

2009: Progress & Challenge

Swedish Tobacco Control

Contents:

- Historic background: How 500 000 lives were saved
- Update: Tobacco use and costs
- Sweden and the Framework Convention
- A new national campaign for 2008–2010
- “Snus is not just any product”
- Smoke free working hours
a growing trend
- Below-the-counter tobacco sales
an important issue
- The Government’s view ...
- ... and the NGOs’



swedish
Beware of the ~~Trojan~~ horse...

1957 The state-owned Swedish tobacco monopoly expresses concern over the first scientific reports on the health risks of smoking. Three years later a brochure warning about the lung cancer risk is produced.

1983 The National Board of Health and Welfare develops, together with the National Board of Occupational Safety and Health, guidelines for smoke-free environments.

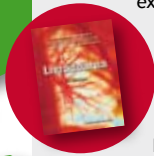
2005 June 1 the legislation on smoke-free restaurants, bars and cafés comes into force. It allows separate smoking rooms where eating and drinking is prohibited.

Important steps in Swedish tobacco control

The story of the lifesavers

Two people that have been extraordinarily important in the efforts to combat tobacco use in Sweden are **Margaretha Haglund** and **Paul Nordgren**. In 2007, Health Professionals against Tobacco published "The Lifesavers", a book that sought to honor Haglund, Nordgren and others who work for a Sweden free from tobacco. Journalist Carl-Olof Rydén has written the book. It tells the exciting story of how the number of smokers in Sweden has been halved since the early 1980's and how 500 000 lives have been saved.

Carl-Olof Rydén has summarised the story in an article that can be found at www.tobaccoorhealthsweden.org



1964 The government makes the first allocation for public information on the harmful effects of tobacco.

1974 The National Board of Health and Welfare presents a report marking the beginning of a new era when solving the tobacco problems is seen as a responsibility for politicians, not surgeons.

1977 An obligatory text warning is included on all cigarette packaging.

1993 A new Tobacco Act comes into force. An important part is restrictions of smoking in public places. Hospitality establishments are, however, excluded.

1997 It becomes prohibited to sell tobacco to persons under 18 years of age.

June 2 the Swedish Government ratifies the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

2007 Increased tobacco taxes.

And here are some of the things that happened in 2008

- Further increase in tobacco taxation.
- A new law permitted other shops than pharmacies to sell nicotine replacement drugs.
- The Government appointed an inquiry on how to strengthen the law banning the sales of tobacco to minors. Investigations have shown that the law is not effective, half of the minors still buy their own tobacco.
- A new National tobacco control campaign (very similar to the one in 2002-2005) was launched, coordinated by the National Institute of Public Health.
- Swedish prisons were made smoke-free.

Hello,

The tobacco epidemic is a global problem and has to be fought against at all levels of society – from local levels up to international. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control has provided us with a framework for this and the World Conferences every third year offer great opportunities to exchange experiences and strengthen cooperation between and within countries.

The Swedish Network for Tobacco Control has at previous World Conferences published its view on the tobacco control situation in Sweden and we do so this time as well. We see this as a means of exchanging experiences by describing the ways in which we have worked, the ways in which we are working right now and the current situation in Sweden when it comes to various aspects of the tobacco issue.

The brochure presents summaries of the most important information. For those interested, more information can be found at www.tobaccoorhealthsweden.org.

Among other things, the material covers Swedish Minister of Public Health Maria Larsson's views on the government's tobacco policy, the four public health goals that are to be reached by 2014, and current statistics on smoking and snus use in Sweden. Lars-Erik Holm, newly appointed Director General of the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, answers questions regarding his position on snus and Sarah Wamala, newly appointed Director General of the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, provides insights into the work being carried out by her institute in strengthening the preventive work against tobacco in Sweden in the next few years.

The efforts with regards to a few specific issues are described in further detail. Representatives of the non-governmental organizations in the Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention also comment on the government's current tobacco policy.

We look forward to seeing you in Mumbai!

Four important goals

The Swedish parliament established in 2003 four basic goals in order to decrease the use of tobacco in Sweden by 2014.

- ▶ All newborns should be welcomed into a tobacco-free environment.
- ▶ The number of children and young adults that pick up tobacco use should be halved.
- ▶ The number of smokers in the social groups that are most affected by smoking should be halved.
- ▶ No one should be exposed to passive smoking against their will.



Margaretha Haglund



Göran Boëthius

Margaretha Haglund and Göran Boëthius are well known tobacco control front figures, here representing Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention.

Photo: Jacob Forsell

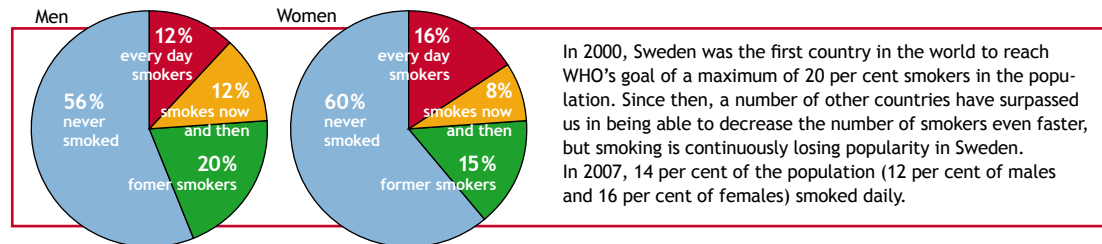


Sweden facts

- ▶ Inhabitants: 9.2 million
- ▶ Political situation: Centre-right coalition government since 2006.
- ▶ Prime minister: Fredrik Reinfeldt, Moderate Party.
- ▶ Member of the European Union since 1995.
- ▶ Capital: Stockholm

Illustration: Elin Brander

Tobacco use in Sweden



In 2000, Sweden was the first country in the world to reach WHO's goal of a maximum of 20 per cent smokers in the population. Since then, a number of other countries have surpassed us in being able to decrease the number of smokers even faster, but smoking is continuously losing popularity in Sweden. In 2007, 14 per cent of the population (12 per cent of males and 16 per cent of females) smoked daily.

19% of males and 4 per cent of females use snus daily.

The consumption of snus among males have decreased by a couple of percentage points in the last few years, but among females the consumption has remained at the same level or even increased slightly.

When consumption of snus is accounted for, the percentage of daily tobacco users rises to

24%

(29 per cent of males and 19 per cent of females smoke or use snus daily).

6400

Swedes die prematurely every year due to their smoking habits. Another 500 die prematurely from the effects of passive smoking.



Photo: Stefan Karlsson

7.5%

of all pregnant women smoke in the early stages of their pregnancies and 1.4 per cent use snus.

The ban on smoking in hospitality venues that was implemented in 2005 has led to substantially fewer Swedes being exposed to passive smoking. However,

10 per cent of all males and 7 per cent of all females still report that they are exposed to passive smoking in their workplaces.



Photo: Sylvain Grandadam/AGE/IBL

SEK 26 000 000 000

Smoking costs the Swedish society an estimated minimum of SEK 26 billion annually.

10% of the 15-year old girls smoke
2% and use snus every or almost every day.

6% of the 15-year old boys smoke
11% and use snus every or almost every day.

Shadow report contains both praise and criticism

- Increase the awareness of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the role it plays in furthering the Swedish efforts against tobacco use
- Continue the implementation of smoke free areas in the Swedish society
- Limit underage exposure to tobacco products through a ban on advertisements at points of sale. All tobacco products should be kept under the counter.

The above are some of the measures that have been proposed by the Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention (SNTP) in its shadow report on Sweden and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

In February 2008, the Swedish government delivered its first report to the Secretariat of the Framework Convention, describing the progress made by Sweden in meeting the demands of the Convention. The shadow report was published a few months later. It paints a somewhat different picture of the situation compared to the government's, even if the government is also moderately praised in a number of areas. The most severe criticism is directed at the fact that no action plan for how Sweden should reach its public health goals with regards to tobacco use by 2014 has been constructed (see also the interview with Maria Larsson, Swedish Minister of Public Health).

Another area in which the opinions of SNTP and the government differ is the Framework Convention's article on how public health policies should be protected from being influenced by commercial and other interests within the tobacco industry.

"We hold the opinion that the government repeatedly has shown itself to be indecisive on the snus issue. The Minister of Public Health should receive credit for her negative attitude to measures that promote the consumption of snus. It is just as obvious that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department for Trade have not evaluated Swedish Match's arguments critically enough. They have viewed the issue solely from a trade policy perspective," the organizations write in the shadow report.

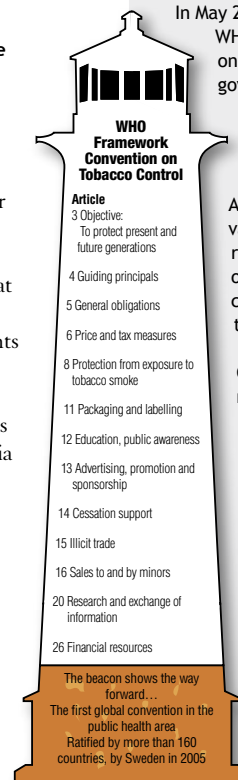
The FCTC as a guiding beacon

In May 22, 2003, Sweden signed the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, FCTC. A governmental inquiry investigated which measures was necessary to implement the FCTC in Sweden.

As a result the Tobacco Act was strengthened in various ways, including new restrictions for marketing of tobacco and a ban on cigarette packs with less than 19 cigarettes.

June 2, 2005, the Swedish Government decided to ratify the FCTC and July 7 the same year a Swedish UN representative handed in the official ratification documents at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Sweden was the last Nordic country to ratify. The first was Norway, ratifying in 2003, Iceland came second in 2004 followed by Denmark later the same year. Finland ratified May 24, 2005, and thereby managed to beat Sweden.



The National Institute of Public Health an important coordinator

The Swedish National Institute of Public Health received more than 70 applications when it in late 2008 announced that the Government had allotted special funds for projects that aim at decreasing the consumption of tobacco.

A total of 22 projects throughout Sweden have received funding for their activities during 2009 and 2010. The applicants have been municipalities, county councils and county administrative boards, often in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. In total, the projects are supported with SEK 12 million during 2009.

– Many organizations have shown a great interest in applying for project funds and this is of course a source of great satisfaction for us, says Sarah Wamala, Director General of the Swedish National Institute of Public Health.

The decision to allot extra funds is part of the commission the Institute has received from the Swedish government in the field of tobacco control until 2010. Most of the projects that are supported aim to decrease the consumption of tobacco among children and young people.

In addition, the Institute is allotting government funds to 20 out of 21 Swedish county councils and regions who have applied for economic support in their further development of cessation services.

– It is important to strike a balance between investing in the weaning off of current tobacco use and other preventive measures, for example supervision, says Sarah Wamala.

– Research shows that a combination of measures gives the best results. If you only focus on one of the two, you will lose the edge.

In the coming year, other projects will take place under the umbrella of the state-funded tobacco prevention campaign, for example educational measures and updates of publications regarding the methods used in tobacco prevention.



Sarah Wamala

Photo: Tina Staffren

Director with a scientific background

Sarah Wamala, BSc, MSc, PhD, is the Director General of the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, Östersund, since 1st November 2008. Prior to this she worked as the Head of Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at Stockholm Centre for Public Health. Sarah Wamala has also previously worked as Research manager and Head of Unit of Social epidemiology at the Swedish National Institute of Public Health and as research scientist at Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm. She is Associate professor and Senior lecturer in public health sciences at Karolinska Institutet.

“Snus is not just any product”

– You cannot treat snus like it is just any product, says Lars-Erik Holm, Director General at the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare.



Lars-Erik Holm

Photo: Sören Andersson

Lars-Erik Holm has joined forces with Director Generals at corresponding government agencies in the other four Nordic countries to debate against the strong interests that would like to export Swedish snus products abroad.

– Health effects of snus use are serious. Snus should not be recommended as a replacement for cigarettes – regardless of how much more harmful smoking may be.

He also wishes to change the attitude towards snus within the Swedish healthcare system. Despite an increasing number of studies on the harmful health effects of snus and a lively debate on an international level, health professionals often show little interest in preventing snus use. The reasoning seems to be that “let’s not make a fuzz about snus, it’s much better than smoking any way”.

– Now is time to change that attitude. Health care employees must understand that snus is no evidence based cessation tool and that snus use is a health hazard that has to be taken seriously, says Lars-Erik Holm.

The National Board of Health and Welfare currently is preparing national guidelines for the tobacco cessation measures in the healthcare system. These guidelines will address snus prevention as well as smoking prevention.

– A tobacco-free life must be the goal. We are satisfied with the decreasing smoking prevalence in Sweden – and we should be able to work just as effectively decreasing snus use!



Photo: Åsa Tilli

10 good reasons...

...to prevent snus from being exported abroad and to work to decrease the consumption in Sweden:

- Snus contains large amounts of nicotine and is highly addictive.
- Snus increases the risk of both temporary and permanent damage to your health.
- Using snus during a pregnancy could harm the unborn baby.
- Research on the health effects of using snus is still limited. Caution should therefore be applied.
- If adults use snus, so do younger people.
- The nicotine affects the brain and increases the inclination to start using other drugs.
- Snus being one of the primary reasons for the decreased smoking among Swedish men is a myth. A maximum of 5 per cent have used snus as a means of giving up smoking.
- There are more efficient methods to help smokers give up their habit than to lure them into using snus.
- To promote the consumption of snus is to support the tobacco industry.
- The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control applies to all forms of tobacco.

This is a short version of the text. The complete list is shown at www.tobaccoorhealthsweden.org

Smoke-free working hours the next step

That smoking is not allowed in the workplace has been standard procedure in the Swedish health sector for a long time.

In the last few years, Swedish municipalities have started following suit. In January 2009, 67 out of the 290 Swedish municipalities have decided not to allow smoking during working hours. Usually it means that the only time during the work day when an employee can smoke is at lunch time. An important part of the policy is to offer the employees sufficient cessation support. Sometimes this even includes reimbursement of costs for cessation drugs.

– We want to protect the health of the employees, says Lisa Petrelius, health developer in the municipality of Halmstad that banned smoking during working hours March 1, 2008.

Swedish municipalities are responsible for most of the local social services. Among the most important services are the schools, childrens day care, social services and the care of the elderly. Swedish municipalities employ around 800 000 people, 80 per cent being women.

In this group smoking prevalence is higher than in the general population which is one of the primary reasons as to why the banning of smoking during working hours has become a strategically important issue. Smoke-free working hours is an effective means of reaching groups of tobacco users that have been difficult to reach using more ordinary preventive methods.

– As the municipalities are big employers, we have a great opportunity to contribute to a decrease in smoking, says Lisa Petrelius in Halmstad.

Another aspect is that many of the concerned professional groups in their work act as role models for children and young people. And not least, most employees, having been influenced by their workplace policy, will probably be better role models outside their work – as parents, as youth leaders etc.

Role models



Photo: Hussein El-Alawi/Sydsvenskan/IBL

Others follow the example

The idea of non-smoking working hours is also gaining ground among private and state employers. A ban on smoking during working hours has been implemented by, among others, the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. The Service has begun the process to make the prisons completely smoke free for its employees as well as its interns.

To remove all tobacco exposure from stores an important issue in Sweden

Make tobacco products invisible in the stores!

This is one of the demands put forward by the non-governmental organizations in the Swedish Network for Prevention of Tobacco (SNTPT). They hold the opinion that a ban on exposing tobacco products at points of sale would be a valuable component in a broad tobacco control strategy.

– We want to protect the young and give support to those who are trying to quit smoking and using snus, says Ingrid Talu, chairwoman of Swedish Teachers Against Tobacco.

Ingrid Talu was one of the initiators of a campaign that took place in 2008 during the so-called Tobacco Free Week, arranged annually in Sweden during week 47. Non-governmental organizations arranged demonstrations and distributed petitions that were aimed at building public support for a ban on tobacco signs in stores.

– Exposing tobacco products in stores is currently the only tool available to the tobacco industry when it comes to advertising its products in Sweden. The exposure encourages young people to start smoking or using snus. Tobacco users who would like to quit are tempted to buy tobacco, says Ingrid Talu.

Legislation banning or limiting the exposure of tobacco products in stores is currently being implemented in an increasing number of countries.

An analytical review of international experiences and current research that was published in the New Zealand Medical Journal in June 2008 concluded that visible tobacco products in stores act as an encouraging factor when it comes to the propensity of children to experiment with tobacco. The review also indicated that exposure to tobacco is a significant problem for adults who are trying to quit smoking.

Shop owner boycotts cigarettes

The owner of a local ICA grocery store in Teg, outside of Umeå in northern Sweden, attracted a lot of attention in 2008 for his decision to stop selling cigarettes. On the Tobacco Free Day, he removed all cigarettes from his store. His decision attracted a lot of attention from the food and grocery industry and from the general public. Many saw him as a role model and he received several awards.

– It has been incredible. I have received positive feedback from every part of Sweden, he says.

He asserts that he has not incurred any economic loss, as many of his customers have approved of his decision not to sell health threatening products such as cigarettes.



Mats Calla

Photo: Icanyheter



Maria Larsson

Photo: Pawel Flato

Minister of Public Health

Christian Democrat Maria Larsson is Minister of Public Health in the Swedish centre-right coalition government. The government is now investing more in efforts aimed at reducing the consumption of tobacco. However, the government has not been able to formulate a coherent stance on the issue of snus and the European Union.

“Swedish government to strengthen tobacco policies”

During 2008-2010, the Swedish government will invest an additional SEK 34 million annually in the following fields:

- Nationwide promotion of local efforts to combat tobacco use, such as school projects and preventive work within maternal health care
- A focused effort to increase the availability of cessation services
- Measures to strengthen the enforcement of the tobacco legislation

“To be able to work effectively against the use of tobacco, you have to make sure you have the overall picture, in which supporting measures are integral parts,” Maria Larsson points out.

In 2005, Sweden ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The same year, the Swedish parliament passed legislative changes that were considered necessary for Sweden to adhere to the framework.

Nevertheless, Maria Larsson underlines that the practical implementation of the Convention into policies and regulations will be an ongoing process with no definite end in sight:

“It will always be possible to point out yet another measure that needs to be taken in order for Sweden to fully adhere to the Convention, as each new generation will have to be won for a tobacco-free life.”

The Swedish Parliament has decided on four Public Health Goals for the year 2014. Maria Larsson thinks that the goal of a tobacco-free life start for all children has a chance of being reached in time. For the other goals she is a little bit less optimistic about the time aspect.

Political leadership is needed in tobacco control

– The current government invests more money in tobacco-preventive work than any previous Swedish government. For this it should receive credit, says Margaretha Haglund, tobacco control advisor at the Swedish National Institute of Public Health and renowned international tobacco expert.

People working against tobacco in Sweden appreciate the increased resources as well as the government's stated policy to promote the preventive work against tobacco, but they also show frustration.

– This government is not the first one that fails to take the far-reaching measures that are necessary for protecting young people from starting and for supporting adults to quit using tobacco, says Göran Boëthius, chairman of Doctors Against Tobacco.

Both Haglund and Boëthius would like to see a broad, long-term government policy on tobacco that builds on all the internationally tested measures whose effectiveness have been proven. Soon a Commission of Inquiry will suggest measures leading to a better enforcement of the existing age limit for tobacco sale.

– The overall aim is to prevent young people from picking up smoking or snus use but the Commission has limited its scope to the age limit issue. This is a clear example of the narrowness of the government policy. You do not protect young people by implementing individual measures, but by implementing a general, adequately funded, strategy, says Göran Boëthius.

– Without a long term action plan we will not reach the national goals for 2014.

To counter the Commission report the Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention has published its own report, demonstrating the need for a broader approach.

– There is a need for leadership and strong commitment not only from the Minister of Public Health but from the government as a whole, says Margaretha Haglund.



Photo: SNTP

SNTP representatives

A National Tobacco Control Network

The Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention, SNTP, has almost all NGO:s working with Tobacco Control in Sweden as its members. The members cooperate in different ways, coordinate their activities and develop joint policies and strategies in important issues.

Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention, SNTP

A Non-Smoking Generation www.nonsmoking.se
Non-Smokers' Rights Association (VISIR) www.visir.se
Swedish Heart and Lung Association www.hjart-lung.se
Swedish Asthma and Allergy Association www.astmaoallergiforbundet.se
Swedish Cancer Society www.cancerfonden.se
Swedish Chiropodist Association
The SMART foundation
Doctors Against Tobacco www.doctorsagainsttobacco.org
Dentistry Against Tobacco www.dentistryagainsttobacco.org
Nurses Against Tobacco www.nursesagainsttobacco.org
Teachers Against Tobacco www.teachersagainsttobacco.org
Pharmacy Against Tobacco www.pharmacyagainsttobacco.org
Psychologists Against Tobacco www.psychologistsagainsttobacco.org
The Network for Tobacco Control Activities in County Councils and Communities
The Quit Smoking Line www.slutarokalinjen.org
www.tobaksfakta.org

www.tobaccoorhealthsweden.org

Swedish Tobacco Control 2009 Progress & Challenge

is published by the Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention for the 14th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Mumbai, India March 8–14 2009, with financial support from the National Institute of Public Health.

Articles by: Helene Wallskär. **Translation:** Anders Gustafsson. **Editors:** Lena Sjöberg and Göran Boëthius.
Graphic design: Annika Lönn. **Cover photo:** Åsa Till. **Printing:** Pressgrannar AB, 2009.

For more information: www.tobaccoorhealthsweden.org and www.tobaksfakta.org
© Swedish Network for Tobacco Prevention 2009