



# RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

Olason, D. T., Hayer, T., Brosowski, T., & Meyer, G. (2015). Gambling in the mist of economic crisis: Results from three national prevalence studies from Iceland. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, doi: 10.1007/s10899-015-9523-4

## **RESEARCH QUESTION(S)**

How prevalent are gambling participation and problem gambling in Iceland before and after the economic crisis of 2008? Do rates of different forms of gambling increase or decrease after the economic crisis? Are people who suffered economic difficulties because of the economic crisis more likely to gamble?

## **WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?**

Research has shown that during a period of economic recession, rates of certain types of gambling (e.g., slot machine gambling) decline, but rates of other types of gambling (e.g., lottery tickets) remain steady or actually increase. Iceland was severely affected by the economic crisis of 2008. This study compared the rates of gambling participation and problem gambling before and after the economic crisis.

## **WHAT WERE THE KEY FINDINGS?**

Research has shown that during a period of economic recession, rates of certain types of gambling (e.g., slot machine gambling) decline, but rates of other types of gambling (e.g., lottery tickets) remain steady or actually increase. Iceland was severely affected by the economic crisis of 2008. This study compared the rates of gambling participation and problem gambling before and after the economic crisis.

## **WHO CAN USE THIS RESEARCH?**

Gambling treatment providers can use these findings to offer increased support for problem gamblers during times of economic crisis. Problem gambling rates increase after an economic collapse, especially for those most strongly affected by the collapse.

## **HOW WAS THE STUDY DONE?**

Data from three studies of gambling prevalence in Iceland were compared. Two studies were conducted before the economic crisis (2005 and 2007) and one study was conducted after the crisis (2011). The total number of participants across the three studies was 8,249 adults (52% = female, age range: 18 to 70 years). Participants completed telephone interviews assessing gambling behaviour and problem gambling.

## **WHAT WERE THE LIMITATIONS?**

The data collected in this study are based on self-reports of gambling behaviours.

**KEYWORDS:** economic recession, gambling, problem gambling, prevalence

**URL:** [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25656216](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25656216)