



The interaction between gambling activities and modes of access: A comparison of Internet-only, land-based only, and mixed-mode gamblers



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HIGHLIGHTS

- 4,594 gamblers completed an online survey assessing gambling participation and related problems.
- Internet-only gamblers used the fewest gambling activities and had the lowest proportion of problems.
- Land-based gamblers were most likely to report problems related to electronic gaming machines.
- Mixed-mode gamblers played more gambling forms and were more likely to attribute problems to sports betting.
- Sub-groups of gamblers use different forms and modes, which impacts their potential risk for harm.

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ABSTRACT

Research suggests that Internet-based gambling includes risk factors that may increase gambling problems. The current study aimed to investigate subgroups of gamblers to identify the potential harms associated with various forms and modes of gambling. An online survey was completed by 4,594 respondents identified as Internet-only (IG), land-based only (LBGs), or mixed-mode (MMG) gamblers based on self-reported gambling behaviour in the last 12 months. Results showed significant socio-demographic differences between groups, with the LBGs being the oldest and MMGs the youngest. MMGs engaged in the greatest variety of gambling forms, had the highest average problem gambling severity scores, and were more likely to attribute problems to sports betting than the other groups. IGs were involved in the lowest number of divergent gambling activities, most likely to gamble frequently on sports and races, and attribute problems to these forms. Compared to the other groups, LBs had a higher proportion of problem gamblers than IGs and were most likely to play electronic gaming machines weekly, with this form of gambling contributing to problems at a substantially greater rate. This study confirms the importance of considering gambling involvement across subgroups of Internet or land-based gamblers. There is a need to consider the interaction between forms and modes of gambling to advance our understanding of the potential risk of mode of gambling to contribute to problems.

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1. Introduction & literature review

Approximately 65–90% of adults worldwide report gambling at some level on some form each year (Abbott, Volberg, & Rönnerberg, 2004; Gainsbury, Russell, Hing, et al., 2014a; Petry, Stinson, & Grant, 2005; Wardle, Moody, Griffiths, Orford, & Volberg, 2011; Welte, Barnes,

Wieczorek, Tidwell, & Parker, 2002). Epidemiological research estimates that between 0.2% and 2.3% of adults in the general population meet criteria for problem or pathological gambling (Fong, Fong, & Li, 2011; Gainsbury, Russell, Hing, et al., 2014a; Petry, 2005; Shaffer, LaBrie, LaPlante, Nelson, & Stanton, 2004; Wardle, Moody, Spence, et al., 2011), a condition now described as 'gambling disorder' (APA, 2013). Problem gambling is a more general term that incorporates sub-clinical conditions and as such is appropriate for use in relation to harm minimisation policies (Neal, Delfabbro, & O'Neil, 2005). The Australian Productivity Commission (2010) estimated that the annual cost of problem gambling to the community was AU\$4.7 billion leading to their conclusion that policy measures with even modest effectiveness in reducing harm will often be worthwhile.

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Table 1

Demographic comparison of Internet-only gamblers (IGs), mixed-mode gamblers (MMGs) and land-based gamblers (LBGs).

Factor	Levels	IGs		MMGs		LBGs	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender	Female	84a	13.8	366a	14.2	572b	40.4
	Male	524a	86.2	2,204a	85.8	844b	59.6
$\chi^2 (2, N = 4,594) = 389.84, p < 0.001, \Phi = 0.29$							
Age	18 to 19	7	1.2	66	2.6	39	2.8
	20 to 24	49a	8.1	302b	11.8	151a, b	10.7
	25 to 29	66a	10.9	317a	12.3	107b	7.6
	30 to 34	77a	12.7	359a	14.0	123b	8.7
	35 to 39	45a	7.4	309b	12.0	112a	7.9
	40 to 44	64	10.5	287	11.2	137	9.7
	45 to 49	76a	12.5	236b	9.2	147a, b	10.4
	50 to 54	57a, b	9.4	246b	9.6	183a	12.9
	55 to 59	49a, b	8.1	188b	7.3	160a	11.3
	60 to 64	58a	9.5	123b	4.8	110a	7.8
	65 +	60a	9.9	137b	5.3	147a	10.4
$\chi^2 (20, N = 4,594) = 168.16, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.14$							
Marital status	Married	308a	50.7	1,045b	40.7	654a	46.2
	Living with partner/de facto	78a	12.8	467b	18.2	201a	14.2
	Widowed	8	1.3	32	1.2	22	1.6
	Divorced or separated	46a	7.6	215a	8.4	164b	11.6
	Never married	168a, b	27.6	811b	31.6	375a	26.5
$\chi^2 (8, N = 4,594) = 49.87, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.07$							
Highest educational qualification	Postgraduate	110a	18.1	289b	11.2	185b	13.1
	University or college degree	164	27.0	671	26.1	326	23.0
	Trade cert, diploma, TAFE	131	21.5	648	25.2	373	26.3
	Year 12	124	20.4	597	23.2	311	22.0
	Less than year 12	79	13.0	365	14.2	221	15.6
$\chi^2 (8, N = 4,594) = 30.82, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.06$							
Employment status	Work full-time	308a	50.7	1,520b	59.1	739a	52.2
	Work part-time or casual	65a, b	10.7	264b	10.3	185a	13.1
	Self-employed	69a	11.3	234a	9.1	76b	5.4
	Unemployed and looking for work	21	3.5	72	2.8	48	3.4
	Full-time student	35	5.8	188	7.3	107	7.6
	Full-time home duties	11a, b	1.8	28b	1.1	45a	3.2
	Retired	76a	12.5	147b	5.7	136a	9.6
	Sick or disability pension	14	2.3	71	2.8	55	3.9
	Other	9	1.5	46	1.8	25	1.8
$\chi^2 (16, N = 4,594) = 109.30, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.11$							
Occupation	Manager	79a, b	17.5	460b	22.3	184a	18.0
	Professional	163a	36.1	560b	27.1	280b	27.3
	Technician or Trade worker	44a, b	9.8	263b	12.7	97a	9.5
	Community or personal service worker	6a	1.3	62a	3.0	63b	6.1
	Clerical or administrative worker	40a	8.9	200a	9.7	147b	14.3
	Sales worker	25	5.5	112	5.4	56	5.5
	Machinery operator and driver	20	4.4	83	4.0	39	3.8
	Labourer	24	5.3	93	4.5	39	3.8
	Other	50	11.1	230	11.1	120	11.7
$\chi^2 (16, N = 3,539) = 71.22, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.10$							
Location of residence	Major metropolitan city	417a	68.6	1613b	62.8	892b	63.0
	Major regional city	97	16.0	489	19.0	247	17.4
	Rural town/location	83	13.7	408	15.9	241	17.0
	Remote town/location	11	1.8	60	2.3	36	2.5
n.s.							
Household	Single person	98	16.1	388	15.1	227	16.0
	One parent family with children	28	4.6	140	5.4	92	6.5
	Couple with children	252	41.4	1024	39.8	513	36.2
	Couple with no children	141a, b	23.2	528b	20.5	370a	26.1
	Group household	65a	10.7	385b	15.0	154a	10.9
	Other	24	3.9	105	4.1	60	4.2
$\chi^2 (10, N = 4,594) = 35.73, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.06$							
Mobile/landline	Mobile phone only	125a	20.6	698b	27.2	338a, b	23.9
	Landline only	20a	3.3	45b	1.8	54a	3.8
	Both mobile phone and landline	463a	76.2	1827b	71.1	1,024a, b	72.3
$\chi^2 (4, N = 4,594) = 28.14, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.06$							
Professional gambler?	Professional gambler	19a	3.1	34b	1.3	4c	0.3
	Semi-professional	69a	11.3	215a	8.4	27b	1.9
	Amateur/recreational gambler	520a	85.5	2321b	90.3	1385c	97.8
$\chi^2 (4, N = 4,594) = 114.75, p < 0.001, \Phi_C = 0.11$							
ATSI status	Non-ATSI	597	99.2	2,496	98.0	1,373	98.4
	ATSI	5	0.8	50	2.0	23	1.6
n.s.							

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