

FACT SHEET 16

MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS

PREVALENCE OF MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS – VICTORIAN ADULTS

All gamblers in this study were administered the nine scored questions from the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), which is a subscale of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). Moderate risk gamblers score between 3 and 7 on the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI).

The prevalence of moderate risk gambling for the Victorian adult population is 2.36%.

The prevalence of moderate risk gambling within males is significantly lower in males 65 years, compared to males 18-24 years. In addition, within females, the prevalence of moderate risk gambling is significantly lower in females 25-34 years, compared to females 18-24 years.

Poker machines or electronic gaming machines is the highest-participation activity for moderate risk gamblers in the past 12 months (77.24%), followed by lotto/Powerball/Pools (72.66%) and buying tickets in raffles, sweeps and competitions (48.60%).

Nearly 72% of moderate risk gamblers participated in three or more activities in the past 12 months (with an average of approximately three gambling activities played).

The highest-spend activity of moderate risk gamblers is poker machines or electronic gaming machines (EGMs) (46.30%), followed by lotto/Powerball/pools (17.27%), horse, harness racing and greyhounds – excluding sweeps (12.39%) and table games – like blackjack, roulette and poker (8%).

TABLE 1. MODERATE RISK GAMBLER PARTICIPATION IN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

| GAMBLING ACTIVITIES | MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS (%) | VICTORIAN ADULT GAMBLERS (%) |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Poker machines or electronic gaming machines | 77.24 | 21.46 |
| Lotto, Powerball and the Pools | 72.66 | 47.50 |
| Buying tickets in raffles sweeps, and other competitions | 48.60 | 42.88 |
| Betting on horses, harness racing, greyhounds – excluding sweeps | 40.13 | 16.40 |
| Scratch tickets | 28.77 | 15.31 |
| Table games such as blackjack, roulette and poker | 24.23 | 4.59 |
| Informal betting like playing cards at home | 17.39 | 3.46 |
| Betting on sports and event results – like on football or other events like TV show results | 17.22 | 3.96 |
| Bingo | 10.38 | 2.12 |
| Competitions where you enter by phone or leave an SMS to be in a prize draw | 9.68 | 7.35 |
| Keno | 7.60 | 2.33 |
| Speculative investments like day trading in stocks and shares | 4.84 | 3.17 |

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS RELATIVE TO THE VICTORIAN ADULT POPULATION

Relative to the Victorian population, a profile of moderate risk gamblers shows that there is a significantly:

- higher proportion of males
- higher proportion of adults 18-24yrs and a lower proportion of adults 65yrs or older
- lower proportion of people with university qualifications and a higher proportion of people with year 10 or lower as the highest qualification
- lower proportion of managers, professionals, technicians/trades workers and clerical/administrative workers
- higher proportion of community/personal services workers, sales workers, machine operators and labourers
- higher proportion of people personally earning between \$52,000 and \$83,199 per year
- lower proportion of households earning under \$33,799 per year and a higher proportion of households earning between \$62,400 and \$103,000 per year
- lower proportion of households comprised of couples without children and a higher proportion of group households.

REASONS WHY MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS PREFER THEIR HIGHEST-SPEND ACTIVITY

In relation to their highest-spend gambling activity, **compared to problem gamblers**, moderate risk gamblers are significantly **less** likely to:

- gamble to take their mind off things
- gamble to relieve stress
- gamble out of habit

Compared to non-problem gamblers, both moderate risk and problem gamblers were more likely to bet on horse/harness/ greyhound racing in clubs and in pubs. However, when compared to non-problem gamblers, only moderate risk gamblers (not problem gamblers) were significantly more likely to use phone betting and internet betting to place wagering bets.

LIFE EVENTS

When compared to problem gamblers, moderate risk gamblers are significantly less likely to have experienced the following life events in the past 12 months: a major injury or illness to themselves or to someone close to them and an increase in the number of arguments with someone they are close to.

SUBSTANCE USE

Similar to problem gamblers, the prevalence of past year and current smoking was high in moderate risk gamblers and there was generally a strong relationship between smoking and increasing risk status for problem gambling.

Both problem gamblers and moderate risk gamblers consume on average a significantly higher number of drinks per week, than non-problem gamblers. In the case of males, the study shows that, compared to non-problem gamblers, moderate risk gamblers are significantly more likely to be in the risky alcohol consumption category, with 11.35% consuming 29-42 drinks per week.

Moderate risk gamblers were not significantly more likely than problem gamblers to use any of the prompted drug classes for non-medical purposes. However, moderate risk gamblers may use ecstasy/designer drugs somewhat less than problem gamblers, although this result was only tending towards significance.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Compared with problem gamblers (44.03%), a significantly higher proportion of moderate risk gamblers (73.85%) are likely to be well in psychological terms (as measured by the Kessler-10). However, moderate risk gamblers still show a higher tendency to experience a mild, moderate or severe mental disorder, compared to non-problem and low risk gamblers.

HELP-SEEKING FOR GAMBLING PROBLEMS

While 25.55% of problem gamblers sought help for gambling problems in the past 12 months, help-seeking was much lower at only 3.77% for moderate risk gamblers.

In addition, a much larger proportion of moderate risk gamblers are in the pre-contemplation stage of behavioural change (45.73%), compared to problem gamblers (only 10.19%). This highlights that moderate risk gamblers are unlikely to be thinking about reducing their gambling.

TABLE A. READINESS TO CHANGE GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR – BY RISK SEGMENT

| RISK CATEGORY | % GAMBLERS BY STAGE OF CHANGE-READINESS | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------|--------|
| | PRE-CONTEMPLATION | CONTEMPLATION | ACTION |
| Moderate risk gamblers | 45.73% | 35.12% | 19.14% |
| Problem gamblers | 10.19% | 57.51% | 32.30% |



LEISURE INTERESTS

As part of the study, moderate risk and problem gamblers were asked to rate a number of activities in terms of their usefulness in helping to reduce their gambling.

While moderate risk gamblers rated the usefulness of more outside leisure activities and interests lower than problem gamblers (although this was only tending towards significance), it is interesting to note that this was also the highest-rated of all prompted activities for moderate risk gamblers.

Having a wider social network was also rated second highest by both moderate risk gamblers and problem gamblers. This may suggest that improving social connectedness may assist not only problem gamblers, but also moderate risk gamblers.