

Tasmanian Gambling Prevalence Study 2005

Measuring Problem Gambling

The 2005 Prevalence Study utilised two alternative sets of measures of problem gambling: the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS), used in the previous waves of the survey; and the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI), used for the first time in the present survey.

South Oaks Gambling Screen

The screen was designed in the United States in 1987 and is one of the most widely used ways to indicate the level of risk around behaviours connected with gambling.

When the SOGS has been used in Australia, the scoring criteria have been adapted to ensure that screening is more accurate, in particular to reduce the number of "false positives" (ie. when the test score incorrectly identifies a respondent as a problem gambler when they are not).

Scores of 5 - 9 on the SOGS are interpreted as placing the respondent in the "at risk" category. Between scores of 5 and 9 there is estimated to be an increasing probability that the respondent is not just "at risk" of harmful impacts but is actually a problem gambler. The interpretation of the scores in terms of the likelihood that the respondent is a problem gambler (ie. is experiencing substantial problems arising from their gambling) is as follows:

SCORE	RISK LEVEL
Scores 0 to 4	Not at risk
Scores 5 to 6	One in five risk
Scores 7 to 9	One in two risk
Scores 10 and over	One in one risk ie: a case

Canadian Problem Gambling Index

The CPGI was developed by a group of researchers under the aegis of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and was published in 2001. The goal was to develop a new, more meaningful measure of problem gambling for use in general population surveys, one that reflected a more holistic view of gambling and placed it in a more social context.

The CPGI, like SOGS, consists of questions that are scored to produce a prevalence rate for problem gambling. Scoring for the CPGI is based on nine items scored as follows:

- never = 0
- sometimes = 1
- most of the time = 2
- almost always = 3

Scores for the nine items are summed and the results interpreted as follows:

SCORE	RISK LEVEL
Score 0	Non-problem
Scores 1-2	Low risk
Scores 3-7	Moderate risk
Scores 8 + (to maximum of 27)	Problem gambling

The CPGI is becoming the preferred measure for problem gambling prevalence.

The SOGS and CPGI approaches, while measuring the same concept ("problem" gambling), use a different approach in their measurement. The CPGI uses a more holistic view of gambling and places it in a more social context. Hence it is not surprising that there is a difference in the proportion of people who pass their different criteria for inclusion as problem gamblers.

The CPGI not only produces a higher estimate of the prevalence of problem gamblers but often assigns a higher risk level to respondents than does SOGS. This is apparent in this survey, and also in an earlier Victorian survey where the two measures were used side by side.

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NOTE: All data reported in this Fact Sheet should be interpreted in conjunction with more detailed data and discussion in the Tasmanian Gambling Prevalence Study 2005 Report.

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Comparison of 2005 Results for Tasmania, SOGS and CPGI, and with the results of recent Research in Victoria

	Sample Size		SOGS		CPGI	
			Problem gamblers (10+)	At risk (5-9)	Problem gambling (8-27)	Moderate risk (3-7)
Tasmania 2005	6,048	%	0.18	1.23	0.73	1.02
VIC 2003 (Gambling Research Panel) ¹	8,479	%	0.30	0.82	0.97	0.91

1. VIC 2003 - Victorian Longitudinal Community Attitudes Survey, prepared for the Gambling Research Panel by the Centre for Gambling Research, ANU.

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Website: www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/gambling