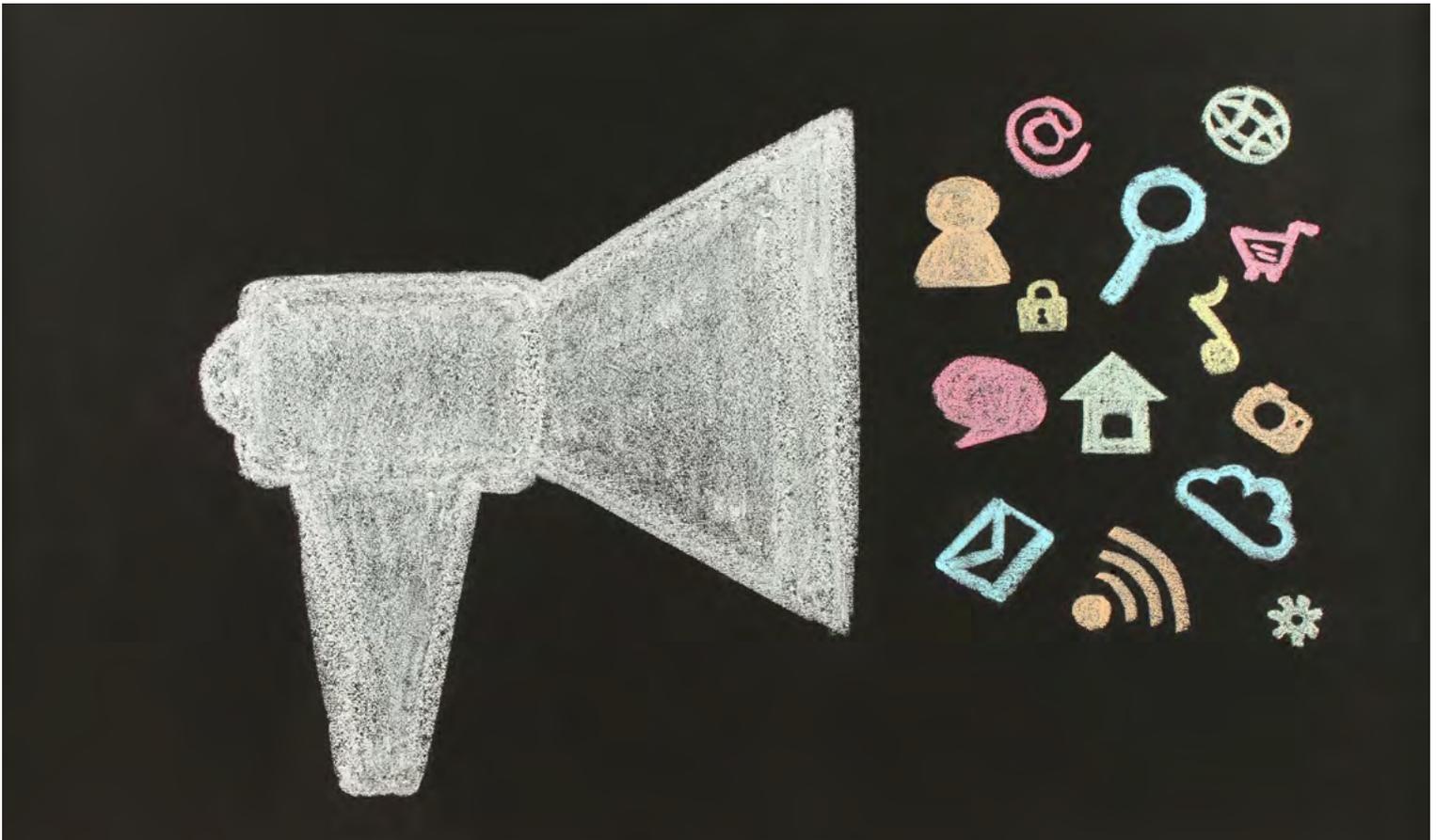


GIRO RESEARCH UPDATE

AUGUST 2015

Keeping you up to date with the latest in gambling research



THIS MONTH

- Does advertising affect gambling?
- Has gambling and problem gambling changed in Victoria?
- Ethnicity and age: predictors of gambling as an escape?
- Electronic bingo games or new age pokies?

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AUGUST 2015



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Does advertising affect gambling?

Sproston, K, Hanley, C, Brook, K, Hing, N & Gainsbury, S 2015, *Marketing of sports betting and racing*. Gambling Research Australia.

What was the research?

This study explored the impact of increased marketing of the sports and race betting (wagering) industry including the impact of this marketing on gambling behaviour. The study sought to answer the following questions:

- Does exposure to wagering marketing encourage gambling intention and behaviour?
- If so, what affect does marketing have on target audiences?
- Does this type of marketing create a relationship with gambling?
- Does this marketing encourage gambling on other activities?
- Does this marketing have a particular effect on vulnerable groups such as adolescents and at risk gamblers?

The research was conducted by ORC International and funded by Gambling Research Australia.

How was the research conducted?

The study involved:

- an environmental scan examining sports betting marketing, focusing on case studies of six wagering companies
- focus groups with different audiences impacted by wagering marketing
- an online survey of respondents impacted by sports betting and racing marketing.

A third of participants believed sports betting advertising targeted underage teenagers.

Limitations

As a cross sectional study, the data for the study was collected at a specific point in time rather than across time. This means findings cannot be used to draw conclusions about any causal relationship between wagering advertising and gambling behaviour. More detailed research is needed to fully understand how advertising might be contributing to gambling harm.

Sports betting advertising made more than half of the participants more aware of other types of gambling.

What were key findings of the research?

Adults

- Almost a third (30 per cent) of survey participants thought sports betting marketing was targeted toward teenagers aged 13 to 17 years. Participants also thought sports betting marketing was targeted to:

- 'young people as future customers' (75 per cent)
 - problem gamblers (74 per cent)
 - sports fans (94 per cent)
 - adults aged 30 to 60 (90 per cent)
 - people who gamble a lot (89 per cent)
- On average, respondents were aware of 2.2 sports and racing betting companies when unprompted, and 5 when provided with a list.
 - A majority of respondents thought 'sports betting marketing increases my awareness of sports betting products and brands'. Interestingly, 52 per cent of participants also thought that sports betting marketing increased their awareness of other forms of gambling.
 - Being male, exposure to sports betting and racing marketing, as well having positive thoughts about gambling and paying attention to the responsible gambling message, all predicted someone was likely to gamble regularly on sports or racing.

Sports betting marketing made one third of adolescents more likely to want to bet on sports.

Adolescents

- Exposure to gambling marketing, through both traditional and digital media, was higher for adolescents than adults. This was true for both sports and racing marketing. Almost half of adolescents (48 per cent) experienced high levels of exposure to sports betting marketing.
- Adolescents were less likely to report positive emotions in response to racing and sports betting advertising, and were more likely to report feeling annoyed or bored than adults.
- Nearly one third (30 per cent) of adolescents said sports betting marketing makes them more likely to want to bet on sports. Almost a quarter (24 per cent) agreed "I am more likely to want to bet on races after seeing race betting marketing." Nearly a quarter of adolescents (24 per cent) said they are more likely to gamble on other forms of gambling after seeing sports betting marketing.

Adolescents are exposed to higher levels of sports betting advertising than adults.

Problem gamblers

- Problem and moderate risk gamblers were more likely to have high exposure to both sports betting and racing marketing, both through traditional and digital media.
- Problem, moderate risk and low risk gamblers were all more likely to report positive emotions and positive thoughts, such as "you can be a winner", in response to sports betting and racing advertising.
- Problem, moderate risk and low risk gamblers said they were more likely to bet on sports and other products after seeing sports betting marketing. They were also more likely to say they would bet on other products after seeing sports betting marketing.

How this research might be useful?

This study cannot be used to show that wagering marketing influences participation in gambling activities as it was done via snapshots in time

rather than following people across time. This means we cannot know for sure whether exposure to marketing led to increased gambling participation or whether a higher rate of gambling participation resulted in increased exposure to or attention to wagering marketing. Both pathways are plausible.

However, it is clear a significant minority of participants (about a third) perceived that both racing and sports betting marketing had an influence on their gambling behaviour. This is a strong signal that advertising is likely to be effective in encouraging participation in racing and sports betting.

According to participants, advertising for racing and sports betting may also play a role in encouraging other gambling behaviours. This has implications for the larger role such advertising may play in the normalisation of gambling as a general behaviour.

That problem gamblers and those at risk had higher exposure to advertising, and were more likely than other participants to say this advertising influenced their behaviour, suggests that gambling advertising is, in itself, exacerbating gambling harm. It is also notable that most of the survey sample also perceived sports betting advertising as targeting problem gamblers.

This study supports and informs the view that gambling advertising needs to be addressed as part of developing policies and responses concerned with reducing harm from gambling.

Want to know more?

Read the [full report from the study](#).

Has gambling and problem gambling changed in Victoria?

Abbott, M, Stone, C, Billi, R & Yeung, K 2015, 'Gambling and problem gambling in Victoria, Australia: Changes over 5 years,' *Journal of Gambling Studies*, online 21 April 2015.

What was the research?

This article reports on an analysis of two Victorian government gambling studies. The study assessed changes in gambling participation and problems in adult Victorians as well as the impact differences in methodology had on prevalence estimates.

The analysis was conducted by a New Zealand academic, an independent consultant and two staff members from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation.

How was the research conducted?

This study examined changes in gambling participation and problems in adult Victorians over a five year period. The data analysed in this study came from:

- the Victorian Gambling Study, 2008-2012 and
- the 2003 Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey

While accessibility to gambling increased, participation in gambling decreased between 2003 and 2008.

Victorian Gambling Study, 2008-2012

The [Victorian Gambling Study](#) is a longitudinal research study on gambling and health in Victoria. The report outlines the final findings and analyses of the study including from the 3,686 participants who completed four waves of data collection between 2008 and 2012.

2003 Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey

The [2003 Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey](#) was the eighth in a series of community attitude surveys. The survey aimed to track changes in community perceptions and attitudes on gambling since the last survey conducted in 1999 by the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority.

Limitations

The studies examined here took place before the explosion of sports betting advertising and increased access to internet gambling made possible via the spread of mobile devices. This phenomenon and its effects are therefore not captured in this study.

What were key findings of the research?

Gambling participation mainly declined

- Despite increases between 2003 and 2008 in both opportunities to gamble and the types of gambling available, the total number of Victorians participating in gambling declined substantially.
 - The number of Victorian adults who had gambled in the previous 12 months went down by 6 per cent between 2003 and 2008, while the number of Victorian adults who gambled weekly reduced by 15 per cent. The number who gambled once a month went down by 39 per cent.
- Decreases in gambling participation occurred across most gambling activities between 2003 and 2008. There were declines in both participation and frequency of participation. Only weekly Keno players showed a significant increase in participation, from 0.17 per cent in 2003 to 0.41 per cent in 2008.
 - The number of Victorians who gambled in the previous 12 months reduced on Keno by 54 per cent, on horse and greyhound racing by 42 per cent, on scratch tickets by 39 per cent, on table games by 37 per cent, on pokies by 36 per cent, on sports betting by 28 per cent and on Lotto by 18 per cent
 - The number of Victorians who gambled monthly reduced by 59 per cent for table games, 54 per cent for scratch tickets, 42 per cent for pokies, 36 per cent for horse and greyhound racing and 26 per cent for Lotto
 - The number of Victorians who gambled weekly reduced by 60 per cent for scratch tickets, 39 per cent for pokies, 30 per cent for Lotto and 27 per cent for horse and greyhound racing. Weekly participation did not decline among those playing casino table games.

Weekly participation in gambling reduced by 15 per cent between 2003 and 2008.

- Decreases in gambling participation were also seen across almost all demographic groups between 2003 and 2008.
 - In the case of weekly participation, large reductions were evident for young males (by 53 per cent), people with a university degree (by 37 per cent) and participants whose main language is not English (by 44 per cent).
- In both 2003 and 2008, weekly and monthly gambling participation was more prevalent in males, people aged 45 years and older, those living in rural/regional area of residence, those with education lower than University, and those with English as their main language.
- The two surveys showed males participated more often in table games and betting on track racing and sports events, while females purchased scratch tickets, played bingo and took part in phone competitions.

Problem gambling prevalence

- Despite the overall decline in participation, there was no evidence of a reduction in prevalence of problem gambling between the 2003 and 2008 studies.
- Problem gambling increased between 2003 and 2008 among people aged 18-24, living in a metropolitan area, in a household consisting of couples with children.
- Males and people with lower education levels had higher rates of problem, moderate and low risk gambling across both surveys
- In the 2008 survey, two groups that experienced large participation reduction – young adults and metropolitan residents – also emerged as additional groups with higher rates of problem and moderate risk gambling than the general population.
- Analysis of methodological impacts on prevalence study results found that surveys that had excluded non-problem gamblers reduced problem gambling estimates and also underestimated the extent of harm occurring to other gamblers.

The number of young adults gambling went down but those still gambling showed higher than average rates of problematic gambling

How this research might be useful?

The finding that participation in gambling by young adults decreased but that rates of problem gambling within this population remained constant, presents challenges for public health strategy.

It is similar to a hypothetical situation where, for example, less young people were driving but they were still being over-represented as drivers in car crashes. In terms of policy direction this would mean that, short of banning all young people from driving, continued emphasis just on reduced participation would have diminishing returns in terms of harm reduction.

Seen in a conventional way the reduction in people gambling regularly is expected to have impacts on reducing harm for the general population. But this study found that the preventative effect is not impacting on a core of people within the population, typically those gambling on more dangerous products such as EGMs and table games, who have the highest rates of harm.

Such findings therefore suggest that, for prevention programs to be more effective, measures need to extend beyond simply reducing gambling participation. Targeted interventions directed towards individuals at risk are needed, while also addressing the wider environmental factors that contribute to vulnerability and harm. Reducing the exposure of identified vulnerable people must also be accompanied by better early intervention.

The question of why overall rates of harm may have plateaued when participation continues to fall, and why some groups with reduced participation still had members with higher than average risk, remains unanswered. Finding an answer should be a research priority, not least to support the development of targeted strategies.

The study is also important for its conclusions regarding the methodology of prevalence studies of problem gambling. The study's criticism of earlier research that did not survey whole populations is important. Such studies under-estimated both prevalence of gambling problems and with them levels of harm. Misapprehensions of the size of the problem has implications for society's appreciation of the issue.

Want to know more?

Read the [full report from the study](#).

Ethnicity and age: predictors of gambling as an escape?

Cookman, M. L., Weatherly, J. N. 2015, 'Investigating Possible Effects of Ethnicity and Age on Gambling as an Escape,' *Journal of Gambling Studies*, online 2 June 2015.

What was the research?

This study investigated interactions between ethnicity and age as they relate to [disordered gambling](#) (the US term for clinically diagnosed problem gambling) and ethnicity and age as predictors of gambling as an escape. Factors such as non-Caucasian ethnicity, younger age and endorsing gambling as an escape from life were considered to determine if they led to increased levels of problem gambling.

This study was conducted by the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, USA.

How was the research conducted?

The study recruited 315 adults (aged 18 years and older) from the United States using an online panel. Participants were paid for their participation. Participants were grouped into ethnic categories of 'Caucasian' and 'Non-Caucasian' and age groups consisting of 18 to 25, 26 to 35, 36 to 55, and 56 years and above.

The sample was predominantly male (55 per cent), of Caucasian ethnicity (80 per cent), married (64 per cent) and earned an annual income of under \$50,000 USD (74 per cent). Those aged 18 to 25 made up 22 per cent of participants, 40 per cent were aged 26 to 35, 27 per cent were aged 36 to 55 and 12 per cent aged 56 and above. Participants completed all measures online. In addition to answering demographic questions, participants were asked to answer measures relating to their gambling behaviour.

The effects of ethnicity and age were analysed across scores from three screens for problem gambling: the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS), Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) and the Gambling Functional Assessment – Revised (GFA-R).

Limitations

This study uses participants from the United States so some environmental and cultural factors are different to Australia. This includes the ethnic experiences of the Caucasian and Non-Caucasian groups and the applicability of these categories to Australian sub-cultures.

People aged 36 to 55 years were found more at risk of problem gambling.

What were key findings of the research?

The study hypothesised that factors such as non-Caucasian ethnicity, younger age, and endorsing gambling as an escape would be predictors of disordered gambling. Results from the study show:

- non-Caucasian participants displayed higher scores for disordered gambling
- younger age was not significantly associated with disordered gambling, however ethnicity and age 36 to 55 did predict disordered gambling
- endorsing gambling as an escape predicted disordered gambling, however people's ethnicity and/or age did not predict they would see gambling as an escape.

Non-Caucasians may be more at risk of problem gambling and may also experience more harm from gambling.

How this research might be useful?

This research is notable because it produces some different findings to many other studies. Previous research has found that problem gambling decreases with age. However, the results from this study found no significant relationship between age and problem gambling. The authors did note this may be due to over 60 per cent of the sample being age 35 years or younger.

By finding a significant relationship between ethnicity and problem gambling, this study confirms previous research regarding culture and background sometimes contributing to risk. It supports arguments for developing prevention programs and public health campaigns targeted to ethnic groups.

Notably the only significant ethnicity-age relationship was found for the large age cohort of 36 to 55 year olds. This result would suggest the direction of programs and attention to those within the cohort should relate to identifying life pressure triggers, such as family troubles or income issues.

The study also found gambling as an escape was a significant predictor of problem gambling. This finding may be used by clinicians to identify people who display this trait as being potentially at risk of developing or worsening a gambling problem. Pointing this out to gamblers might also be useful in both prevention and triggering awareness of risk and help-seeking.

Want to know more?

Read the [full report from the study](#).

Electronic bingo games or new age pokies?

Harrigan, K, Brown, D & MacLaren, V 2015, 'Gamble While You Gamble: Electronic Games in Ontario Charitable Gaming Centres,' *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, online 1 May 2015.

What was the research?

This article examines bingo electronic gaming machines (bingo EGMs) which have recently appeared in Ontario Charitable Gaming Centres. The article summarises the characteristics of bingo EGMs and provides a comparison with slot EGMs (known in Australia as pokies).

Charities in Canada often raise funds through bingo, raffles and instant win ticket-lotteries. Bingo halls are owned and operated by private companies, with a portion of profits going to the charitable organisations running the particular event. Charitable bingo halls are permitted under the Criminal Code of Canada and are regulated by the Provinces. Under the Criminal Code, slot EGMs are not permitted in charitable gaming centres.

The regulator in Ontario, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG), has introduced electronic gambling into bingo halls through bingo EGMs and has rebranded the halls as Charitable Gaming Centres.

18 year olds in Ontario cannot legally drink a beer or play roulette, but they can gamble for charity.

How was the research conducted?

The authors conducted a literature review to determine the characteristics of slot EGMs. The authors then spent in excess of 40 hours playing the following electronic bingo games offered by the Charitable Gaming Centres in Ontario to determine the characteristics of bingo EGMs:

- Lucky Clover Bingo
- Old Glory Bingo
- The Aztec Game
- Treasure Island
- Berri Fruiti

What were key findings of the research?

The article found bingo EGMs have structural characteristics that make them similar to slot EGMs including:

- fast and continuous play
- player adjustable frequency and win size
- losses disguised as wins and
- highly salient near misses.

Fast and continuous play

- Bingo EGMs can be played at a faster rate than paper bingo – one play per two seconds and 30 plays a minute.

Player adjustable frequency and win size

- Players have the choice to increase the frequency of play on bingo EGMs by increasing the number of cards played, similar to slot EGMs where players can also increase the frequency of play by increasing the number of lines played.

Losses disguised as wins

- Similar to slot EGMs, bingo EGMs have a high frequency (19 per cent) of losses disguised as wins (LDW). Also similar to slot EGMs, these LDWs are accompanied by celebratory lights and sounds.

Near misses

- Bingo EGMs remind players of near misses (occurring on over 30 per cent of plays) through flashing lights and sounds.

Bingo EGMs and pokies may be hard to tell apart. They have similar features, such as loud noises, bright lights and fast play.

How this research might be useful?

Until now bingo has been considered a much less dangerous gambling product than EGMs. However this new form of bingo has taken on many of the characteristics of pokies.

Because this new form of bingo appears to transform the product into something more like a pokie it may lead to the higher rates of problem gambling more commonly associated with traditional EGMs.

This article is a useful warning for gambling regulators, that the placement of bingo EGMs in existing bingo halls may increase problem gambling among an already well-established community of bingo players. It would, in effect, be using the reputation and knowledge of bingo among both the population and the regulators to infiltrate a more dangerous form of gambling with many significantly different characteristics to traditional bingo.

With the addition of these bingo EGMs, the modernised charitable gaming sector may become a new source of increased problem gambling.

Want to know more?

Read the [full report from the study](#).