

FACT SHEET 11

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GENERAL HEALTH OF GAMBLERS – BY RISK CATEGORY

Survey participants were asked about their general health over the past 12 months and self-reported their health as either: Excellent; Very good; Good; Fair or Poor. Eighty four per cent of all gamblers reported their health as good or better than good. This compares with 57.74% of problem gamblers.

There was a strong tendency for health to decline with increasing risk status for problem gambling. The proportion of problem gamblers who reported their health as poor is nearly 17%. This is considerably higher than for non-problem gamblers (where only 3.43% rated their health as poor).

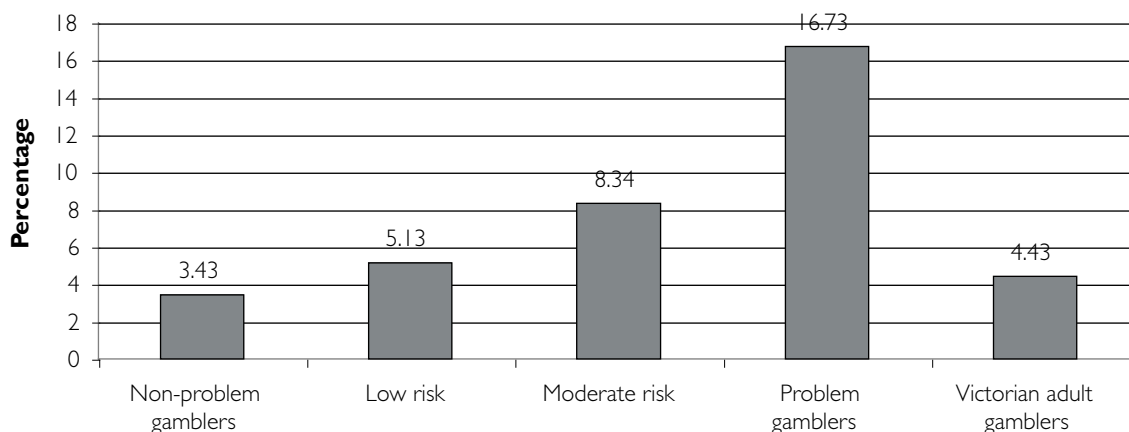


Reported health conditions based on prompted recall showed that 'heart conditions' were the most common health condition reported for adult gamblers (25.81%), followed by miscellaneous physical or mental health conditions (12.81%) and general disabilities (12.44%).

When compared to non-problem gamblers, problem gamblers reported:

- a **slightly higher** rate of diabetes (although the trend was only tending towards statistical significance)
- a **significantly higher** rate of lung conditions including asthma
- a **significantly higher** rate of depression
- a **significantly higher** rate of anxiety disorders
- a **significantly higher** rate of obesity
- a **significantly higher** rate of other miscellaneous physical or mental health conditions.

FIGURE A. GAMBLERS SELF-REPORTING POOR HEALTH – BY RISK CATEGORY



GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS (KESSLER-10) – BY RISK CATEGORY

The study used the Kessler-10 scale to measure levels of generalised psychological distress experienced by survey participants. Results from the Kessler-10 are categorised into four psychological distress categories, with the following findings for Victorian adult gamblers:

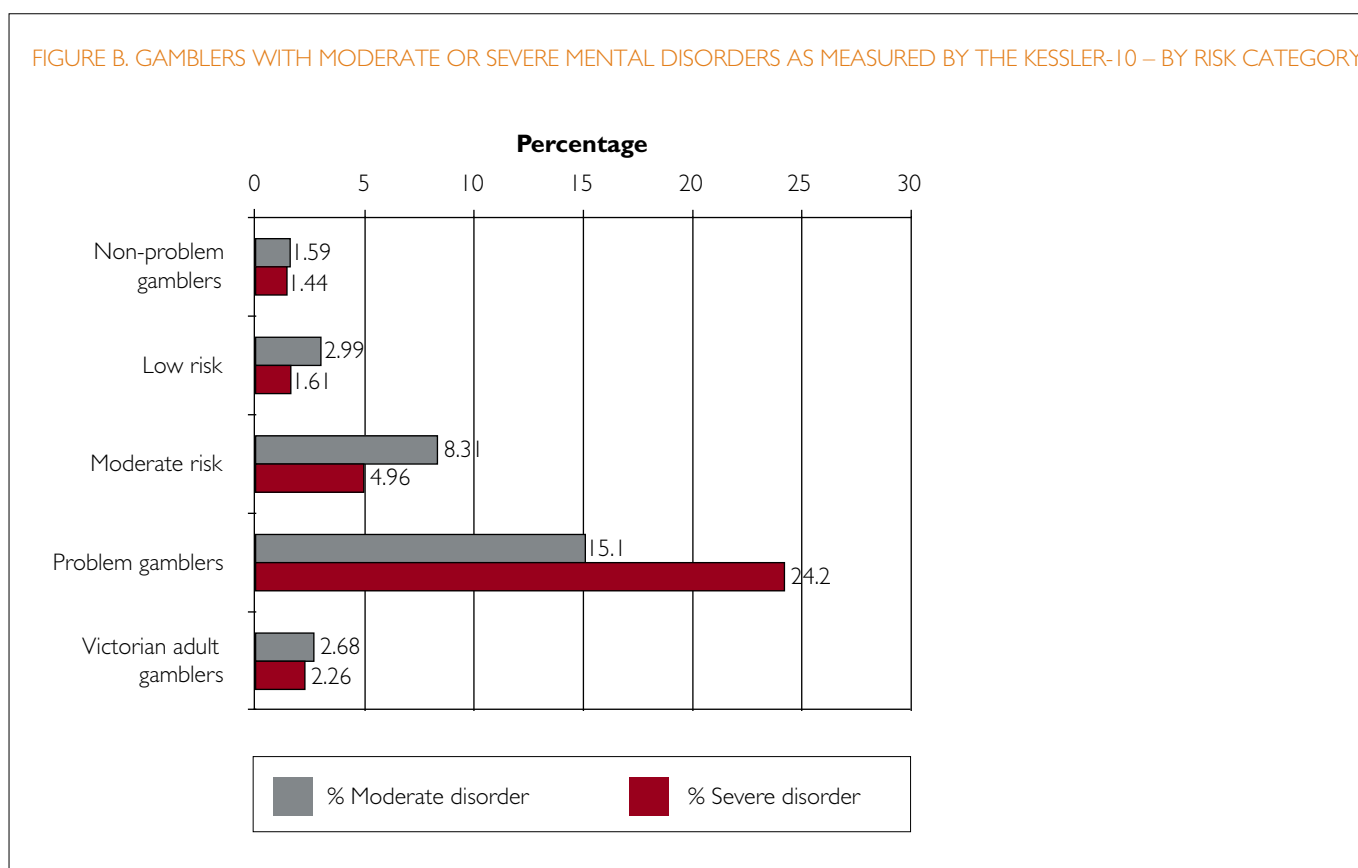
- 89.50% are likely to be well
- 5.56% are likely to have a mild psychological disorder
- 2.68% are likely to have a moderate mental disorder
- 2.26% are likely to have a severe mental disorder.

Compared to non-problem gamblers, problem gamblers are also:

- **significantly less** likely to be well
- **significantly more** likely to experience a mild disorder
- **significantly more** likely to experience a moderate mental disorder
- **significantly more** likely to experience a severe mental disorder.

Based on Kessler-10 scoring, over 39% of problem gamblers are categorised as being likely to experience a moderate or severe mental disorder (with both categories combined). In contrast, the same combined figure was just over 3% for non-problem gamblers.

FIGURE B. GAMBLERS WITH MODERATE OR SEVERE MENTAL DISORDERS AS MEASURED BY THE KESSLER-10 – BY RISK CATEGORY



SUICIDE IDEATION AND OFFENDING BEHAVIOURS – BY RISK CATEGORY

Moderate risk and problem gamblers were asked about suicide ideation and offending behaviours that resulted from gambling. The study shows that 27.06% of problem gamblers and 6.07% of moderate risk gamblers considered suicide in the past 12 months. In addition, 15.17% of problem gamblers and 3.46% of moderate risk gamblers reported that their gambling led to doing something against the law. In both cases, results for problem gamblers were significantly higher than those for moderate risk gamblers.

TRAUMA AND HARDSHIP – BY RISK CATEGORY

Gamblers were asked whether they had experienced trauma and hardship in their lives. Overall, 20.81% of gamblers report a lot of trauma, hardship and problems in their life or upbringing. Problem gamblers (47.63%) and moderate risk gamblers (31.88%) also reported significantly higher levels than non-problem gamblers (18.7%).

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CONNECTEDNESS – BY RISK CATEGORY

The concept of social capital and connectedness was explored by asking whether gamblers could access help if they needed it, their involvement in organised groups and satisfaction levels of living in their local community (including the quality of services and facilities).

The study shows that 3.26% of gamblers reported being unable to access help from friends when needed, with problem gamblers being significantly more likely to not have access to help (21.31%) compared to non-problem gamblers (only 2.60%).

In addition, 45.66% of gamblers belonged to an organised group, with group participation amongst problem gamblers being significantly lower (only 33.29%) than for non-problem gamblers (46.87%).

Only 1.84% of gamblers reported not enjoying living in their community at all and 1.92% had no feeling about it. Problem gamblers were also significantly more likely to report not liking living in their community (9.1%), compared to non-problem gamblers (1.38%).

Satisfaction with community facilities and services received a mean rating of 3.96 (out of a maximum five points), and significant differences were reported across risk groups, with problem gamblers (mean rating of 3.43) rating the quality of facilities and services significantly lower than non-problem gamblers (mean rating of 3.92).

Study results thus show that in general problem gamblers fair poorly in terms of their access to social capital and social connectedness to their community.