



RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

Welte, J. W., Barnes, G. M., Wieczorek, W. F., Tidwell, M.-C. O., & Hoffman, J. H. (2007). Type of gambling and availability as risk factors for problem gambling: A tobit regression analysis by age and gender. *International Gambling Studies*, 7(2), 183-198.
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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the risks for problem gambling associated with different types of gambling?

PURPOSE

This study examined risk factors for problem gambling such as gambling accessibility and gambling types using Tobit regression as a data analysis technique.

HYPOTHESIS

None stated.

PARTICIPANTS

This sample consisted of 2168 adults (18 years and older) from all 50 US states plus Washington, D.C. who reported that they had gambled at least once in the last 12 months. A telephone sample was purchased from Survey Sampling Inc., and was stratified by county and by telephone block within each county.

PROCEDURE

Each telephone number was called at least seven times to determine if an eligible person lived there. When a household contained more than one adult, the one with the most recent birthday was selected. Once a potential respondent was identified, the number was called until an interview was obtained or the potential respondent had refused and refusal conversion had failed. Sixty-five percent of eligible households participated in the interview of gambling behaviours, and convenience of gambling.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

A problem gambling scale composed of items from both the SOGS-R and the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for DSM-IV assessed gambling problems. Frequency of gambling was also assessed. Distance from gambling facilities was assessed through geo-coding (i.e., assigning geographic location coordinates to a specific address). Five questions assessed self-reported convenience of gambling

(e.g., ease of buying lottery tickets). Participants were also asked about family and friends' approval of gambling, and neighbourhood characteristics (e.g., percentage of families receiving social assistance).

KEY RESULTS

Individuals aged 30 or older gambled slightly more than younger adults, but younger adults experienced more problems. Males tended to gamble more than females and also tended to have more gambling problems. Gambling Problems by Types of Gambling. Casino gambling caused the most problems per day of play. Video keno was also found to be problematic per day of play. In terms of impact per person, internet gambling and off-track betting were most related to problems. Casino gambling had the largest impact on society, next being lotteries, gambling machines, and card playing. Video keno was more problematic for men than women, and was also related to higher levels of alcohol consumption. Lottery and dice games were more problematic for individuals 30 and older, whereas casino, off-track betting and bingo were more problematic for younger respondents. Risk for Gambling Problems. Being male, non-white, and living in a more disadvantaged neighbourhood all increased risk for problem gambling. Living closer to a casino or a card room was also related to higher risk for problem gambling, particularly for individuals over the age of 30 and for men. Approval from friends and family was related to more problem gambling, with friends' approval being more important than family approval for those under 30 years of age. Being more socioeconomically advantaged was a risk factor for problem gambling for those under the age of 30, but was not a risk factor for those over 30.

LIMITATIONS

One limitation is that it is not certain that the sample was representative of the target population. The study employed self-report measures and is dependent on participants' honesty in answering. Since gambling practices can change rapidly, caution should be taken

in interpretation of these results, particularly as time passes. Results may not be generalizable outside of the USA.

CONCLUSIONS

The results underscore the central role of casinos in gambling problem. In addition to the effect on individuals of living close to casinos, casino gambling contributes the most to the overall societal gambling

problem and has the largest individual problematic effect per day of play.

KEYWORDS: problem gambling, risk factors, gambling accessibility, sex differences, age

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