



RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

Orford, J., Wardle, H., & Griffiths, M. (2013). What proportion of gambling is problem gambling? Estimates from the 2010 British Gambling Prevalence Survey. *International Gambling Studies*, 13(1), 4-18. doi:10.1080/14459795.2012.689001

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What proportion of time and money do problem gamblers spend on gambling?

PURPOSE

Previous research has produced estimates of the proportion of adult problem gamblers in Britain. However, the estimates produced depend on methodology utilized in the estimation. For example, the proportion of individuals in the general population who have gambling problems is not the same as the proportion of adults attending gambling establishments who have gambling problems. The goal of this study was to provide estimates for 15 separate forms of gambling and the proportion of gambling attendances and gambling revenue contributed by problem gamblers.

HYPOTHESIS

None stated.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 7756 adults (demographics not provided) in Britain.

PROCEDURE

Data were obtained from the 2010 British Gambling Prevalence Survey (BGPS10) which was a survey of a nationally representative sample of people aged 16 years and over living in private households in England, Scotland and Wales. Experienced interviewer conducted computer-assisted self-report surveys of gambling behaviours and problems.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

Participants reported on the frequency of engagement in 15 forms of gambling in the last twelve months and the amount of money usually spent on these activities per month. An estimate of the percentage of each day's play attributable to problem gamblers was calculated as a percentage of day's play by all players. To obtain an estimate of money spent that is attributable to problem gamblers, first a ratio of the average money spent on each form of gambling by

problem gamblers versus non-problem gamblers was calculated then used as a multiplier to convert problem gambling prevalence into an estimated percentage of money spent attributable to problem gamblers. The Problem Gambling Scale and the Problem Gambling Severity Index assessed past year problem gambling.

KEY RESULTS

Estimates of day's play attributable to problem gambling fell roughly into four groups. Three forms of gambling where the estimate exceeded 20%: casino games, fixed odds betting, and dog races. Seven forms of gambling where the estimates were between 12% and 18%: poker, online slot machine style games, sports betting, betting on non-sporting events, slot machines, private betting, and horse races. Three forms of gambling where the estimates were between 5% and 8%: football pools, scratch cards, and bingo. Estimates for lotteries were between 2% and 3%. Estimates of percentages of money spent attributable to problem gamblers also fell roughly into four groups. For two forms of gambling where estimates exceeded 20%: betting on dog races and fixed odds betting. Six forms of gambling for which the best estimate was between 10% and 12%: slot machines, betting on non-sporting events, online slot machine style games, poker, casino games, and sports betting. Five forms of gambling for which the estimates were between 4% and 7%: betting on horse races, scratch cards, football pools, private betting, and bingo. For lotteries the estimates were between 1% and 2%.

LIMITATIONS

The estimates made are gross approximations as they rely on self-report responses to questions about gambling behaviour and may be subject to biases. The estimates were likely sensitive to the relatively small numbers of problem gamblers. The absence of data for those engaging in a form of gambling less than once a month was a further limitation. Estimates of 'days play' rather than actual time spent were used.

CONCLUSIONS

The results suggest that problem gamblers make a far greater contribution to total gambling attendances and losses than problem gambling prevalence figures would suggest.

KEYWORDS: United Kingdom, expenditure, economics, epidemiology, problem gambling

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