



Report Summary

Examining lottery play & risk among young people in Great Britain

What this report is about

Young people 16-24 are frequently among the highest risk age groups for problem gambling among adults in Great Britain. Often one of the first and most popular games among young people is lottery products, particularly scratchcards.

There is a lack of understanding of the problems associated with lottery and scratchcard play overall and particularly among young people. Limited research focuses specifically on lottery and scratchcards. Few studies examine the problems associated with different games among young people. Even fewer consider the factors that may explain a relationship between lottery and scratchcard participation and gambling problems, such as (mental) health and gambling behaviours, which are frequently found to be relevant for other game types.

The purpose of this project is to examine whether lottery and scratchcard participation is related to gambling problems among 16-24 year olds in Great Britain and whether general and mental health and gambling behaviours explain this relationship. In doing so, this work addresses research gaps on the lottery games (including scratchcards) associated with the highest degree of problems and predictors of problematic lottery and scratchcard play, particularly for young people.

What was done?

This report is a secondary analysis of the England and Scottish Health Surveys series in 2012, 2015, and 2016. This analysis answered whether lottery draw and scratchcard play is associated with gambling problems among 16-24 year olds, and whether general

Why is this report important?

Despite the popularity of lottery and scratchcards and some evidence of gambling problems among players, limited research focuses on the risks of play on these games and predictors of problems, especially among young people. In studying whether and how lottery and scratchcard play leads to gambling problems, this work addresses research gaps on the lottery games (including scratchcards) associated with the highest degree of problems and predictors of problematic lottery and scratchcard play, namely health and mental health and other gambling activities. These predictors are relevant for other game types and in line with the Pathways Model of Gambling.

and mental health and gambling behaviours explain this relationship.

What you need to know

Results from this study show that gambling problems are higher among: males (2.1%), 20-24 year olds (1.6%), lottery players (2.7%), scratchcard players (3.0%), those with the lowest wellbeing (3.0%), those with mental health conditions (2.0%), those with fair/bad/very bad self-assessed health (2.5%), and those who play any other games (3.2%).

When included in separate predictive models, lottery and scratchcards were both found to be related to gambling problems. However, when both lottery and scratchcard were included together, only scratchcards remains significant, indicating that scratchcard play explains the impact of playing lottery play on

gambling problems. Age and gender were found to be significant predictors across all models.

Playing any other games reduces a larger portion of the relationship between scratchcards and gambling problems compared to the health variables, but the relationship remains significant. Adding wellbeing, mental health disorders, and general health only slightly reduces the relationship between scratchcards and gambling problems, with the relationship once again remaining significant. In the final model, gambling problems is predicted by being 20-24 years old, being male, having the lowest wellbeing, and participating in any other gambling.

Nearly one third of 16-24 year olds reported having spent money on lottery tickets (29.9%) or scratchcards (31.4%) in the past year and 19% spent money on both. In this sample, 1.2% experienced gambling problems in the past year.

Who is it intended for?

This report is intended for policy makers, health professionals, community groups, gambling operators, and others who could use the information to inform strategies for harm prevention, reduction, and treatment for young people who gamble, particularly on scratchcards.

What does the report recommend?

The results of this study suggest targeting education, initiatives, and research on high risk populations (20-24 year olds and males) and high risk gambling behaviours (playing scratchcards and playing other gambling games as well). Approaches for high risk populations can include targeted educational messages to 20-24 year olds and males as well as tailored in-play messaging (e.g., on online gambling sites when these players register for an account). Recommendations for targeting high risk gambling behaviours include warning messages on physical and digital scratchcards, education and site messaging on how scratchcards work and the risks for players, limiting the use of risky game features such as losses disguised as wins in scratchcard design, targeted training for retail staff selling scratchcards, as well as

providing information on low-risk gambling guidelines such as limiting the number of games played.

About the researchers

Sasha Stark and **Isabel Burdett** are affiliated with the Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices at the Responsible Gambling Council in Ontario, Canada.

Heather Wardle is affiliated with the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow in Glasgow, Scotland. For more information about this study, please contact Sasha Stark at SashaS@rgco.org.

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Study disclosures

N/A.

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