Surviving cardiac arrest

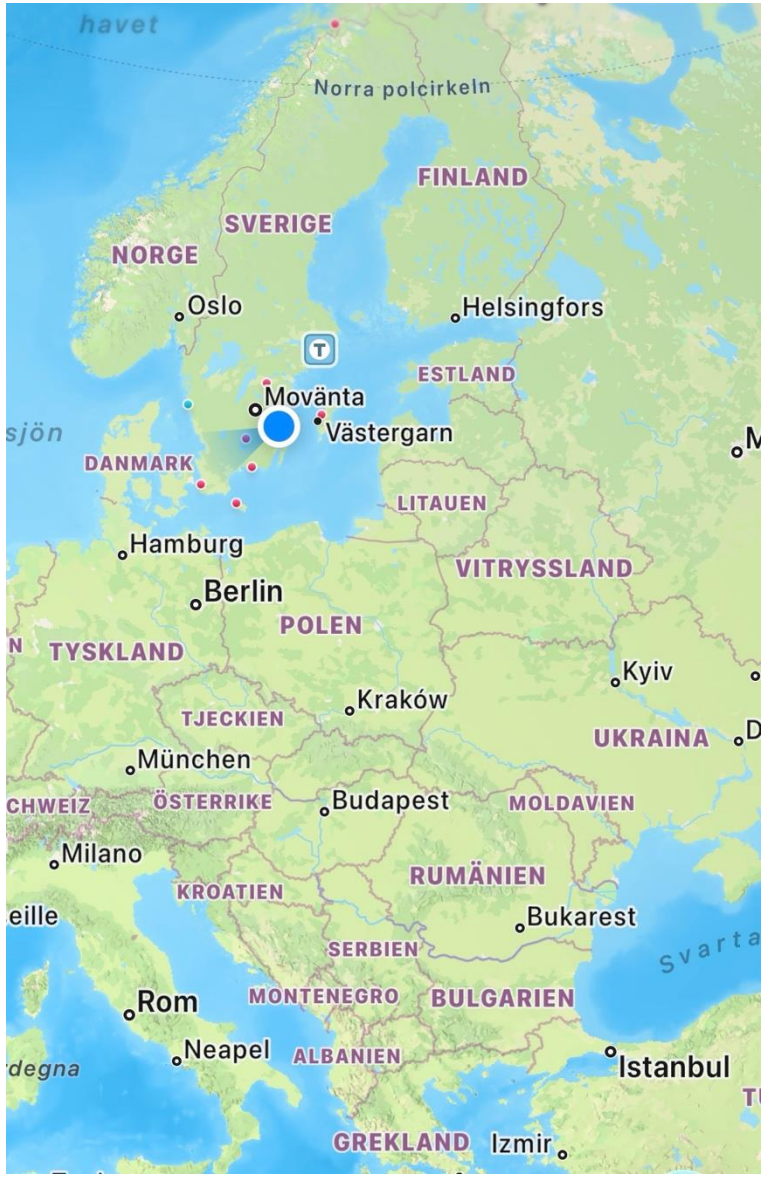
Every day is a gift!

Annmargreth Kvarnefors
Stefan Jutterdal

Helsinki, 4 November, 2026



Oskarshamn, Sweden





We want to tell you about

-our experiences as survivor, livesafer and relatives

- Stefans cardiac arrest, rehabilitation and back to new life
- What have we learned and what needs to be done?
- Improvements since Copenhagen 2023



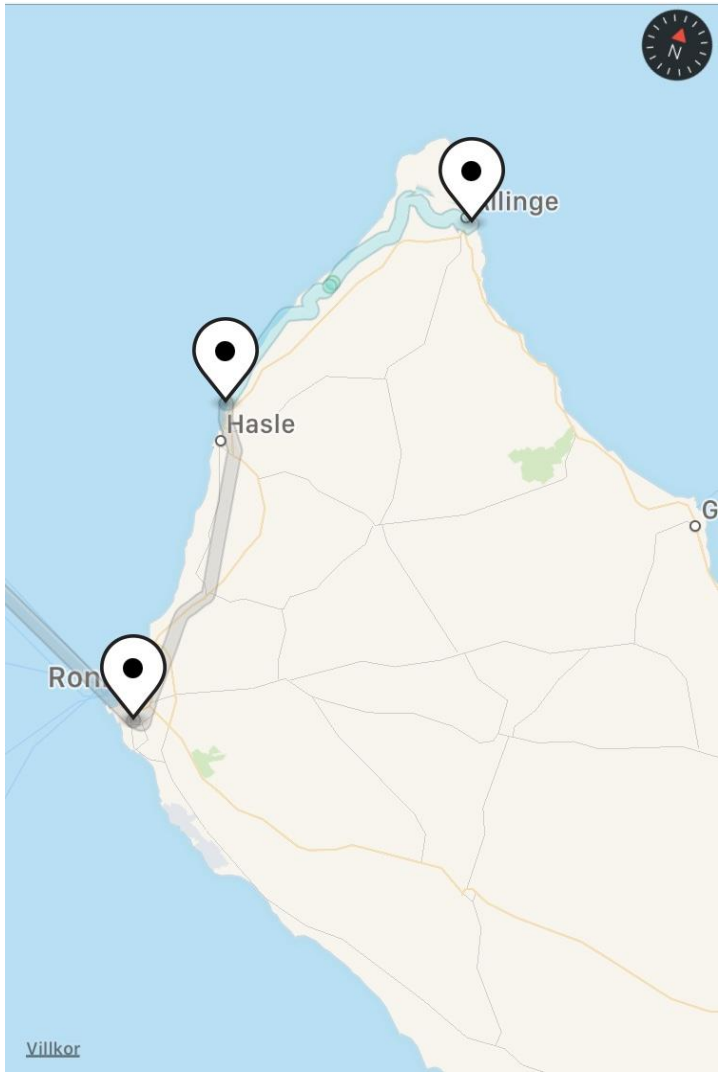
Bornholm, biking, late summer, 1 september 2017



When life is at its best..



2 September 2017
09.38





11.27



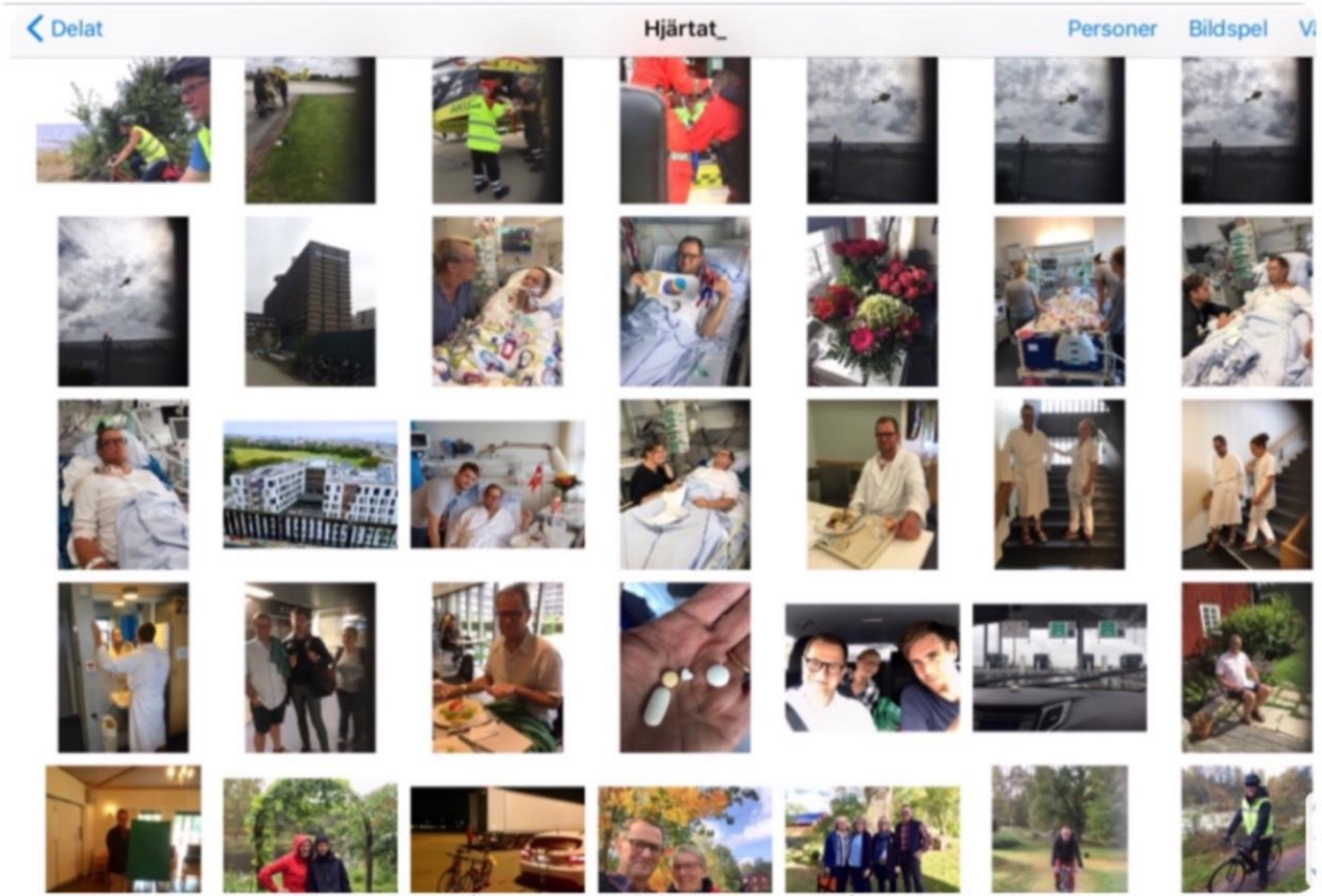
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20.00



The familys Photo Stream ”The Heart” 💔



2 September 2017



4 September 2017



One week at Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen

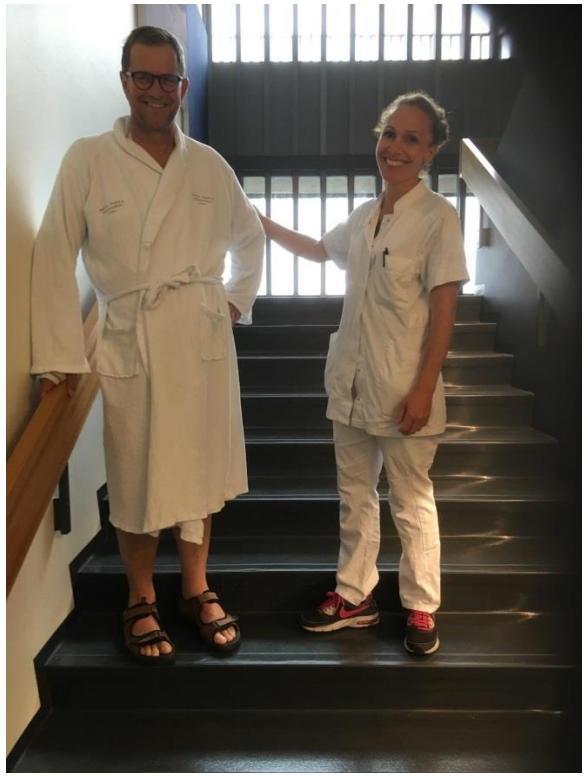




6 september



7 september



8 september



Rehabilitation and back to ”normal” life







Back on Bornholm a year after the cardiac arrest





Fantastic meeting with my lifesavers





Nine years later - What have we learned?



- Every day is a gift
- To live a healthy lifestyle
- To spread the message:

  -knowledge about CPR

  -AEDs available 24/7

  -Volonteer responders in all regions

Swedish network for cardiac arrest survivors and co-survivors





We started up 2020
Today 800 members in the network



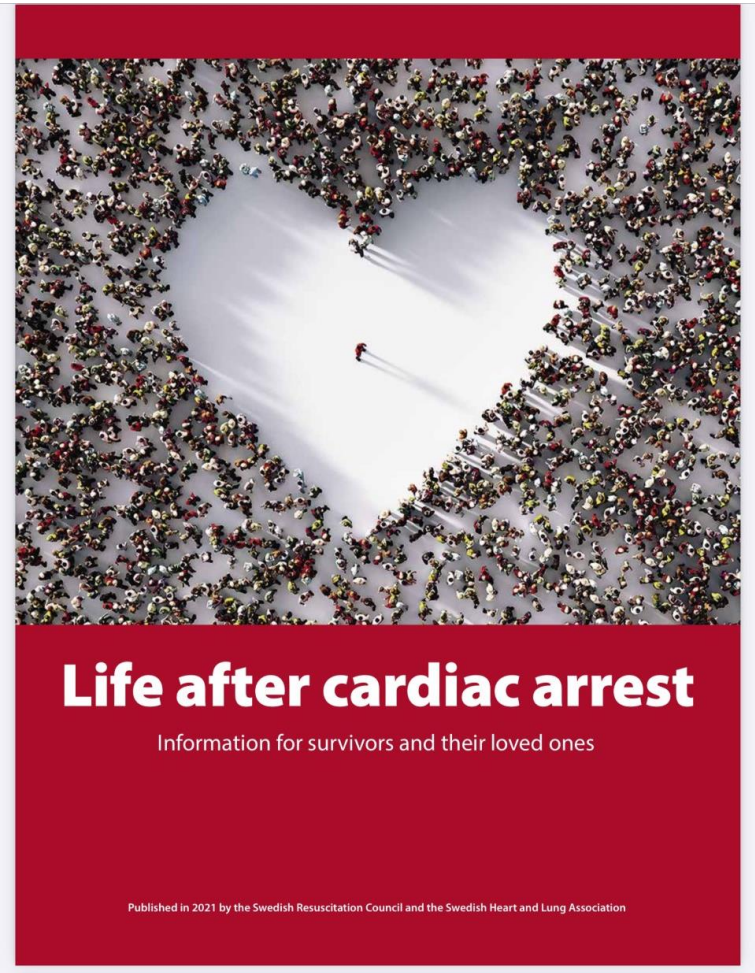




Photo MARIA CARLUND

Peer support network for cardiac arrest survivors and their loved ones

Contact with others in similar situations is important for getting support and exchanging experiences. A national network has been formed by a number of survivors affected and their loved ones, together with the SRC and the Swedish Heart and Lung Association. You can contact the network via Facebook or by email to the Swedish Heart and Lung Association. The Swedish Heart and Lung Association also offers network support through its local chapters.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/hjartstopp
Email address: overlevarehjartstopp@hjart-lung.se
Website: www.hjart-lung.se/natverket-for-overlevare

"I received information about a patient association at the hospital. The local chapter arranges informational meetings twice a year for people with pacemakers. I went there to listen and met some people that I chose to stay in closer contact with. We've become a bunch who meet and go out to eat now and then to talk about everything. For a time, I had a lot of existential questions. It's easier to exchange such thoughts with those who are like-minded and have been in the same situation as me. You have similar experiences, like in the beginning, when you worry about the heart attack, that it hurts, and the mental part."

In the UK, a national peer support network for people affected by a cardiac arrest was started in 2015 by Paul Swindell, a survivor himself. He experienced that there were shortcomings in the follow-up care after cardiac arrest and that many needed to talk to others who'd been in the same situation. The Sudden Cardiac Arrest UK network today offers, among other things, a website, a Facebook group, a podcast, and an expansive group of members who can offer information and support to those who need it. More information is available at www.suddencardiacarrestuk.org. Along with occupational therapist Donna Malley, the network has developed informational material about fatigue. The material is translated into Swedish on the SRC's website hlr.nu.

www.hlr.nu/vard-efter-hjartstopp/

21

■ **Survivors and loved ones who share their stories:**



"I can continue to live life 2.0 with Annmargreth, my children and grandchildren. I am infinitely grateful for that."

Stefan, survivor:

"In September 2017 I had a heart attack during a bicycling holiday on Bornholm. Thanks to my wife Annmargreth, who immediately began CPR and Ole, Erik and Sennait, who came to help, I am alive today and I feel good. I am incredibly grateful to the fantastic initiative from those who saved my life, and often think about what luck I had. Their wise intervention and all the other fantastic healthcare efforts from ambulance staff, the team at Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen, and the continued cardiac care I receive in Sweden means that I can continue to live.

All of the photos that Annmargreth took during the entire time I was sick are so meaningful for me, helped me to process and enabled me to share my story. I was able to return to work full-time and can train more today than I did before my heart attack.

I can continue to live life 2.0 with Annmargreth, my children and grandchildren. I am infinitely grateful for that."

Annmargreth, loved one and lifesaver:

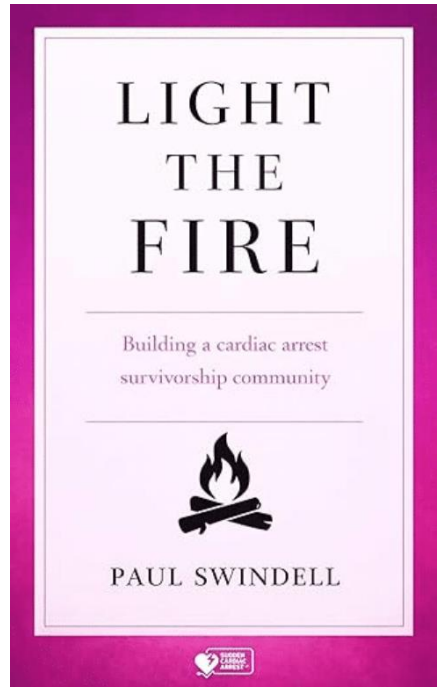
"When Stefan collapsed over his bike, I understood immediately that something serious had happened and I began CPR. For 20 minutes we kept Stefan's heart going until the ambulance arrived. When the time came to transport him to Copenhagen by ambulance helicopter, I began documenting. I photographed a lot over the next few days, to be able to show the pictures to Stefan when he awoke.

I was by his side nearly all the time during the first two months. In the beginning, it was really important for me to accompany him to all clinical visits. When Stefan became healthier and could return to work, I was able to start letting go. Then it was time for me to have problems with my health, in the form of widespread skin problems, eczema and itching.

The doctor explained that similar stress reactions are common after such a serious incident. The problems persisted almost a year. Today, I feel good but still live with an elevated level of tension."

https://www.hlr.nu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/livetefterhjartstopp_ENG.pdf





https://suddencardiacarrestuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Light-the-Fire.pdf



https://blinq.me/cmrhjxntn03q90bs640081lnk?bs=db

We work at several levels to Improve heart safety



CPR training for our neighbors



AED available 24/7





Conversations with local, regional and national politicians



Seminar in the Swedish Parliament

Everyone needs to train CPR!



June 2023





Ambassador Hjärtuppropet “Heart Call”

https://www.hjartuppropet.se

Hjärtuppropet

VISION:

”No one should have to die because an AED or someone trained in CPR is unavailable”



Campaign ahead of O-Ringen 2024

From 5 to 24 available AED



Byggebo



IK Oskarshamn



Svenska kyrkan

Our citizens proposal – 30 new available AED



Hem Kontakt Om oss

KATEGORIARKIV: MEDBORGARFÖRSLAG

Vårt medborgarförslag till Region Kalmar län: Det skall finnas hjärtstartare tillgängliga dygnet runt utomhus vid alla hälsocentraler och motsvarande enheter i Kalmar län.

Publicerat **10 januari, 2024**

Nytt år och nya möjligheter!
Idag har vi lämnat in ett medborgarförslag till Region Kalmar län om att det ska finnas hjärtstartare tillgängliga dygnet runt utomhus vid alla hälsocentraler i länet. Endast ett fåtal av Region Kalmar läns hjärtstartare är idag registrerade och publikt tillgängliga dygnet runt. Regionen skulle istället kunna vara ett föredöme och leda utvecklingen.

Nu återstår att se hur vårt förslag tas emot❤️

Region Kalmar län Sök Meny



PRESSMEDDELANDE 2024-12-11

Hjärtstartare ska placeras vid länets hälsocentraler

Hjärtstartare ska finnas utomhus vid länets samtliga hälsocentraler. Det beslutade regionstyrelsen vid onsdagens sammanträde.

I ett medborgarförslag önskar en invånare att hjärtstartare ska finnas tillgängliga dygnet runt utomhus vid alla hälsocentraler. En idé som regionstyrelsen säger ja till. I dagsläget är hjärtstartare på regionens hälsocentraler placerade inne i lokalerna. Regionen ser att det finns fördelar med att även placera hjärtstartare utomhus så att de kan nås även efter stängning. Det-

Hjärtuppropet



Stefan och Annmargreth tillsammans med Angelica Katsanidou regionstyrelsens ordförande (S) Fotograf/Källa: Hjärtuppropet

Opening ceremony available AED Stockholm



Truls Möregårdh and Minister for Social Affairs Jakob Forssmed

Opening ceremony
available AED
Stockholm

Janne Andersson
and
Sarah Sjöström



Swedish government trained in CPR 2025

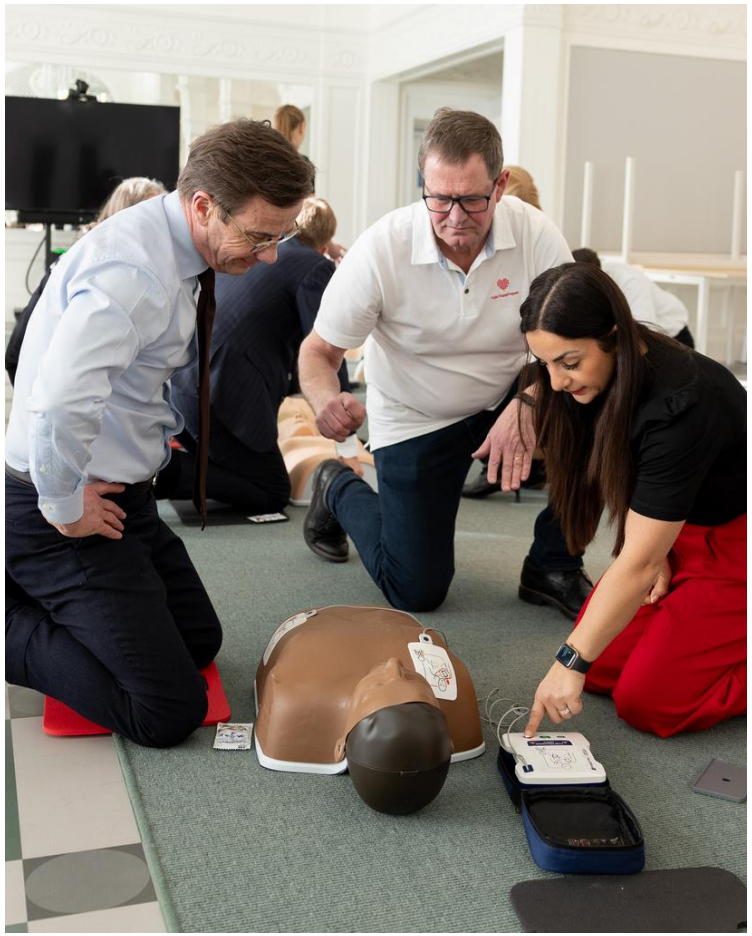
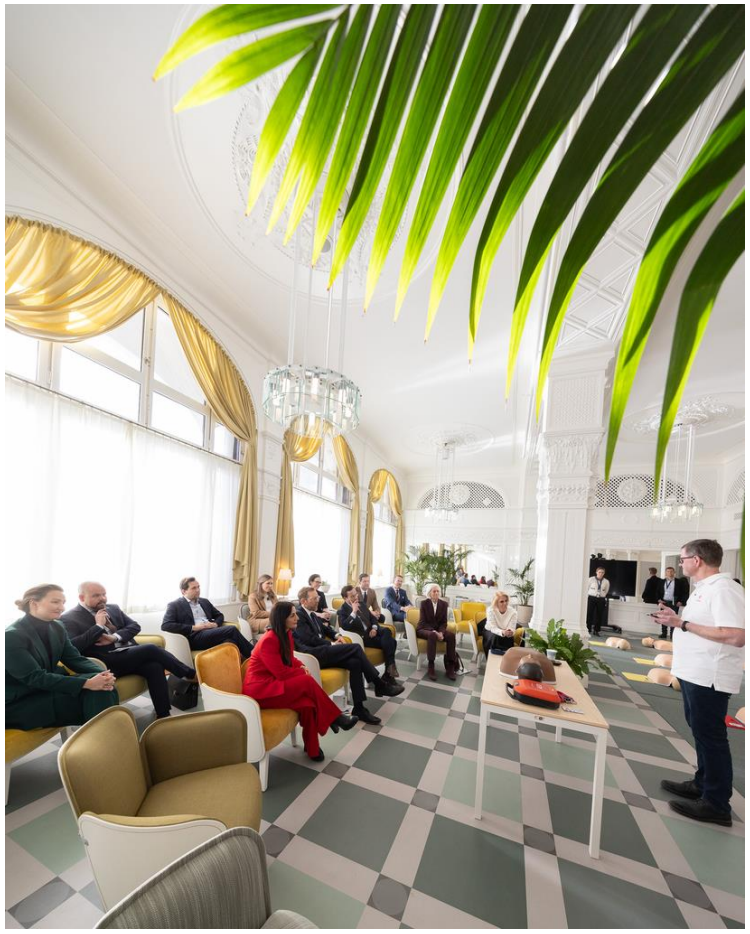
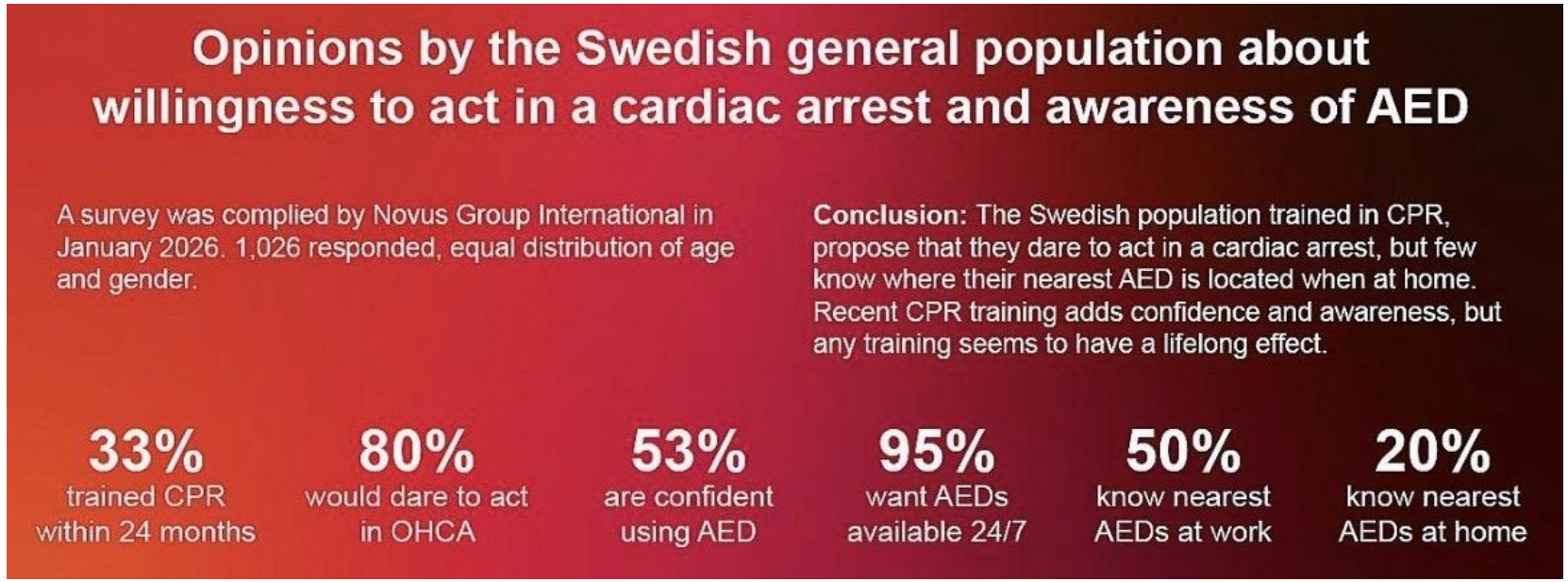




Foto: Ninni Andersson/Regeringskansliet



A survey of the Swedish population



Swedish Resuscitation Council

The Heart call

Heartrunner

The Swedish Heart and Lung Association

Short paper

Willingness to act in a cardiac arrest and awareness of automated external defibrillators: a survey of the Swedish population

Therese Djärv [a], David Fredman [b], Anders Åkesson [c], Stefan Jutterdal [d]

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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resplu.2026.101428 ↗

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Abstract

Purpose

A population-based survey on opinions about CPR education, willingness to act, and awareness of AEDs location.

Method

A survey was compiled by the commercial Novus Group International, Stockholm, Sweden in January 2026. Novus use their *Sweden Panel* which aim to mirror the public opinion and consist of about 60000 people aged 18-84 years. Novus uses purposeful recruitment of representative participants until the target 1000 people have replied to the survey.

Results

Among the 1026 responders, there was an equal distribution of age, gender and one third reported training CPR within 24

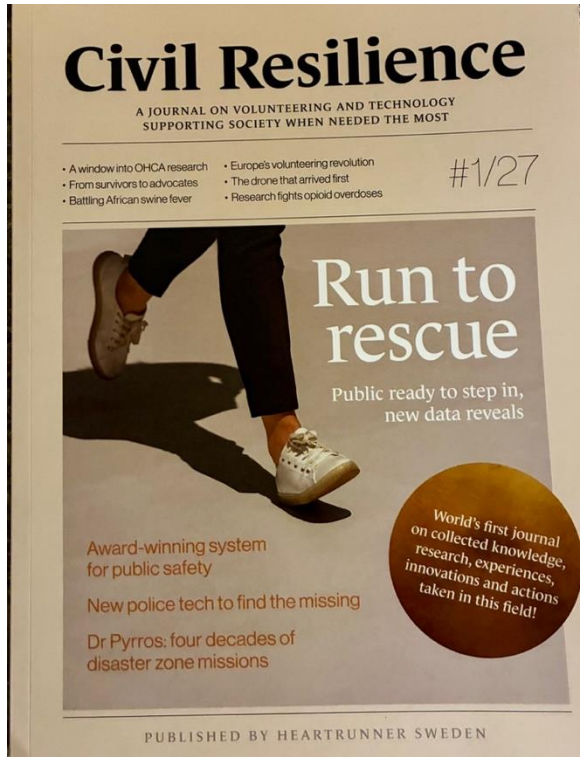
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resplu.2026.101428

Swedish TV morning news



https://stefanjutterdal.se/2026/03/26/hlr-och-tillgangliga-hjartstartare-ar-viktiga-fragor-for-45-av-befolkningen-i-sverige-infor-hostens-val/

Civil Resilience Journal



https://heartrunner.com/crj/



The survivor turned advocate

Gunilla Velin survived an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in central Stockholm in 2022, rescued by bystanders and a volunteer responder who arrived with a defibrillator through the Heartrunner platform, called Sms-livräddare in Sweden. Gunilla had a full recovery, but the experience left her with a question that has since shaped her public engagement: what would have happened had she collapsed in Skåne, her home region, which was not yet connected to the system. That question proved consequential. She has spoken publicly about the regional disparity in access to volunteer dispatch. Gunilla is a prime example of how the expansion of a volunteer responder system in Sweden has been driven not only by research, but by the people it was designed to help.

How are you doing today?

"I'm doing excellently. My heart sustained very little damage. I live an active life. I exercise regularly, go for walks, cycle, play golf, and hike. Two years ago, my husband and I went hiking in northern Sweden, and last autumn we walked the Inca Trail up to Machu Picchu in Peru. I've also been blessed with two wonderful grandchildren, and I'm so grateful that I got to live on after my cardiac arrest."

You were a nurse for almost 40 years. Did that experience teach you something your professional background never could?

"As a nurse with a background in intensive care, I've always had a deep respect for life, but now I appreciate every single day even more. I count each day as a bonus, and there are quite a few bonus days adding up.

My prior understanding has probably helped me process what happened and channel it into something meaningful. Being actively involved in efforts to give more people a chance of survival has been important to me. If my story can help more people understand the need for general CPR knowledge, the importance of defibrillators available around the clock in public spaces, and the value of volunteer responders, then I want to contribute."

After the event, you raised the question of what would have happened had you collapsed in Skåne instead of in Stockholm. How did you turn that question into action?

"Shortly after my cardiac arrest I felt immediately grateful to have survived and wanted to help give others the same chance. When I realised that Skåne, where I spend half the year, wasn't a part of Sms-livräddare, I was upset. Had I been in Skåne, I most likely would not have survived. I was connected with Jessica Holmström from Heartrunner through a mutual contact. Jessica introduced me to Cecilia Andréll, a Lund-based cardiac arrest researcher who had long been fighting to bring a volunteer responder system to the region. The three of us shared a common goal.

Newspapers covered my case, national TV ran a segment in which I shared my story, and representatives from both the Swedish Heart Lung Foundation and the research community added their voices to the cause. As a survivor, I was fairly difficult to argue against.

After all this, I wrote to the regional council, which assured me that a decision was in progress, and early 2024 the system went live in Skåne, and the system quickly proved to be a valuable complement to existing emergency care. Every time I hear of someone who survived thanks to this effort, I'm deeply moved," says Gunilla. •

Swedish movement calls for systemic change

Hjärtuppropet, "The Heart call", founded 2022, brings together survivors, researchers, clinicians, and organisations including the Swedish Heart and Lung Association and the Swedish Resuscitation Council in a shared push for legislative action on cardiac safety. Among its most prominent advocates is Stefan Jutterdal, a cardiac arrest survivor himself.

The argument is straightforward: Sweden sees around 6,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests each year, of which 13.3 per cent survive, the highest rate on record. Yet the movement believes that figure could climb significantly higher, and the biggest obstacle isn't knowledge of CPR or lack of volunteer responders, but access to a working defibrillator when it's needed.

Sweden has around 30,000 public defibrillators. The problem is that many of them are effectively useless outside office hours, locked inside buildings, switched to inaccessible modes overnight, or simply hard to locate in an emergency.

"The vision is that no one should die needlessly because a defibrillator was unavailable. Several of our ambassadors are themselves survivors, or close relatives of someone affected, and the drive to fix this is very strong, particularly when you have been brought back to life yourself," Jutterdal says.

"I think it largely comes down to a lack of knowledge," he says. "When I suffered a cardiac arrest in 2017, I had worked in healthcare for forty years, yet I had little understanding of how common cardiac arrest is, or how important accessible defibrillators are."

The gap becomes clear in a comparison with Denmark: over 70 per cent of Danish defibrillators are available around the clock. In Sweden, the figure is just 33 per cent.

"Quite simply, we need far greater awareness, and a requirement that public defibrillators are made accessible around the clock. One that doesn't work when it's needed saves no lives," Jutterdal says.

The movement notes that even though both citizens and politicians agree on the importance of CPR training and available AEDs, the gap between sympathy and structural change remains wide.

Jutterdal's message to decision-makers:

"Learn CPR, and train your organisation regularly. Make public defibrillators accessible around the clock. Implement the volunteer responder system Sms-livräddare in all of Sweden, which today covers about 90 per cent of the population. Together, these steps could save hundreds of lives in Sweden every year."

Scale the picture to Europe, and the numbers become staggering. Over 300,000 people suffer an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest in Europe every year. Yet average survival across European countries is 8–10 per cent. The gaps in defibrillator use are striking: the use of public defibrillators remains low across Europe and varies considerably between countries. From as little as 3.8 per cent up to 59 per cent. Levelling out these differences and increasing usage could save thousands more lives every year. •



Assignment from the Swedish government to the National Board of Health and Welfare to increase the availibility of AED 24/7



Regeringskansliet

Sök på regeringen.se

Sök

Regeringen ser över hur tillgången till hjärtstartare kan stärkas för att rädda fler liv vid hjärtstopp

› Ändring av uppdrag till Socialstyrelsen att stärka allmänhetens beredskap kopplat till första hjälpen och akut omhändertagande

Publicerad 07 september 2026

Socialstyrelsen får i uppdrag att utreda hur offentliga verksamheter kan nyttjas för att öka antalet tillgängliga hjärtstartare för allmänheten och lämna förslag på åtgärder som kan få fler offentliga aktörer att ansluta sig till registret över hjärtstartare. Syftet är att verka för stärkt tillgång till hjärtstartare och möjligheter till tidiga livräddande insatser vid hjärtstopp.

– Vi ska värna ett samhälle där människor har kompetens och förmåga att kunna hjälpa varandra när olyckan är framme. Därför har Socialstyrelsen fått i uppdrag att stärka allmänhetens beredskap i första hjälpen, hjärt- och lungräddning och akut omhändertagande. Nu tar vi ytterligare steg för att också öka tillgången till hjärtstartare, säger sjukvårdsminister Elisabet Lann.

– Vid ett hjärtstopp är tiden avgörande. Varje minut räknas, och en hjärtstartare kan vara det som gör skillnaden mellan liv och död. Därför vill vi att fler hjärtstartare ska finnas tillgängliga och vara enkla att hitta när de behövs som mest. Genom sådana insatser kan fler människor överleva hjärtstopp, säger socialminister Jakob Forssmed.

Improvements since Copenhagen 2023



	2023	2026
• Proportion of survivors after cardiac arrest	10%	13%
• Proportion of AED:s always available	23%	38%
• Volonteer responders in Swedish regions	11(21)	17 (21)

- Activities/participation/advocacy work. From 2023 until now we have increased our work together with other organisations.

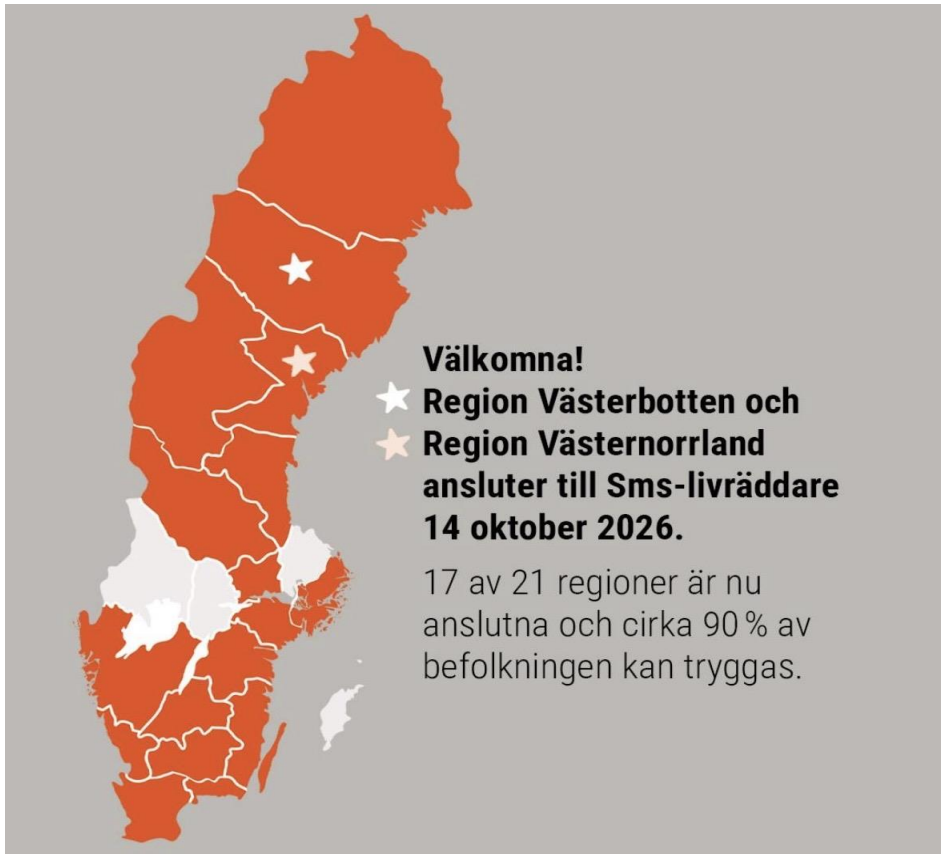
Volonteer responders in Swedish regions

2023



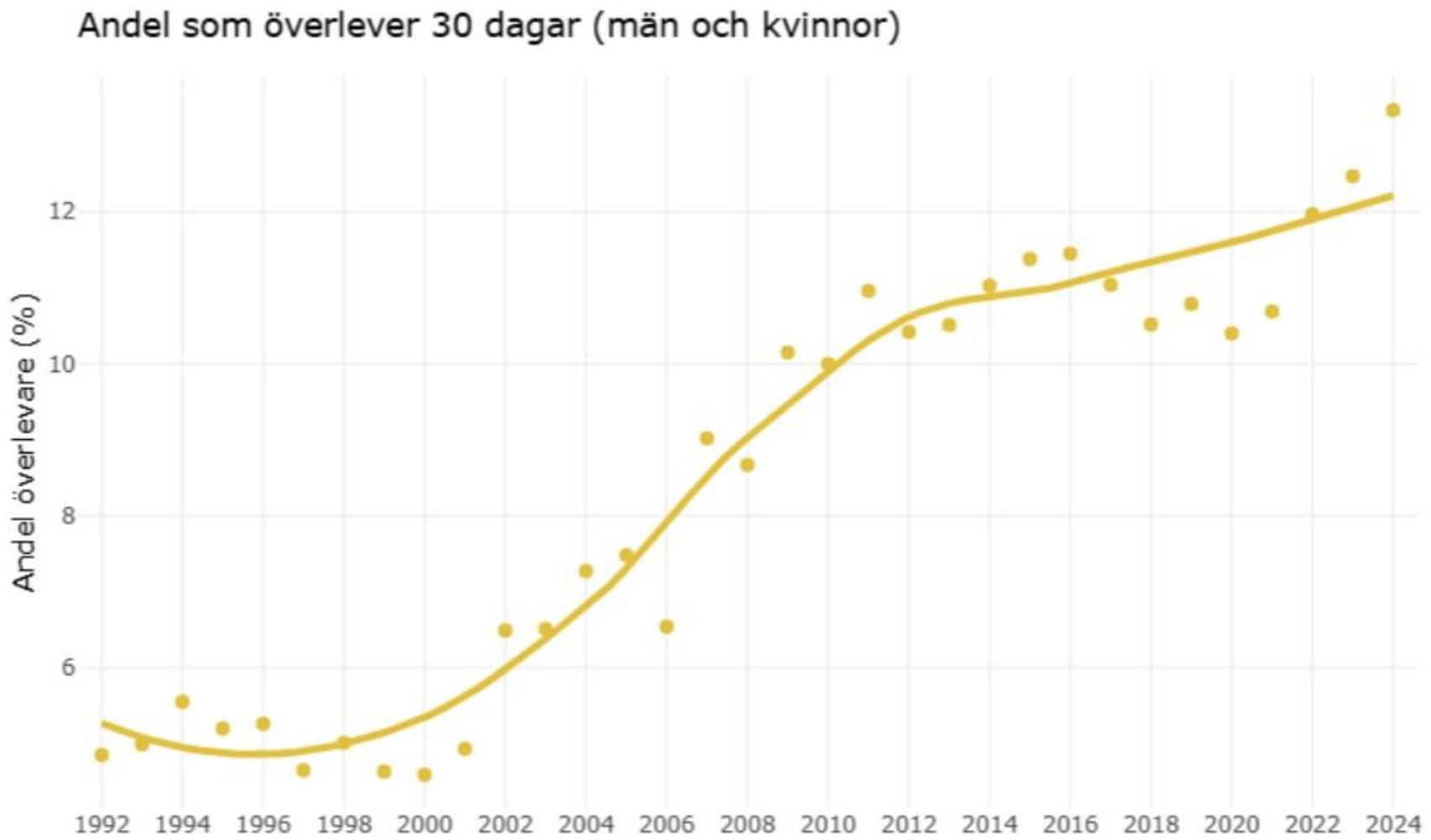
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2026



17

Survivorship, out of hospital cardiac arrest, Sweden



Swedish Registry for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
https://shlr.registercentrum.se/

Success factors

- Build collaboration with other organisations









- Listen to survivors and relatives/co-survivors

“

Stop thinking about survival as the end game.
For most **survivors and their families**, surviving starts when they leave the security of the hospital.
Then they **want to live** and **not just survive**.”

Dave Cleland. Cardiac Arrest Survivor, UK
Research Partner and PPIE co-chair, CARESS study



Therese.djarv@ki.se



Every day is a gift!



Stefan Jutterdal och Annmargreth Kvarnefors
www.stefanjutterdal.se