



SPOTLIGHT ON ICRG-FUNDED RESEARCH

RETHINKING GAMBLING HARM THROUGH A NEW LENS: “GAMBLING SATISFACTION”

ICRG is proud to highlight new research led by Sally Gainsbury and her team at the University of Sydney, exploring an innovative approach to understanding gambling behavior and harm.

Supported through an ICRG Center of Excellence grant (awarded in 2023, [click here](#) for more information on all ICRG-funded grants), this multi-year research program focuses on improving engagement with responsible gambling tools and developing more effective, data-driven interventions.

A recent publication from this work introduces a novel concept: “gambling satisfaction” as a potential indicator of gambling-related harm.

Traditionally, gambling research has focused almost exclusively on harms and deficits. This study takes a different approach by examining how individuals evaluate their own gambling experiences, and what those evaluations reveal about risk.

Using large-scale survey data from both online and land-based gamblers, the research found that:

- Gambling satisfaction is negatively associated with problem gambling severity
- It is positively associated with financial well-being and overall life satisfaction
- A simple, one-item measure of gambling satisfaction can help identify individuals experiencing harm, particularly when combined with other indicators

Importantly, the findings suggest that gambling satisfaction reflects more than just wins or losses. It is shaped by factors such as:

- Sense of control
- Financial outcomes
- Social and environmental context
- Perceptions of gambling as entertainment versus obligation

This work represents a shift toward non-stigmatizing, person-centered approaches to identifying and addressing gambling-related harm. By focusing on how individuals experience gambling, rather than only on symptoms, this approach may support more effective screening, earlier intervention, and more meaningful engagement with responsible gambling tools.

As part of the broader Center of Excellence program, this research is complemented by ongoing studies using real-world behavioral data, co-designed interventions, and targeted messaging strategies to improve uptake of protective tools among at-risk populations.

Together, these efforts reflect ICRG's commitment to advancing innovative, actionable research that bridges science, policy, and practice.