Research Briefing 07/09 (September 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Board approval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Board discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Board information</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responsible: Matthew Hill
Executive: Director of Strategy, Research & Analysis
Date: 10 September 2009
Research Briefing 07/09

1. The purpose of this briefing note is to provide both the Board and all Gambling Commission employees with a short summary of significant research that has either been published recently, or is due to be published in the near future. This, and future, Research Briefings will be shared with the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board.

Recent/current research

2. **Impact of survey description, administration format, and exclusionary criteria on population prevalence rates of problem gambling**
   Williams and Volberg *(August 2009)*

3. This research examined the impact of survey administration format, survey description and gambling behaviour thresholds on obtained population prevalence rates of problem gambling. A total of 3028 adults were surveyed about their gambling behaviour, with half of these surveys administered face-to-face, and half conducted over the telephone. Within each administration format, half of the surveys were described as a ‘gambling survey’ and half as a ‘health and recreation survey’.

Main findings

- Administration format, survey description and gambling behaviour threshold all significantly and independently influence problem gambling prevalence rates.

- Survey description is the strongest of these effects, with population prevalence rates of problem gambling 133% higher in ‘gambling’ as opposed to ‘health and recreation’ surveys.

- This is because topic interest ensures that gamblers and problem gamblers participate at a much higher rate than non-gamblers when a survey is described as a ‘gambling’ survey.

- Administration format was the next strongest effect, with problem gambling prevalence 55% higher in face-to-face administration compared to telephone administration.

- This is primarily because face-to-face administration results in increased participation of demographic groups (young people, males) that have higher rates of gambling and problem gambling.

- Excluding people with annual gambling expenditures of less than Can$300 from the problem gambling questions, gives a problem gambling prevalence rate that is 42% lower.

- When all of the above elements are aligned they result in markedly different problem gambling prevalence rates (4.1% v 0.8%), indicating that problem gambling rates are a function of how the survey is conducted.

4. **Legal gambling availability and problem gambling among adolescents and young adults**
   Welte, Barnes, Tidwell and Hoffman *(August 2009)*
5. This study used a national US telephone survey conducted with 2274 respondents aged 14-21. Respondents were asked about their gambling behaviour and assessed using the South Oaks Gambling Screen revised for adolescents (SOGS-RA). Analysis was then conducted comparing responses against the number of types of legal gambling operation, and legal gambling ages, in each state.

Main findings

- The number of types of legal gambling available in the respondent’s state was positively related to the odds of lifetime gambling, current gambling, current frequent gambling and current problem gambling.
- For respondents aged 18-21, odds of current problem gambling, as opposed to never gambling, increased 39% for each additional type of legal gambling.
- The number of types of gambling in which a respondent was old enough to legally participate had a positive relationship to gambling involvement, including problem gambling.
- Being old enough to participate in specific forms of gambling was positively related to the frequency of playing those specific types.

6. Once a gambler – always a gambler? A longitudinal analysis of gambling patterns in young people making the transition from adolescence to adulthood
Delfabbro, Winefield and Anderson (August 2009)

7. This research tracked the gambling habits of 578 young people for four years, from mid-adolescence (age 15 years) into adulthood (18-19 years). Standardised participation data was collected every year by respondents completing and returning questionnaires. The participants for this study were drawn from an on-going longitudinal study of young people in South Australia.

Main findings

- Gambling patterns in young people are subject to considerable individual variability.
- Only 1 in 4 young people who gambled at the age of 15 continued gambling every year.
- Consistent participation in specific activities was rare amongst the respondents.
- Participation patterns observed when young people were closer to leaving school were more predictive of adult gambling patterns than those obtained at a young age.
- The findings emphasise the potential difference in results that arise from basing conclusions on longitudinal studies as opposed to those that are cross-sectional in design.

8. Barriers to seeking help for gambling problems: A review of the empirical literature
Suurvali, Cordingley, Hodgins and Cunningham (September 2009)

9. This literature review summarises recent (since 1998) empirical research on obstacles preventing problem gamblers from seeking treatment for their gambling problems.
Nineteen studies, conducted in six countries\(^1\), were examined with the only methodological requirement being that gamblers themselves were asked about the reasons for not seeking help.

**Main findings**

- Despite differences in methodology, many of the same barriers to treatment were identified.

- The most commonly reported barriers were: wish to handle problem by oneself; shame, embarrassment and stigma; unwillingness to admit problem; and issues with the treatment itself.

- Unwillingness to admit to having a gambling problem may be even more prevalent than is typically indicated by the results of ‘barrier’ studies.

- Other frequently reported barriers included lack of knowledge about treatment options and practical issues around attending treatment.

- Input directly from gamblers can be combined with information from other kinds of studies to devise better ways of reaching problem gamblers.


Thomas, Allen & Phillips (2009)

11. This research developed a measure of EGM gambling motivations based on the results of qualitative research previously conducted with EGM problem gamblers and experienced counsellors. This measure was then included, alongside the PGSI, in a questionnaire for current EGM gamblers (n=355).

**Main findings**

- Exploratory factor analysis extracted three motivational factors indicating people like to gamble on EGMs to escape, for its accessibility and for the social environment.

- Gambling to escape and for its accessibility had substantial positive correlations with frequency of EGM gambling and gambling problems. Social environment correlated less well with these indicators of excessive gambling.

- Correlations between factors suggested the accessible, social experience offered by EGM venues increases their appeal as a means of escape

- The new subscales developed in this study will facilitate future investigations into the relationships between gambling motivations, other causal factors and EGM problem gambling.

**12. BBGS vs. NODS-CLiP: Which brief screen for pathological gambling wins the battle of psychometrics?**

The Wager Vol. (14)6 (August 2009)

13. This article compares two new, independent reports focusing on the development of two brief screens for pathological gambling\(^2\); the Brief Bio-Social Gambling Screen (BBGS)

---

\(^1\) Canada, Australia, Brazil, Switzerland, United States and New Zealand.

\(^2\) A brief for pathological gambling.
and the NODS-CliP. By using follow-up evaluations of those identified as pathological gamblers, researchers in both studies analysed whether they had been correctly identified.

**Main findings**

- The BBGS has the advantage of assessing past year pathological gambling, which is consistent with clinical practice, compared to the NODS-CliP which assesses lifetime pathological gambling.

- In follow-up evaluations, with those identified as pathological gamblers by the NODS-CliP, it is expected that only one in eight would be correctly identified as a pathological gambler.

- Of those identified as a pathological gambler by the BBGS, approximately one in three would be identified correctly as a pathological gambler in follow-up evaluations.

- As the NODS-CliP yields many false positives (7 for every 8 screened) it is the best screen for garnering liberal estimates of problems, but has limited clinical utility.

**Recent/current journal articles**

14. Abstracts of the following articles are available on request.

**Are gamblers more likely to commit crimes? An empirical analysis of a nationally representative survey of US young adults**
Clark and Walker *(August 2009)*

**Participation and level of play in the UK National Lottery and correlation with spending on other modes of gambling**
Forrest and Gulley *(August 2009)*

**Wins, winning and winners: The commercial advertising of lottery gambling**
McMullan and Miller *(September 2009)*

**Impact of visiting an onsite casino information centre on perceptions about randomness and gambling behaviours**
Boutin, Tremblay and Ladouceur *(September 2009)*

**Who plays what? Participation profiles in chance versus skill-based gambling**
Stevens and Young *(September 2009)*

**Knowledge and Beliefs About Gambling in Australian Secondary School Students and their Implications for Education Strategies**
Delfabbro, Lambos, King & Puglies *(September 2009)*

**A Comparison of Ambient Casino Sound and Music: Effects on Dissociation and on Perceptions of Elapsed Time While Playing Slot Machines**
Noseworthy & Finlay *(September 2009)*

---

The NODS–CLiP: A Rapid Screen for Adult Pathological and Problem Gambling (Toce-Gerstein, Gerstein & Volberg) and Optimizing DSM-IV classification accuracy: A brief bio-social screen for gambling disorders among the general household population (Gebauer, LaBrie & Shaffer)
Forthcoming research

15. RIGT/ESRC

- A web-based survey of the clinical and psychological characteristics of Internet gamblers

Contact: Jon Watkin j.watkin@gamblingcommission.gov.uk 0121 230 6657