



## Are New Zealand youth taking a big gamble?

February 2008

### In New Zealand:

The 2002 NZ Youth Lifestyle Survey collected data from 3434 students between the ages of 14 and 17 years and examined how they spent their disposable income. 60.3% spent over \$21 a week. 5% used some of this money to gamble, and almost 50% of those who gambled were under the age of 16.<sup>1</sup>

Ministry of Health statistics show that 2% of those seeking help for problem gambling are in New Zealand are under 20 years of age. 8.3% of significant others of problem gamblers seeking counselling in New Zealand are under 20 years of age. The under 20 years age group had one of the highest median amounts of dollars lost in the four weeks prior to seeking help (\$1270).<sup>2</sup>

A recent NZ youth study<sup>3</sup> with a sample of approximately two thousand (N=2005) high school students found that:

- 3.8% of sample satisfied problem gambling criteria, which also equates to 6.1% of those participants who had gambled in the past year;
- More than one third had gambled by the age of ten and the likelihood of problem gambling was inflated for those who began gambling at an early age;
- Most popular modes included lottery type games (Instant Kiwi, Lotto), board/dice games, and bets with friends;
- Casino tables and casino EGMs were found to be particularly risky in relation to problem gambling;
- Most gambled for enjoyment, winning money, excitement, relief of boredom and for a challenge;
- Most were introduced to gambling through family and friends;
- Males more likely than females to gamble at problematic levels;
- Having one or more parent increased the risk of a young person developing a gambling problem;
- Young people who self-identified as Pakeha/NZ European were less likely to develop a gambling problem.

**The good news however, is that connectedness (strong positive relationships) to family and friends was found to be protective against problem gambling. In particular, having positive relationships with teachers and mothers was found to be protective, even in the presence of the following major risk factors: low initial age of gambling, being Non-Pakeha/NZ European, parental problem gambling, and poor school integration.**

1. H Darling, A Reeder, R McGee & S Williams (2006) Brief report: Disposable income, and spending on fast food, alcohol, cigarettes, and gambling by New Zealand secondary school students. *Journal of Adolescence* 29 : 837-843.
2. Ministry of Health (2007) *Problem Gambling intervention services. 2006 statistics*. Wellington: MOH.
3. F. Rossen (2007) *Adolescent gambling in New Zealand: An exploration of protective and risk factors*. PhD thesis. Auckland: University of Auckland
4. C. Messerlian, J. Derevensky & R. Gupta (2005) Youth gambling problems: a public health perspective. *Health Promotion International* 20 (1): 6-79.
5. J Derevensky, R Gupta, L Dickson & AE Deguire. (2002) Prevention of youth gambling problems: Some important considerations. Powerpoint presentation. URL: [http://gaming.uleth.ca/agri\\_downloads/968/Derevensky.ppt#475,1](http://gaming.uleth.ca/agri_downloads/968/Derevensky.ppt#475,1)



## Protective factors for problem gambling in youth

The Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand Youth Services Team is available to come to your school or youth group. We have a range of resources that we can help you implement into your health program. For more information on youth services in your area: [www.pgfnz.co.nz](http://www.pgfnz.co.nz) or call us free on 0800 664 262.



### Primary, secondary and tertiary preventions <sup>4,5</sup>

The objectives of prevention are to increase knowledge and awareness of the risk of gambling, through education and early interventions and treatment. As well as teaching resiliency and coping skills to help minimise harm.

#### Primary prevention

Activities that promote healthy communities and aim to reduce the risks of gambling harm through enhancing community capacity and resilience. Aimed at preventing the start of at-risk gambling behaviour for example social marketing through community campaigns and school programmes have been used to educate youth, their parents and the public in an attempt to change attitudes. These programmes emphasise healthy alternatives and are aimed at changing behaviour through the implementation of public policy, improving public awareness and the perceptions of risk in youth gambling.

Primary prevention aims at decreasing the exposure of youth to unsafe products, limiting the availability of gambling through regulation and denormalizing gambling are also important devices. Venue owners need to ensure they enforce age limits on those using pokie machines

and also those who sell Instant Kiwi and lotto tickets as they are one of the most popular modes of gambling for youth. Focus is needed on programmes which teach resiliency and school connectedness.

#### Secondary prevention

Activities that limit harm in the early stages of problem development, through identifying gambling problems and intervening at an early stage of problem development. Such as targeting those individual demonstrating at risk behaviours, inappropriate attitudes, and erroneous cognitions with respect to gambling.

#### Tertiary prevention

This is the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Activities that treat the long-term effects of problem gambling. It involves the provision and access to treatment, services and support networks. The provision of free confidential and youth friendly services, with telephone and internet or online counseling may increase the number of youth seeking help. Programmes need to be tailored to meet the needs of youth. The promotion of services and advertising in youth forums/ magazines is also crucial.

---

**Problem Gambling Foundation**  
**0800 664 262**

Produced by the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand,  
P.O. Box 8021, Symonds Street, Auckland.  
Phone 368 1520

[www.pgfnz.org.nz](http://www.pgfnz.org.nz) / [www.problem-gambling.info](http://www.problem-gambling.info)  
<http://www.pgfnz.co.nz/youth.htm>