

## NEW IN SPECIALISED RESOURCES

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### Supporting the Gambling Commission's research programme

#### [A safer bet? Online gambling and mental health](#)

This report by Money and Mental Health Policy Institute highlights how having a mental health problem can make it more difficult to stay in control when gambling online, which can contribute to financial and psychological harm. The project involved a literature review, an online survey of 2,096 adults in the UK on their gambling in relation to COVID-19 pandemic social distancing measures, and two additional surveys and a focus group with people who have lived experience with mental health problems.

The report sets out key sources of gambling-related harm for people with mental health problems. It shares the views of people with mental health problems on how to reduce gambling-related harm. It also outlines steps to make the online gambling environment safer and more responsive to harm, including recommendations related to advertising and stake limits.

Holkar, M. and Lees, C. (2020) *A safer bet? Online gambling and mental health*. London, UK: Money and Mental Health Policy Institute. Available from [https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/A\\_Safer\\_Bet.pdf.pdf](https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/A_Safer_Bet.pdf.pdf)

#### [Future-proofing the industry: Towards the safer design and situation of games](#)

This paper for British Columbia Lottery Corporation's New Horizons in Responsible Gambling Conference in 2020 provides an overview of major theories and evidence related to the design and situation of gambling games. The paper focuses on the speed and continuity of play, near wins, losses-disguised-as-wins and volatility, choice architecture, and the number and location of gaming machines in venues. For each issue, it provides a definition and notes the level of risk for harm, challenges for safer design, and current knowledge on the issue. The author recommends that stakeholders identify and address priority issues where there is extensive research. The author also recommends that stakeholders prepare a long-term, collaborative approach to research that fills knowledge gaps to inform future decisions to reduce gambling harm.

Parke, J. (2020). *Future-proofing the industry: Towards the safer design and situation of games*. New Horizons in Responsible Gambling Conference, Vancouver, BC. Available from: <https://www.bclc.com/content/dam/bclc/new-horizons/documents/2020/j-parke-nh2020.pdf>

## Gambling and social theory

In this blog post from the new journal Critical Gambling Studies, the author addresses biases found in gambling research, focusing on 'problem gambling' research, and argues for the inclusion of social theories in gambling studies. He analyses how a researcher's participation or non-participation in gambling activities can affect their approaches and create biases in their research on gambling. Specifically addressing 'problem gambling' research, he argues that this research field inadvertently contributes to negative biases against gambling activities and focuses on the individual, limiting research results, and the type of research being conducted.

Cosgrave, J. (2020, June 22). *Gambling and social theory - part 1*. Critical Gambling Studies Blog. Available from: <https://www.criticalgamblingstudies.com/index.php/cgs/article/view/56>

## Post-lockdown survey: The impact on health risk behaviours

This survey looks at changes in health risk behaviours post-lockdown in New Zealand. It focuses on alcohol use, smoking, gambling, and health and wellbeing. The survey is a follow-up to the COVID-19 Alert Level 4 survey, which examined the impact of lockdown on the same health risk behaviours. Key results showed that gambling levels are less than pre-lockdown across all gambling types, including online gambling. The survey was conducted by Nielsen, an independent research company.

Health Promotion Agency (HPA). (2020). *Post-lockdown survey: The impact on health risk behaviours*. Available from: <https://www.hpa.org.nz/research-library/research-publications/post-lockdown-survey-the-impact-on-health-risk-behaviours>

## The emerging impact of COVID-19 on gambling in Ontario

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent government emergency measures the Responsible Gambling Council's Centre for the Advancement of Best Practices surveyed 2,005 adult gamblers living in Ontario, Canada. It found that in the previous 12 months, 77% of respondents reported that they had gambled at in-person venues exclusively. However, 54% of respondents had gambled online in the six weeks since emergency measures were declared, with one third saying they were influenced to gamble by COVID-19 and emergency measures. Those who reported gambling online had higher levels of moderate (8%) and high risk (13%) gambling.

Responsible Gambling Council (2020). *The emerging impact of COVID-19 on gambling in Ontario*. Toronto, ON: Responsible Gambling Council. Retrieved from: [https://www.responsiblegambling.org/wp-content/uploads/RGC-COVID-and-Online-Gambling-Report\\_June8.pdf](https://www.responsiblegambling.org/wp-content/uploads/RGC-COVID-and-Online-Gambling-Report_June8.pdf)

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