

Adapting Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines for the Finnish context

What this research is about

The Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGGs) are an evidence-based public health tool to help people reduce the risk of gambling-related harm. The LRGGs were developed in Canada using a large body of international data. However, they need to be adapted to specific cultural and regulatory environments before being implemented in other countries. This commentary discusses how the LRGGs have been tailored to the Finnish setting to ensure cultural relevance and policy feasibility.

What the researchers did

The researchers review how the LRGGs were first developed in Canada through multiple phases of research. These phases involved systematic reviews of existing studies, quantitative statistical modelling using international data, and consultations with interest holders. The Canadian LRGGs provide the following recommendations:

1. Spend no more than 1% of monthly household gross income on gambling, and
2. Gamble on no more than four days per month, and
3. Avoid regularly participating in more than two types of gambling.

These recommendations are based on research suggesting that risk for experiencing harm increases if gambling beyond these thresholds. The guidelines also acknowledge that people with existing vulnerabilities (such as a history of mental health or substance use problems) may face elevated risk even below these thresholds. These people should consider gambling even less than that

What you need to know

This commentary discusses how the Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGGs) have been tailored to the Finnish setting to ensure cultural relevance and policy feasibility. The LRGGs were first developed in Canada through multiple phases of research using a large body of international data. However, the researchers noted that the first guideline uses monthly gross income to define the threshold for spending (i.e., spending no more than 1% of monthly household gross income on gambling). In Finland, income is usually viewed as personal instead of household-based, and salaries are usually described as income after taxes (net income). These cultural nuances make the guideline difficult to interpret and operationalize in Finland. Thus, the researchers proposed that the Finnish guideline should be adjusted to not spending more than 2% of personal net income.

recommended by the guidelines or abstaining completely. Additionally, for people with a personal or family history of problem gambling, these limits may not be suitable.

The researchers then provide the rationale for adapting the LRGGs for the Finnish context and the specific adjustment made.

What the researchers found

The gambling environment in Finland is undergoing a major transformation. The state monopoly system is set to transition to a licensed system in 2026. There

are also structural reforms, with sports betting and online casino expected to be open to competition by 2027. This will likely increase gambling marketing. At the same time, Finland has strengthened harm-prevention measures (e.g., personal identification is now mandatory).

With respect to the LRGs, the researchers noted that the use of monthly gross income to define the threshold for spending would be inappropriate in the Finnish context. This is because income is usually viewed as personal instead of household-based in Finland. Another difference is that, in Finland, salaries are usually described as income after taxes (net income). These cultural nuances make the first guideline (1% of monthly gross household income before taxes) hard for people to interpret and operationalize in Finland.

Thus, the researchers proposed that the Finnish guideline should be adjusted to not spending more than 2% of personal net income. They believe that this threshold is comparable to the Canadian guideline, or may even be slightly more conservative, as net income is often 30–35% lower than gross income. The adjustment aligns with cultural understanding of income and enables analyses across datasets, as Finnish population surveys collect net income data.

The adapted guidelines are now used in a national interactive self-assessment tool and a public awareness campaign in Finland that started in February 2026.

The researchers emphasized that cultural adaptation is needed in different contexts. Guidelines need to be seen as relevant, understandable, and achievable for people to adhere to them.

How you can use this research

Practitioners and policy makers can use this research to adapt the LRGs to fit local cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Doing so can improve how understandable, acceptable, and effective these guidelines are for the public.

About the researchers

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Citation

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About Greo Evidence Insights

Greo Evidence Insights is an independent, non-profit organization specializing in research, knowledge mobilization, and evaluation in the health and well-being sectors. Greo transforms research and insights into actionable strategies to prevent and reduce harm related to gambling, gaming, technology use, and substance use. To learn more about funding for Research Snapshots visit [our website](#).

