

## FACT SHEET 10

# GAMBLING AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

### SMOKING HABITS OF ADULT GAMBLERS

The study identified approximately 11,000 gamblers from the total sample of 15,000 survey participants. The overall smoking prevalence rate for Victorian gamblers was 27.69% in the past year. Approximately 53.88% of problem gamblers reported having smoked in the past year, compared to only 22.18% of non-problem gamblers. →

In addition, 21.30% of Victorian gamblers and 47% of problem gamblers reported being current smokers, compared with 16.59% of non-problem gamblers. ↓

FIGURE 1. GAMBLERS WHO ARE CURRENT SMOKERS – BY RISK SEGMENT

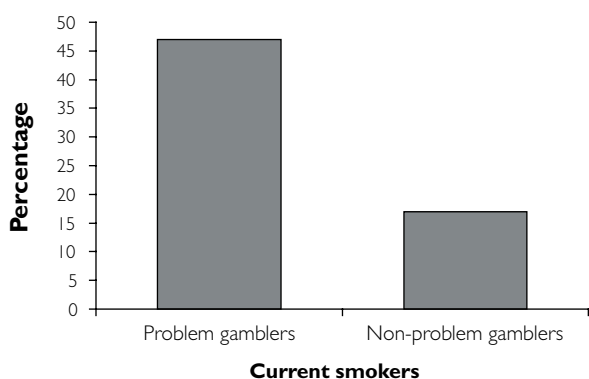
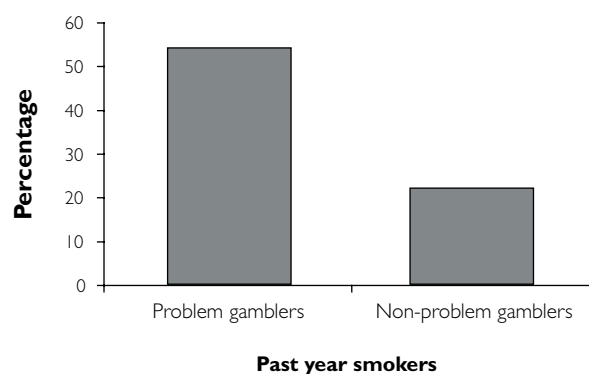


FIGURE 2. GAMBLERS WHO ARE PAST YEAR SMOKERS – BY RISK SEGMENT



The study results also show that problem gamblers are heavier smokers than smokers in the lower gambling risk segments. When comparing the average number of cigarettes smoked per day, problem gamblers are significantly more likely to smoke over 40 cigarettes per day than non-problem gamblers (with 2.23% and 0.21% smoking over 40 cigarettes per day respectively). Furthermore, 8.39% of problem gamblers smoke 31-40 cigarettes per day, compared with 1.37% of non-problem gamblers.

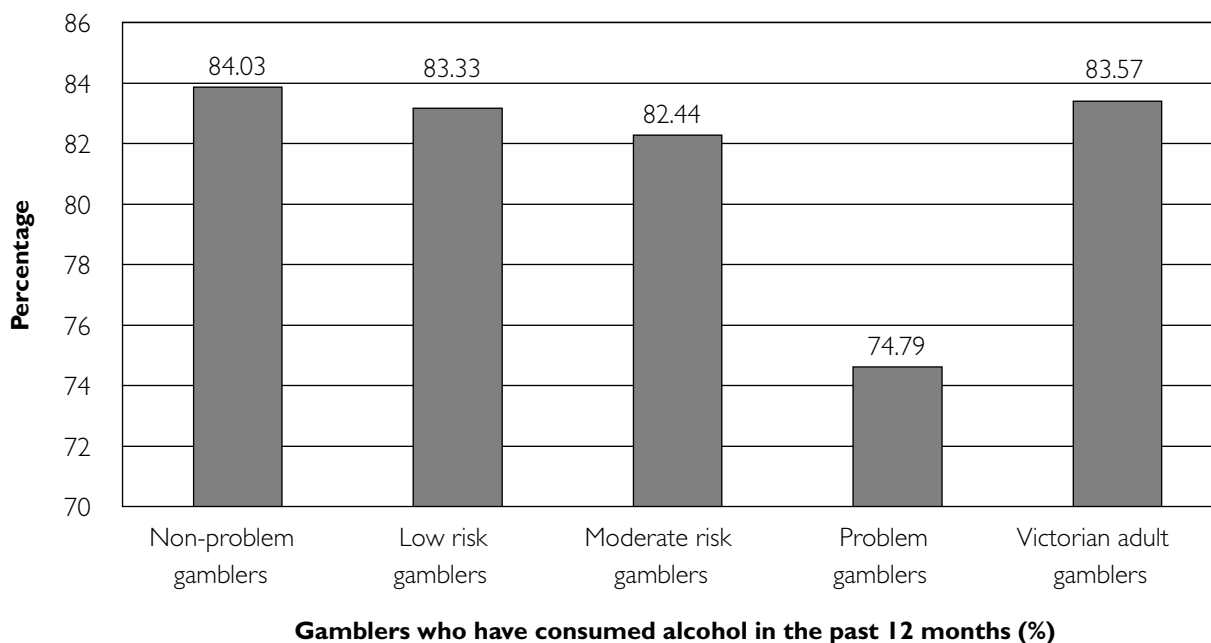
Participants were also asked about the effects of the smoking ban since July 2007 on their gambling frequency. Results show that 94.65% of Victorian adult gamblers reported that the smoking ban had no effect on their gambling frequency, as did 76.83% of problem gamblers and 85.44% of moderate risk gamblers.

Compared to non-problem gamblers, problem gamblers are significantly more likely to report that the ban had altered their gambling behaviour. In particular, they are significantly more likely to report a decrease in their gambling, significantly less likely to report no impact and significantly more likely to report an increase.

With respect to the type of changes to gambling behaviour reported, 12.16% of problem gamblers reported an increase in gambling frequency, while 11.01% reported a decrease.

ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE OF ADULT GAMBLERS

FIGURE 3. ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THE PAST YEAR – BY RISK SEGMENT



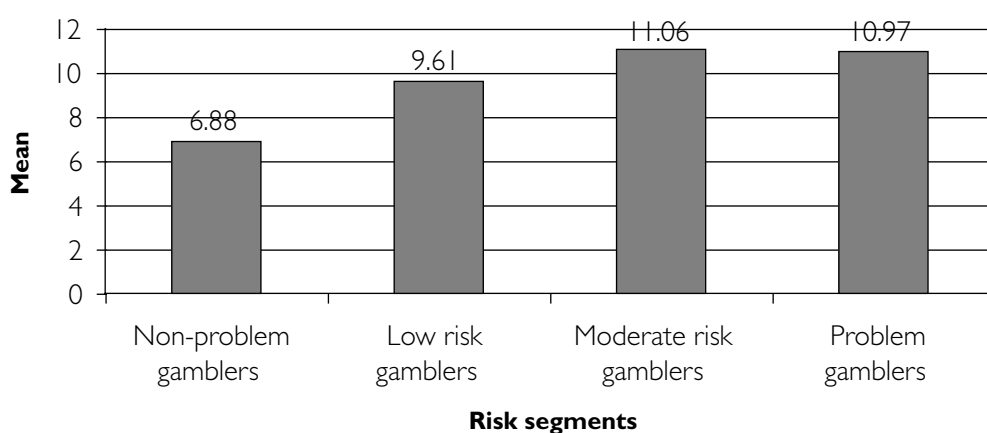
Findings show that 83.57% of gamblers consumed an alcoholic drink in the past 12 months, as did 74.79% of problem gamblers and 84.03% of non-problem gamblers.

Problem gamblers are not significantly less likely to have consumed alcohol in the past year than non-problem gamblers. However, the result was tending towards significance. This seemed to be linked to a lower alcohol consumption in female problem gamblers, as male problem gamblers consume alcohol at a higher level than female problem gamblers.

The mean number of standard alcoholic drinks consumed per week shows that non-problem gamblers consume an average of 6.88 alcoholic drinks per week, compared to 10.97 in problem gamblers and 11.06 in moderate risk gamblers. This shows that problem gamblers and moderate risk gamblers consume a significantly higher number of alcoholic drinks per week.



FIGURE 4. MEAN STANDARD NUMBER OF ALCOHOLIC DRINKS CONSUMED BY GAMBLERS PER WEEK – BY RISK SEGMENT



## ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION RISK LEVELS OF GAMBLERS – BY RISK SEGMENT

The mean number of standard alcoholic drinks consumed per week was converted to alcohol consumption risk categories for both males and females.

Risk categories are defined to reflect the different rates of alcohol metabolism for males and females<sup>1</sup>.

### Males

The study shows that 5.44% of male Victorian adult gamblers consume alcohol at levels which correspond to risky drinking (29-42 standard drinks per week) and 1.48% consume alcohol at levels which correspond to high risk drinking (over 42 standard drinks per week).

91.64% of male adult gamblers are in the low risk category (1-28 standard drinks per week) and 1.44% are in the no risk category.

When compared to male non-problem gamblers:

- male moderate risk gamblers are significantly more likely to be in the risky alcohol consumption category, with 11.35% consuming 29-42 drinks per week (compared to only 3.68% of non-problem gamblers)
- male moderate risk gamblers are significantly less likely to be in the low risk category, with 85.29% consuming 1-28 drinks per week (compared to 93.71% of non-problem gamblers).

TABLE 1. LEVEL OF RISK IN GAMBLER ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION – RESULTS FOR MALES BY RISK SEGMENT

LEVEL OF RISK OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION	NON-PROBLEM GAMBLERS (%)	LOW RISK GAMBLERS (%)	MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS (%)	PROBLEM GAMBLERS (%)	VICTORIAN ADULT GAMBLERS (%)
No risk (zero drinks per week or less than one on average)	1.52	1.21	1.54	1.19	1.44
Low risk (1-28 per week)	93.71	88.40	85.29	89.82	91.64
Risky (29-42 per week)	3.68	7.83	11.35	8.15	5.44
High risk (over 42 per week)	1.09	2.56	1.82	0.85	1.48

Definitions of risk were based on Department of Human Services guidelines, which also follow the Australian National Guidelines.

### Females

The study shows that 90.49% of female Victorian adult gamblers consume alcohol at levels that are in the low risk category for alcohol consumption (1-14 standard drinks per week), 3.59% in the risky category (15-28 standard drinks per week) and 0.62% in the high risk category (over 28 standard drinks per week). In addition, 5.31% of females are in the no risk category<sup>2</sup>.

When compared to female non-problem gamblers:

- female problem gamblers are significantly more likely to report risky alcohol consumption, with 24.60% consuming 15-28 standard drinks per week compared to 2.69% of non-problem gamblers
- female problem gamblers are significantly less likely to report low risk alcohol consumption, with 75.40% consuming 1-14 standard drinks per week, compared to 91.13% of non-problem gamblers
- female moderate risk gamblers are significantly more likely to report risky alcohol consumption, with 8% consuming 15-28 standard drinks per week compared to 2.69% of non-problem gamblers.

TABLE 2. LEVEL OF RISK IN GAMBLER ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION – RESULTS FOR FEMALES BY RISK SEGMENT

LEVEL OF RISK OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION	NON-PROBLEM GAMBLERS (%)	LOW RISK GAMBLERS (%)	MODERATE RISK GAMBLERS (%)	PROBLEM GAMBLERS (%)	VICTORIAN ADULT GAMBLERS (%)
No risk (zero drinks per week or less than one on average)	5.73	3.37	5.47	0.00	5.31
Low risk (1-14 per week)	91.13	90.01	85.80	75.40	90.49
Risky (15-28 per week)	2.69	5.05	8.00	24.60	3.59
High risk (over 28 per week)	0.45	1.58	0.73	0.00	0.62

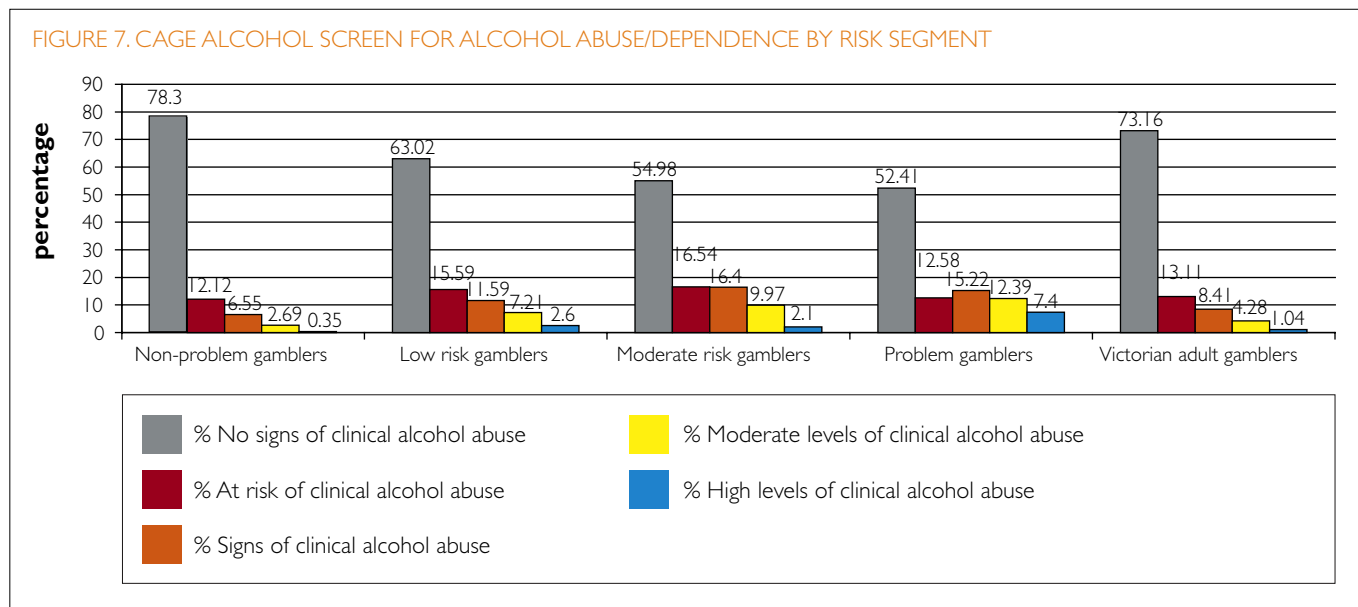
1. Definitions of risk were based on Department of Human Services guidelines, which also follow the Australian National Guidelines.

2. The total sample for female gamblers in the no risk and low risk alcohol consumption categories is 95.93%.

### ALCOHOL ABUSE AND DEPENDENCE OF GAMBLERS – BY RISK SEGMENT

The CAGE alcohol screen is a tool used for assessing clinical alcohol abuse and dependence. All gamblers completed the four items of the CAGE screen.

The study shows that 73.16% of adult gamblers reported no signs of clinical alcohol abuse. In contrast, 1.04% reported high levels of clinical alcohol abuse, 4.28% reported moderate levels of alcohol abuse, 8.41% reported signs of alcohol abuse and 13.11% were at-risk of alcohol abuse.



Findings also revealed that problem gamblers who consume alcohol:

- were significantly **less likely** to report no signs of clinical alcohol abuse
- significantly **more likely** to report signs of clinical alcohol abuse
- significantly **more likely** to report moderate levels of clinical alcohol abuse
- significantly **more likely** to report high levels of clinical alcohol abuse.

Similar trends applied to moderate risk gamblers who were significantly less likely to report no signs of alcohol abuse and significantly more likely to report high levels of alcohol abuse.

### DRUG USE OF GAMBLERS – BY RISK SEGMENT

The patterns of drug use were measured in moderate risk and problem gamblers. This involved asking survey participants about their use of specific classes of drugs and pharmaceuticals for non-medical purposes.

Findings showed that the most common drugs for 'regular use' included prescription pain-killers (3.96%), marijuana/hashish (3.75%) and amphetamines (2.24%).

The most common forms of drugs for 'occasional use' included marijuana/hashish (14.26%), prescription pain-killers (10.18%) and amphetamines (6.78%). Ecstasy/designer drugs also followed closely based on 'occasional use' (6.16%).

When occasional and regular drug use categories are combined and compared between moderate risk and problem gamblers, no statistically significant differences are apparent. However, a marginally higher use of amphetamines by moderate risk gamblers is observed (although it is not statistically significant).