

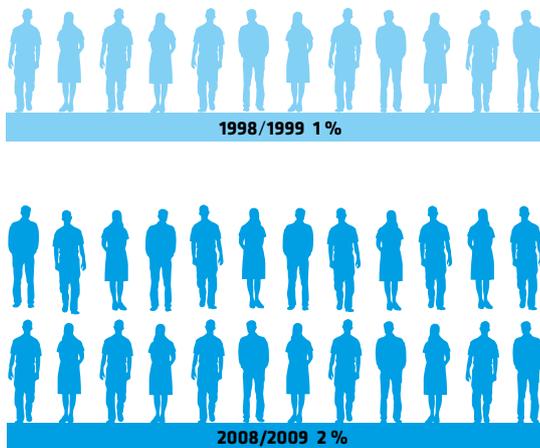


# The proportion of people who have had serious gambling problems doubled

The proportion of people who have had serious problems with gambling at some time in their lives doubled between 1998/1999 and 2008/2009. Greater availability and more intense marketing are two possible explanations.

The findings come from the Public Health Agency of Sweden's population study Swelogs and an earlier population study on gambling problems.<sup>1</sup> The results were taken in 1998/1999 and 2008/2009.

The calculation is based on Sweden's population at each point in time.<sup>2</sup>



The comparison shows that the proportion of people who have had serious gambling problems earlier in their lives has doubled, from 1 to 2 percent.

People who have experienced serious gambling problems have suffered several and, in some cases, far-reaching harmful consequences from their gambling. Compared to this group, people with less serious gambling problems have suffered fewer and less far-reaching consequences.

One possible explanation for the increase is greater availability to gambling, for example through the Internet.

## Swelogs

Swelogs, the Swedish longitudinal gambling study, is a Swedish population study of health and gambling being conducted over seven years, between 2008 and 2015. The study aims to build an evidence base to develop effective preventive measures against the harmful effects of excessive gambling. The roughly 8,000 randomly selected respondents between the ages of 16 and 84 who took part in the baseline study will be contacted at least three more times during the course of the study. Data used in this fact sheet is from 2008/2009. The degree of gambling problems was assessed based on the measurement instrument South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS).

Read more at [www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se](http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se)

Of those who had had gambling problems earlier in their lives at the time of the 2008/2009 survey, 42 percent had gambled on the Internet the previous year compared to 7 percent of gamblers who had no problems. At the end of the 1990s, it was unusual to gamble on the Internet. More intense marketing of gambling products might be a further reason. In one Swedish study, people who had previously had gambling problems were influenced to a higher extent by gambling advertisements.<sup>3</sup>

## Previous gambling problems – a risk factor

Even if people succeed in recovering from serious gambling problems, consequences such as large debts, relationship breakdowns and health problems are often experienced for a long period afterwards. Previous gambling problems are also a risk factor for developing gambling problems again. As a result, a particularly vulnerable group has grown over the last ten years in terms of gambling harms and potential for relapse.

A focus on prevention methods as well as treatment would not only benefit the individual gambler and those close to them, but also the general community.

A helpline for gamblers and their family and friends is available via phone, e-mail or chat: [www.stodlinjen.se/](http://www.stodlinjen.se/) **other-languages/in-english/**, phone no +46 (0)20-81 91 00

1. Rönnberg et al. (2000). (Report no. R 2000:21) Stockholm: Swedish National Institute of Public Health.

2. In 1998/1999 a sample of people aged between 15 and 74 was used and in 2008/2009 a sample aged between 16 and 84.

3. Binde, Per (2007). *Spelreklam och spelberoende – en intervjustudie* [Gambling advertisements – an interview study] (Report no. R 2007:15) Östersund: Swedish National Institute of Public Health