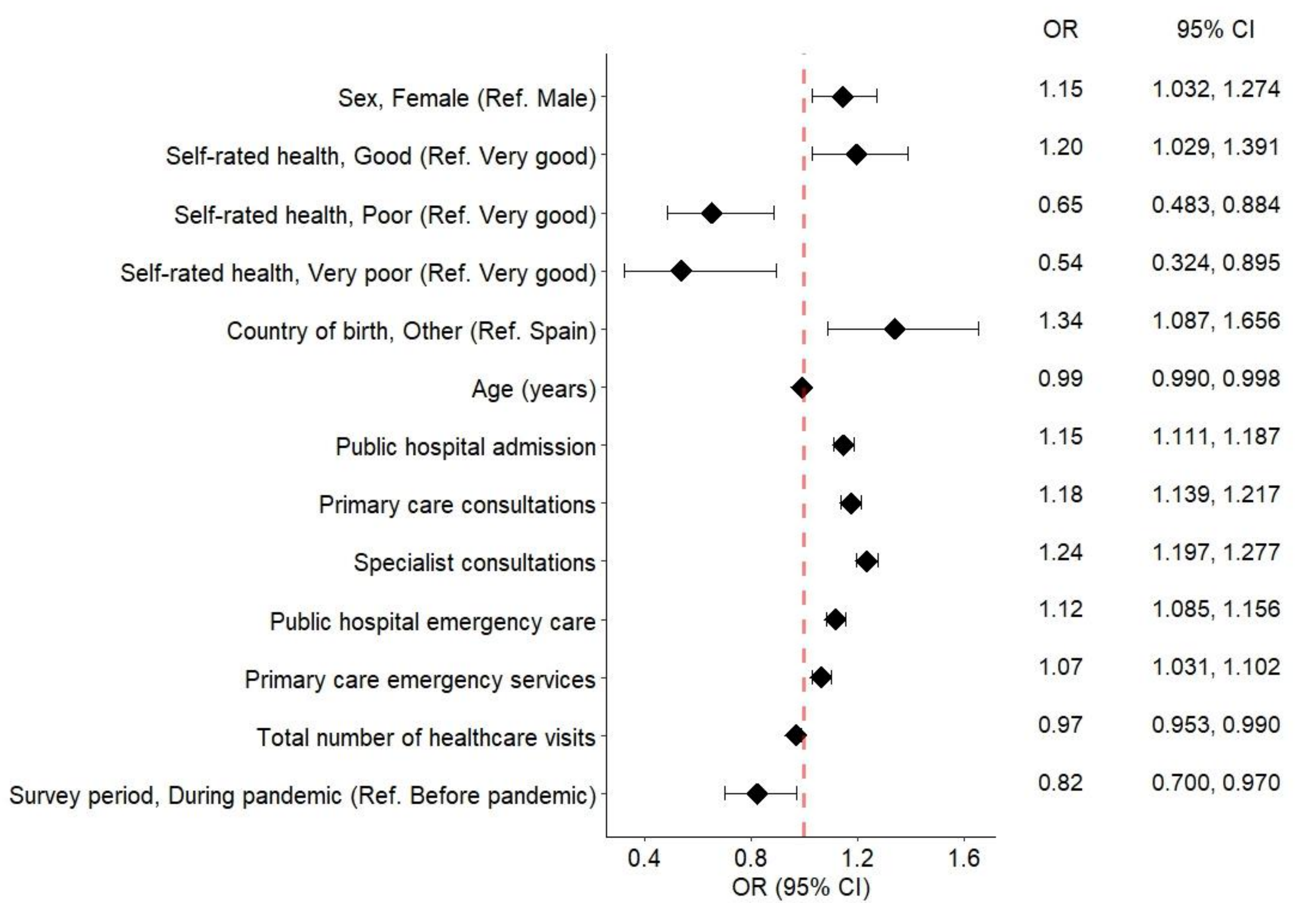
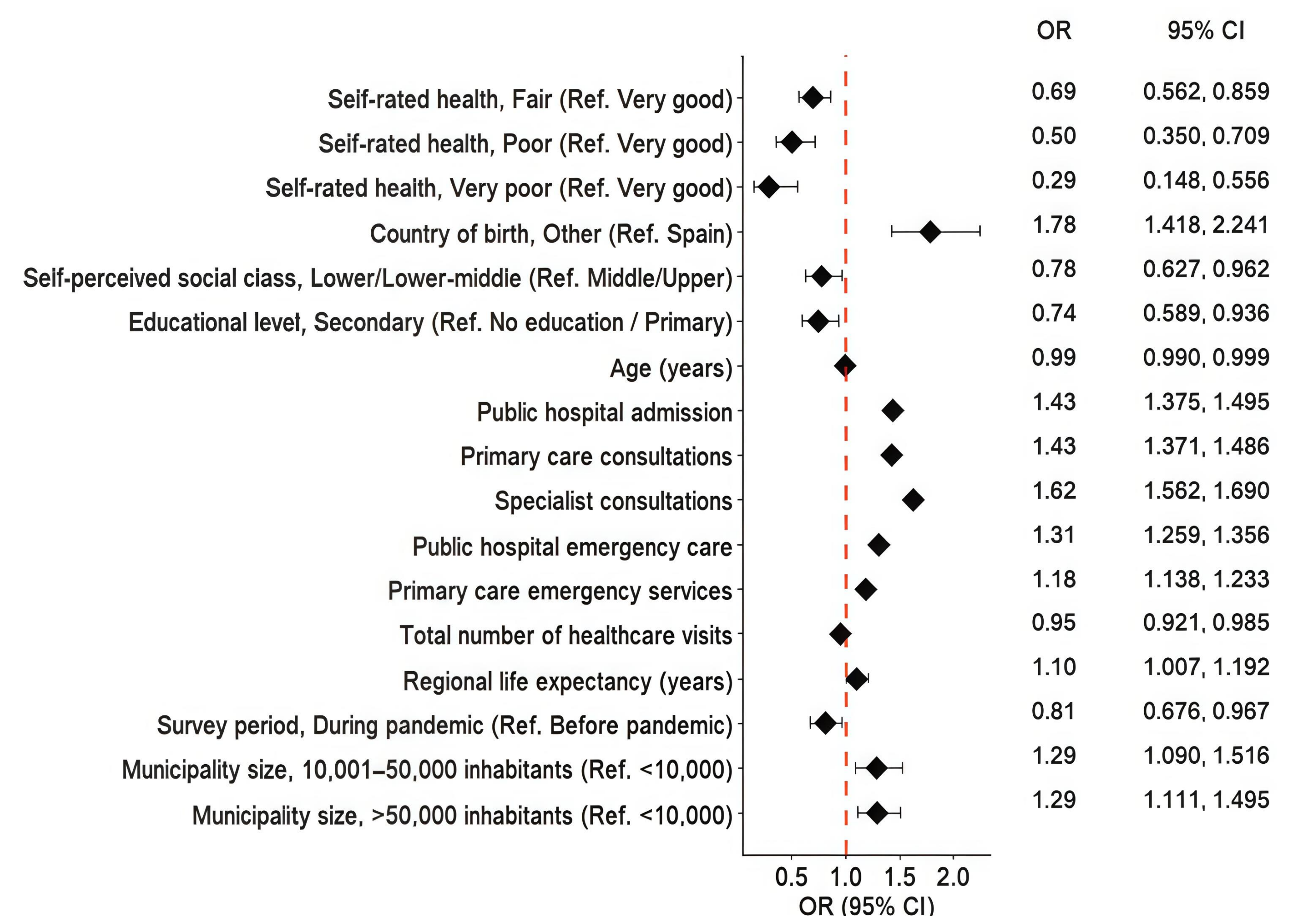


Figure 1B. Adjusted Odds Ratios for Reporting High Satisfaction With the Spanish Public Healthcare System (Reference: Low Satisfaction).



CONCLUSION

High satisfaction with the Spanish NHS is driven primarily by individual health status and use of public services. Regional investment levels appear less influential. These findings highlight the need to strengthen system responsiveness and patient-centered care, particularly in times of crisis.