

The NUMBER OF GAMBLING RELATED SUICIDES EACH YEAR IN THE UK.

3 studies carried out in the UK, Hong Kong and Sweden indicate that there are 250 to 650 gambling related suicides each year in the UK – 4% to 11% of total suicides.

There is a long history and substantial research literature showing a robust and consistent link between gambling and high rates of suicidal ideation, suicide attempts and completed suicides. These studies support the rates estimated from the 3 key studies.

Studies of Completed Suicides

1. UK study¹ (2017) showing 4% of suicides of 20-24 year olds in the UK are gambling related => **250 gambling related suicides per year in the UK**
2. Hong Kong study² (2010) showing 11% of suicides in Hong Kong are gambling related => **650 gambling related suicides per year in the UK**
3. Swedish study³ (2018) showing suicide rate of people with gambling disorder is 15 times that of the general population => **550 gambling related suicides per year in the UK**
4. The same Swedish study found that suicide was the most common form of death of people diagnosed with gambling disorder, accounting for 31% of deaths.
5. Canada Safety Council⁴ (2005) estimated 200 gambling related suicides per year ~ 5% of all suicides => **300 gambling related suicides per year in the UK**

A note on population estimates – a common pushback on estimating population figures from these studies is that studies relate to people diagnosed with gambling disorder and maybe receiving treatment. The implication is that these are a “more severe” group. We are not aware of any evidence to support this assumption. In the UK only 2% of gamblers receive treatment: we know virtually nothing about the other 98%. Only a few of the young men lost by Gambling with Lives families received any treatment; none had a diagnosis of gambling disorder; all took their own lives. This experience suggests that the treatment population is not “the tip of the iceberg” but just “the bit of the elephant that we can see”.

Studies of Suicidal Ideation and Attempts

Table 1 - Suicidal ideation rates and suicide attempts (usually gamblers seeking treatment, several countries)

	No. of studies	Min	Max	Average
Suicidal ideation rate	13	10%	81%	42%
Attempted suicide	17	4%	40%	20%

1. A review of 13 UK and international studies⁵⁻¹⁶ (1990 – 2019) which considered suicidal ideation showed that an average of 42% of gamblers seeking treatment had had suicidal thoughts ... **around 3 times the average¹⁸ of the general population.**
2. A review of 17 UK and international studies^{10-16,19-27} (1990 – 2019) which considered attempted suicides showed that an average of 20% of gamblers seeking treatment had attempted suicide ... **over 3 times the average¹⁸ of the general population.**
3. The most recent UK study²⁰ (2018) showed that 30% of gamblers entering treatment in the UK in 2015 had attempted suicide ... **over 5 times the average of the general population.**

Applying this 30% to the approx. 10,000 gamblers receiving treatment²⁸ and using the estimated 10-25 attempts for each completed suicide²⁹
=> **120 to 300 gambling related suicides per year in the UK.**

Arguably we should apply the 30% to a much higher figure of gamblers to reflect the numbers who should be receiving treatment. Gambleaware/GamCare aim to treble the number in treatment
=> **360 to 900 gambling related suicides per year in the UK.**

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