



RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

Lund, I. (2006). Gambling and problem gambling in Norway: What part does the gambling machine play? *Addiction Research & Theory*, 14(5), 475-491. doi:10.1080/16066350600836825

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the rates of problem gambling in the Norwegian population?

PURPOSE

To increase understanding of the relationship between gambling machines and the prevalence of problem gambling in Norway.

HYPOTHESIS

None stated.

PARTICIPANTS

Data from a net weighted sample of 5235 individuals (47% males) from a national gambling survey of 15 to 74 year olds in Norway was used.

PROCEDURE

Ten thousand potential participants were randomly selected from the database of the Norwegian National Tax Authority in which all individuals are registered at birth (or upon immigrants obtaining employment). Participants completed self-report questionnaires regarding gambling participation and gambling problems. Questionnaires were completed via telephone interview when telephone numbers were available (58%). Otherwise, questionnaires were mailed to participants. A total of 471 potential participants could not be reached. The sample was subsequently weighted to adjust for the fact that men, people born abroad, people in younger age groups and individuals living in Oslo were over-represented among the non-participants. The weight was constructed using official statistics of the demographic structure of the Norwegian population.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

Gambling participation was assessed using nine sets of questions that related to nine groups of games (i.e., lotteries, football pools, sports betting, horse betting, bingo, bingo machines, gambling machines, cards/casino/other games, internet games) which were designed specifically for use in this study. Lifetime and current gambling problems was

assessed using the NORC DSM Screen for Gambling Problems (NODS).

KEY RESULTS

Gambling Rates. The prevalence of weekly gambling was high, but daily gambling was low. Lotteries were the more popular than any other type of gambling with 74% of Norwegian adults taking part (29% weekly; less than 1% daily). The second most popular form was gambling machine with overall participation rates of 21% (12% weekly; less than 1% daily). **Gambling Problems.** Problem and pathological gamblers made up 1% of the sample. There were a disproportionately high number of young men experiencing gambling problems, with five times as many men under age 25 classified as problem or pathological gamblers compared to women in the same age group and men 25 or older. Young men were more likely to be at-risk gamblers. Prevalence of problem gambling was 2.5 times higher in the female under 25 age group compared to women 25 and older. Problem gamblers (those who gambled at least once a day) tended to play many different types of games, but preferred gambling machines. In comparison, non-problem gamblers had tried fewer games and their favourite form of gambling was lotteries. Lifetime problem gamblers tended to begin gambling at an earlier age (average = 17 years for a problem gambler, 21 years for a non-problem gambler), had beginner's luck (60% of problem gamblers, 23% of non problem gamblers), and had a family where gambling had a central place (4% of problem gamblers had parents who had gambling problems compared to 1% of non-problem gamblers).

LIMITATIONS

Two methods of data collection (phone and mail) were used for data collection. The NODS is believed to be a more restrictive measure of problem gambling than the South Oaks Gambling Screen.

CONCLUSIONS

Problem gamblers preferred gambling machines while non-problem gamblers preferred lotteries. The results show a high level of gambling in the population as a whole over the last 12 months; however, problem

gambling levels are comparatively low. This may partly be the result of a bias in the sample, and should be considered a conservative estimate. However, the scarcity of social arenas in Norway may have contributed to holding problem gambling levels down. Further investigation should focus on the role of the social aspects of gambling in the problem-generating process.

KEYWORDS: gambling machines, problem gambling, NODS, adults, Norway, prevalence

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