

Prevention and Education Review: Gambling-Related Harm

R E S E A R C H R E P O R T

2021

2.0 Universal Measures

2.2 Regulatory Restrictions on How Gambling is Provided

Search Strategy

LITERATURE SEARCH

A literature search for academic evidence was carried out May 4, 2020 in the following five databases: ERIC, PsycINFO (Ovid), Epub Ahead of Print and In-Process & Other Non-Indexed Citations, Open Science Framework, and Google Scholar. A search was performed for articles in English that were published between 2016 and 2020, as the purpose of this study is to scope evidence from the most recent regulatory changes.

The search terms were “gambl*” and variants of (e.g., “casino”, “scratch card”, “electronic gambling machine”, “sport* betting”, etc.), and; “policy” and variants of (e.g., “regulation*”, “legislat*”, etc.), and; “harm” and variants of (e.g., “risky”, “gambling disorder”, etc.), and; “marketing” and variants of (e.g., “advert*”).

A search for grey literature was also undertaken, using an additional five sources: GREO Evidence Centre, GambleAware commissioned research, Alberta Gambling Research Institute library, Australian Gaming Council, and Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation. Conference slides from University of Nevada, Las Vegas Risk Taking Conference, European Association for Study of Gambling, New Horizons in Responsible Gambling BCLC, and the Responsible Gambling Council’s Discovery were also searched.

In total, 2027 articles were identified through the search after removing duplicates. Additional handsearching was conducted; studies included via handsearching are indicated in the results tables.

STUDY SELECTION

Publications were included if they were: quantitative empirical studies, including experimental studies relevant to policy, natural experiments, and non-randomised trials; qualitative policy evaluations including case studies; conference proceedings; research in progress; other research reports; or commentaries (as they can provide examples of case studies or relevant research). See additional study types in the table of included studies below.

Any form of privately operated gambling or government operated lotteries and online gambling were included. Prioritised forms of gambling were online gambling (with special attention to maximum bet and speed of play); scratch cards; lotteries; casino table games; betting/wagering (sport and non-sport); and gaming machine placement and messaging. These areas were prioritised as they have the highest participation and/or highest problem gambling rates in Great Britain. Policy topic areas of focus were individual licence conditions (i.e., restricting how much gambling one licensee can operate); broader licence conditions (i.e., limiting total number of licensees, density and placement of licensees, etc.); restrictions on volume and placement of gambling advertising in both land-based and online environments; and restrictions on the content of gambling advertisements, including inducements.

Excluded documents were related to restrictions on higher-level placement of gambling venues (i.e. "neighbourhood" restrictions) and structural characteristics of gaming machine games (e.g., maximum bet, payback percentages, etc.), and bingo. The review was limited to English language jurisdictions, including the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada (Alberta, Quebec, Ontario), USA (Massachusetts, Nevada), plus other jurisdictions that have English materials available, such as Sweden, Finland, Singapore, and South Africa.

Unlike systematic reviews, which typically have a narrower scope, a scoping review does not normally require a formal quality assessment.¹ Instead, the author provided an expert opinion guided by the quantitative and qualitative assessment tools selected for the overall review (see CASP, 2018; Evans, Larson & Tsey, 2015).^{2,3}