

# research snapshot

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## Tongan male youth in New Zealand learn gambling from home, schools, and the media

### What this research is about

Pacific adults in New Zealand gamble less than European adults living in New Zealand. But Pacific adults who gamble are more likely to develop problem gambling. The authors examined the gambling experiences of young Tongan men in New Zealand.

### What the researchers did

One of the researchers shared information about gambling-related harms to Tongan people at a *faikava* session and a church service. The researcher then invited young Tongan men (To'utupu) to participate in this study.

Eighteen To'utupu participated in focus group *talanoa* and individual *talanoa*. In *talanoa*, people share their stories, ideas and feelings in an open conversation. According to the United Nations' 2018 Talanoa Dialogue Platform, *talanoa* is a traditional word used across the Pacific. It refers to a process of inclusive, participatory, and transparent dialogue.

### What the researchers found

The researchers discussed three key themes. Each theme referred to a different hub where Tongan youth learned about gambling: (1) family (homes), (2) peers (schools), and (3) the media.

At home, most of the Tongan youth saw their family members participate in gambling. These family members were most often their fathers or other men. Other Tongan youth learned to gamble (e.g., card games, bingo, board games) during family time.

Tongan youth participated in gambling activities at school. Many engaged in social (gambling) games at

### What you need to know

Pacific adults who gamble are more likely to develop problem gambling than European adults in New Zealand. The authors examined the gambling experiences of Tongan men in New Zealand. Eighteen young Tongan men (To'utupu) participated in focus group *talanoa* and individual *talanoa*. The researchers discussed three different learning hubs of gambling behaviours. At home, most of the Tongan youth saw their family members participate in gambling. At school, Tongan youth played games to socialize with friends. Sometimes these games were used as a form of bullying whereby Tongan youth were forced to gamble with their lunch money. These social games were often not recognized as gambling. Tongan youth also learned about gambling from the media. Tongan youth mentioned that the media often present gambling as "cool" and a harmless form of entertainment. Some Tongan youth imitated the gambling practices of celebrities and elite sports athletes.

school to socialize and spend time with friends. But sometimes these games were used as a form of bullying. Tongan youth were sometimes forced to gamble with their lunch money. However, these social games were often not recognized as gambling.

Tongan youth also learned about gambling from the media. They mentioned the media often present gambling as "cool." Tongan youth sometimes tried to imitate the gambling practices of celebrities and elite sports athletes. Some participants talked about how

gambling advertisements (e.g., newspapers, billboards) encourage Tongan youth to gamble.

### How you can use this research

The researchers suggested that public health officials should encourage parents to address activities at home that have gambling characteristics. School administrators should increase awareness of and create policies around lunch-break gambling-related games. Further research is needed to better understand the gambling behaviours of Pacific people.

### About the researchers

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### Citation

Fehoko, E. S., Bellringer, M. E., & Fairbairn-Dunlop, P. (2022). Learning from home, schools, and the media: Exploring the learning of gambling from a Tongan male youth perspective in New Zealand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Health*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10105395221107854>

### Study funding

Edmond S. Fehoko received funding from the Ministry of Health in New Zealand through the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

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