

# Gambling and gambling problems in Sweden

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# Historical background

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- 13th century- law regulating gambling
- 1772 – first state owned lottery company
- 1923 – gambling on horses
- 1934 – gambling on pools
- 1986 – online sports betting
- 1998 – Internet gambling
- 2001 – international casinos



# Knowledge of gambling problems

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Rönnerberg et al (1999)

N=9 917, response rate 71,9 %, 15-74 years

SOGS-R (DSM-IV)

1,4 % ( $\pm 0.3\%$ ) problem gamblers

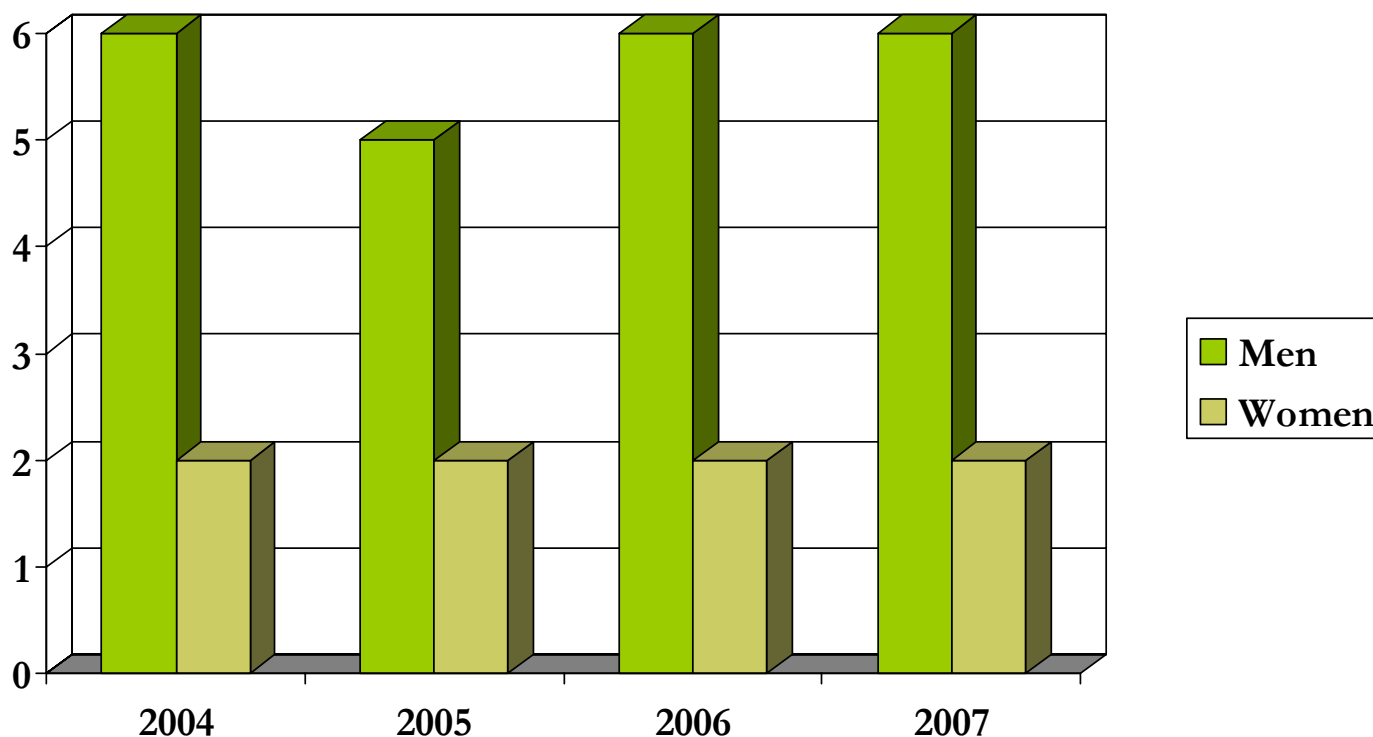
0,6 % ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ) probable pathological gamblers

(0,6 % ( $\pm 0.2\%$ ) problem gamblers)

(0,3 % ( $\pm 0.1\%$ ) pathological gamblers)

# Knowledge of gambling problems

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Risky gambling habits among Swedes aged 16-84  
2004-2007 (%) Source: Statens Folkhälsoinstitut

# What characterises problem gamblers?

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- Follow up Rönnerberg study 1999
- Double-blind "twin" study
- Personal interviews
- 324 of 578 participated (56 %)

# What characterises problem gamblers?

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- ❑ Childhood circumstances
  - Burdensome social factors
  
- ❑ Motivating factors
  - Erroneous beliefs
  - Dissociative experiences
  - Increased gambling at major life events
  
- ❑ Other problems
  - Depression
  - Drinking habits
  - Personality disorder

# Connection between gambling types and gambling problems

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## Top-3 Helpline (2007)

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|--------------------|--------|
| 1. Internet poker  | 29,9 % |
| 2. Gaming machines | 29,4 % |
| 3. Internet, other | 11,4 % |



# Connection between gambling types and gambling problems

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- Westfelt (2006)
  - Risk for gambling problem highest among gaming machine and bingo players
  
- Westfelt Casino study (2006)
  - 100 % increase of gambling problems in larger town, no change in smaller town
  
- Poker evaluation (2007)
  - 8,2 % problem gambling
  - 14,8 % moderate risk

# What is done to tackle gambling problems?

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- Swedish National Institute of Public Health
  - National helpline
  - Financing research
    - Treatment studies
    - Qualitative & quantitative research
  - Educating key groups
  - SWELOGS

# What is done to tackle gambling problems?

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- Gaming industry (example of Svenska Spel)
  - Age-limit control
  - Educating personnel and retailers
  - Tools for the gamblers
    - Set their own limits
    - Self-test
    - Self-exclusion
    - Play scan™

# Ideas for improvement

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- Research-based approach when introducing new games
- Evaluation up and running from the beginning
- Measurable goals – conditions regarding responsible gaming
  - Use of responsible gaming tools
  - Acceptable levels of gambling problems
- Evaluate effects of responsible gaming