

# Study finds low income and education level were risk factors for mental ill-health during the pandemic

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Swedes with lower income and education level were at greater risk of deteriorating mental health during the pandemic. This is shown in a

[study](#) conducted by researchers from the University of Gothenburg in collaboration with Professor Mats Lekander at the Department of Clinical Neuroscience. The findings are published in *Psychology & Health*.

Together, several aspects of Swedes' mental health in relation to the pandemic were examined. In total, more than 5,700 people participated in two different surveys.

The first measurement was taken before the pandemic in January 2019, and the second measurement took place during the [second wave](#) of the pandemic in October–November 2020. The participants answered questions about anxiety, depression, stress and well-being before and during the pandemic.

Overall, the researchers could see slightly higher levels of mental ill-health during the pandemic, compared to the period before the outbreak. The deteriorating [mental health](#) of the Swedish population during the pandemic, with increased depression, anxiety, and lower self-rated well-being, became clearer when Swedish citizens' income and [education level](#) were taken into account.

A somewhat surprising result was that stress levels for Swedish citizens decreased somewhat during the pandemic. This finding can possibly be explained by the fact that the pandemic for some groups had positive effects such as working from home, a slower pace, more time for rest, and a flexibility in relation to professional life.

**More information:** Ann-Sophie Lindqvist Bagge et al, Mental health, stress, and well-being measured before (2019) and during (2020) COVID-19: a Swedish socioeconomic population-based study, *Psychology & Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1080/08870446.2023.2257747](https://doi.org/10.1080/08870446.2023.2257747)

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