



Background to the Swedish population study on gambling and health (SWELOGS)

In order to increase knowledge about gambling and health, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health has created a research program, SWELOGS, Swedish Longitudinal Gambling Studies. An international steering group, consisting of gambling researchers within various fields and areas of orientation, is affiliated with the program.

Research Program Objectives

In the most recent public health proposition, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health was commissioned to conduct a longitudinal population study on gambling. The objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate the extent of problem gambling, changes over time and how they relate to other studies on the subject.
- Identify target groups for preventive measures.
- Describe what problem gambling looks like in Sweden and what health-related, social and economic consequences it has.
- Identify risk and preventive factors.

The need for a new study

There are several reasons why a national population study covering a longer period of time is needed:

- Existing data is limited and out of date.
- The gambling market has undergone major changes in the past decade. Updated information is greatly needed.
- Increased awareness of the social consequences of problem gambling has led to requests for additional information from Sweden's decision makers.
- The Swedish National Institute of Public Health wants to abandon the "ambulance perspective" - emergency treatment for acute pathologic gambling - for a focus on prevention.

Implementation

Data will be collected in three ways:

- Repeated population studies at intervals of one to three years. In-depth studies on a sample of the respondents.
- A specially designed questionnaire for young people with three follow-ups over three years.
- Collected data will be combined with data from various registers at Statistics Sweden, such as employment, education and income.



Areas of focus

The study's areas of focus

- Gambling - what, how often, how much money, age started, etc.
- Problem gambling/relationship to gambling/thoughts about gambling
- TV and computer gambling
- Health
- Alcohol and tobacco
- Well-being and social relationships
- Employment, finances and living situation
- Questions for relatives
- Seeking help

Earlier population study

The most recent scientific study on gambling and gambling addiction, the Swedish Gambling Screen (SWEGS) was conducted in 1997/98 under the leadership of Professor Sten Rönnerberg. According to this study, approximately two percent of the population aged 15-74 had a gambling abuse problem. The study was followed up with an in-depth study on a sample of the respondents, entitled Gambling Addiction in Sweden – the characteristics of problem gamblers. SWELOGS provides an opportunity to follow up on changes over the past ten years.

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