



# Are 98% of Sweden's population really "happy gamblers"?

The findings from Swelogs (Swedish longitudinal gambling study) first round of data collection were published in 2010. The findings showed that 2% of the Swedish population were problem gamblers. This figure has been used by various stakeholders to claim that 98% of the Swedish population are happy gamblers. However, it is not really that simple.

If we subtract 2% from the total population, there remain 98% who do not have any gambling problems at all. If we subtract the 5% who experience some negative consequence of their gambling, the remaining figure is 93%.

31% of the population do not gamble at all and if we subtract them from the original 93%, there remain only 62% who are potentially "happy gamblers".

Not experiencing problems is not necessarily the same as being in a state of happiness. If we think of happiness as primarily a source of happy feelings, we can look more closely at one of the questions in the study, where respondents were asked how much fun they thought it was to gamble. The statement they were asked to respond to was "Gambling is one of the most enjoyable things in life."

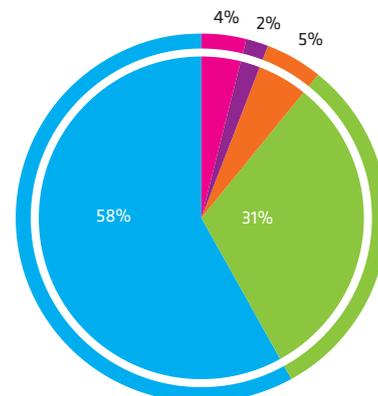
Of those who gamble without any problems (62%), only 4% agree in whole or in part that gambling is one of the most enjoyable things in life. And 4% is certainly quite different to 98%.

What is of even greater interest is that almost 20% of the at-risk gamblers and 40% of the problem gamblers agree in whole or in part that gambling is one of the most enjoyable things in life. It would seem that the more enjoyable one thinks it is to gamble, or in other words the "happier" the gambler is, the more negative consequences one experiences. This means that feeling enjoyment for the moment does not preclude experiencing negative consequences from one's gambling.

Statistics can be used to show many things. We have chosen an angle that shows how attitudes to gambling can be presented. The enjoyment experienced whilst gambling can have serious negative impacts for the gambler once the game is over. This is why we cannot agree with the term 'happy gambler'.

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

Gambling and gambling problems among the population



- Problem gamblers
- At-risk gamblers
- Do not gamble
- Do not agree with the statement "Gambling is one of the most enjoyable things in life"
- Agree with the statement "Gambling is one of the most enjoyable things in life"

Source: Spel om pengar och spelproblem i Sverige 2008-2009 (Statens folkhälsoinstitut 2010)

## 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 Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI).

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