

Internet Gambling Among Ontario Adults

The coupling of Internet access and legalized gambling has generated a new venue for gambling activity. This *eBulletin* examines the prevalence of Internet gambling among Ontario adults, and variation according to demographic characteristics. The data are drawn from four cycles of the *CAMH Monitor*, conducted between 2000 and 2003.

Trends in Internet Gambling, 2000–2003

The *CAMH Monitor* first began monitoring Internet gambling among Ontarians in 2000. The percentage of Ontario adults reporting past-year Internet gambling was as follows:

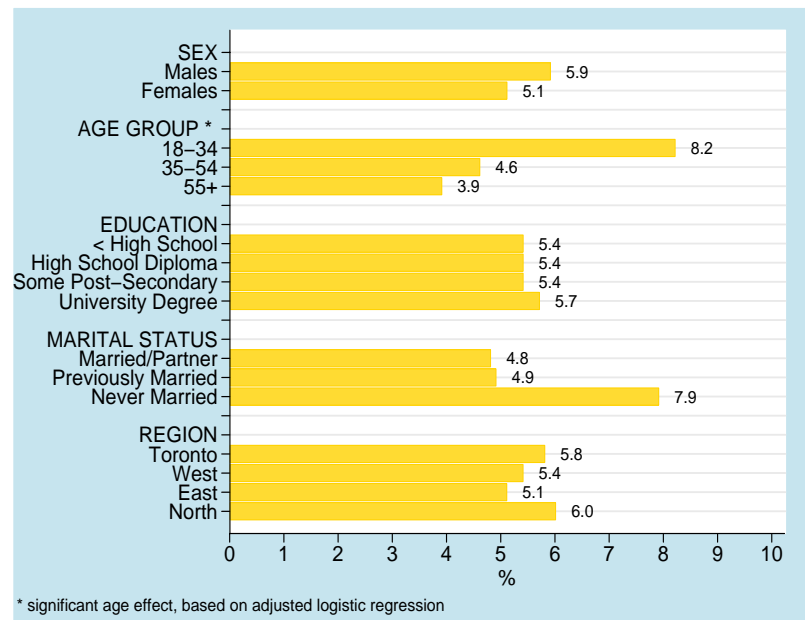
- ◆ 5.3% (95 % CI: 4.1%–6.9%) in 2000;
- ◆ 3.2% (2.3%–4.5%) in 2001;
- ◆ 6.8% (5.4%–8.5%) in 2002;
- ◆ 6.6% (5.2%–8.3%) in 2003.

Although the 2001 estimate is significantly lower than those found in 2002 and 2003, there is no indication of a dominant trend between 2000 and 2003.

Demographic Differences

CAMH Monitor data between 2000 and 2003 were pooled in order to examine whether the prevalence of Internet gambling significantly differs among demographic subgroups. The total prevalence, averaged across the four years of data, was 5.5% (95% CI: 4.8%–6.2%). Analyses were conducted by sex, age, education, marital status, and region. Figure 1 presents the percentage reporting Internet gambling among these subgroups. An adjusted logistic regression analysis showed that, while controlling for the other variables, only age was a significant factor. Specifically, Ontarians

Figure 1. Percentage Reporting Past-Year Internet Gambling by Sex, Age, Education, Marital Status, and Region, 2000–2003 CAMH Monitor (merged N=5,350)



aged 18–34 were most likely to gamble money over the Internet compared to the older age groups. No significant differences were found for sex, highest level of education, marital status, or region of Ontario.

Methods:

The *CAMH Monitor* is an addiction and mental health random, anonymous telephone survey of the Ontario population aged 18 and older, administered by the Institute for Social Research, York University. The *CAMH Monitor* is conducted on an ongoing monthly basis and employs a stratified (region) two-stage (household, respondent) probability sample design. The following 6 regional strata are used: Toronto, Central East, East, Central West, West, and North. The annual sample size averages around 2,400 respondents. The results shown here are based on merged data, containing *CAMH Monitor* data from 2000 to 2003, inclusive. The gambling questions were asked among a half-sample in each of these four years, resulting in a total sample size of 5,350.

All survey estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were corrected for the sampling design.

Terminology:

- **Internet Gambling** refers to betting money online to gamble. Respondents were asked “*In the past 12 months, how often did you bet money over the Internet?*” Response options were: once a day, 2-6 times a week, about once a week, 2-3 times a month, about once a month, less than once a month, and never. Prevalence is defined as having done the behaviour at least once in the past 12 months.
- **Region:** The four regions presented are based on the 7 public health planning regions of Ontario: *Toronto*; *West* (includes Southwest, Central West and Central South planning regions); *East* (includes Central East and East planning regions); and *North*.
- **95% Confidence Interval (CI)** can be crudely interpreted as being 95% likely to include the “true” percentage value if every adult in Ontario was surveyed.
- **Significant Difference** refers to a difference between two percentages that is not likely due to chance. For example, a difference found at the $p < .05$ level of statistical significance is one that is less than 5% likely to occur by chance alone.

Source:

These *CAMH Monitor* results are based on unpublished statistical analyses. For more details on gambling among Ontario adults, please see:

Adlaf, E.M., & Ialomiteanu, A. (2002). *CAMH Monitor eReport: Addiction and Mental Health Indicators Among Ontario Adults in 2001, and Changes Since 1977*. CAMH Research Document Series No. 12. Toronto: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. [electronic document]; available: http://www.camh.net/research/camh_monitor.html .

Suggested Citation:

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Internet Gambling Among Ontario Adults. *CAMH Population Studies eBulletin*, July/August 2005, Vol. 6, No. 4. Toronto, Ontario: CAMH.

To receive future issues of the *eBulletin*, please contact Maureen Kothare via email at: maureen_kothare@camh.net

Media Enquiries: Tel: 416-595-6015