

**Manitobans and Gambling**  
**Manitoba**  
**Gaming Control Commission**

**2004**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **THE MANITOBA GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION**

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The Manitoba Gaming Control Commission (MGCC) is an independent commission created to regulate and control gaming activity in the Province of Manitoba with the aims of ensuring that the gaming activity is conducted honestly, with integrity and in the public interest. The MGCC recognizes the diversity of views with respect to gaming and takes a reasoned and balanced approach toward gaming activities in our province.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

Using a cognitive-behavioural approach, the MGCC conducted this public perception survey to support public interest mandate and policy advisory responsibilities. In the present study, key cognitive variables were investigated including Manitobans' gambling-related awareness, attitudes and knowledge about gambling. Key behavioural variables included games played, frequency of play, and the use of responsible gambling techniques.

The findings of this study will support the development of:

- MGCC responsible gambling policies;
- MGCC public education initiatives to promote responsible gambling; and
- The evaluation of these initiatives and strategies.

### Research Design

The survey instrument was designed by the MGCC with input from other agencies. Following a request for proposal submission process, Viewpoints Research was selected to survey Manitobans' about gambling. A Proportional to Population Size (PPS) sample design was used. The sample, generated from listed telephone numbers, totaled 1,309 Manitobans, interviewed by telephone between October and November of 2003. The response rate was 20%. Results are accurate within  $\pm 2.7\%$  nineteen times out of twenty.

### Overall Findings

- ***Gambling Activities***  
In total, 96% of Manitobans had participated in gambling activities at least occasionally in the past year. There were no statistically significant age or gender differences in overall

participation rates, however men and women differed in the types of gambling activities they participated in. Excluding stock market investments and betting with friends, the most popular activities (played once a month or more) included:

1. Buying lottery tickets - 42%
2. Scratch/Breakopen/Nevada - 13%
3. Charity raffle tickets - 13%
4. Slot machine and VLT play – 7% and 6% respectively.

- ***Knowledge and Perceptions***  
While few Manitobans believed they were lucky gamblers, many displayed erroneous thinking about randomness, odds, and outcome control when gambling, especially in relation to VLT and slot machine play.
- ***Attitudes***  
In total, 90% of respondents recognized that gambling was not a way to make money, 98% believed they could not make more money gambling than working and 96% noted it would be unlikely they could win enough to change their lifestyle. Almost half of respondents believed gambling was a social activity (47%) and almost three-quarters (73%) believed it was a way to donate money to charity. Some respondents believed that playing VLTs, slot machines, casino table games, internet games and participating in horserace betting might create problems for some people in Manitoba.
- ***Responsible Gambling***  
In total, 62% of Manitobans had heard the term responsible gambling. Two-thirds of Manitobans set time and/or spending limits when they gambled. This simple action was very helpful as 91% of Manitobans stuck to the limits they set for themselves.

- ***Problem Behaviours***

Manitobans indicated that alcohol abuse was the most serious addiction problem in Manitoba, followed by drug abuse, problem gambling, and smoking.

- ***Awareness of the Signs of Problem Gambling***

Using credit card advances to gamble was most strongly identified with a gambling problem among respondents. Not surprisingly, those who had personal experience with a problem gambler were better at identifying warning signs.

- ***Perceived Social Costs and Benefits***

Respondents believed that gambling had both negative and positive social impacts in Manitoba. Six percent of Manitobans said gambling had a positive effect on their own lives, while 15% said gambling had a negative effect and 79% said gambling had no effect at all.

Respondents who stated gambling was having a negative impact on their lives were significantly less likely to stick to the time and budgetary limits they set on their play, were more likely to believe winning at gambling was a matter of skill and were more likely to have been affected by someone who had a gambling problem. Overall, 53% of Manitobans believed they knew someone with a gambling problem and 22% stated they had been negatively affected by another's gambling at some time in their lives.

- ***Knowledge of Responsible Gambling Initiatives***

In total, 69% of Manitobans were aware of educational gambling initiatives in the province; in particular, television advertisements (46%). When Manitobans were asked about the sources they would contact for more

information about gambling, the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM) was the most frequently named (37%), followed by Gamblers Anonymous (27%), telephone help-lines (18%), and pamphlets at a casino (7%). Only 18% of Manitobans knew someone who had received treatment for gambling yet more than 50% said they knew someone who had a problem. Denial was named the most frequently as the reason a problem gambler did not seek help.

- ***Awareness of the MGCC***

In total, 83% of Manitobans had heard of the MGCC and many (54%) correctly understood its role as a gambling regulator in the province. Fewer Manitobans recognized the MGCC as a licensing body that makes policies and decisions about gambling in Manitoba and ensures integrity, fairness, and honesty in gaming across the province.

- ***Special Populations***

*Young Adults:* The results indicated that young adults (18-24 years) in Manitoba were more likely to buy scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets, play slot machines, VLTs and casino games, bet on Sport Select, and gamble on the internet more frequently than older Manitobans. As well, young adults had more misperceptions about gambling, were more likely to say gambling was having a negative impact on their lives, were less aware of the signs of problem gambling, and were less aware of the treatment/awareness programs offered in Manitoba.

*Regular Players:* Manitobans who played bingo, casino games, and /or electronic gaming machines (VLTs and slot machines) once a week or more had

specific and statistically significant characteristics that set them apart from Manitobans who participated in gambling activities less frequently or not at all. These individuals had completed less education and/or had lower annual household incomes; were more likely to have misperceptions about their odds of winning and the randomness of numbers; were more likely to engage in a number of gambling activities each week; and were more likely to say gambling was negatively impacting their lives. In addition, regular electronic gaming machine players (i.e., VLT and slot machine players) were less likely to have heard the term responsible gambling and to stick to the time and money limits they put on their play.

### **Key Findings**

The key findings of this study suggest targeted responsible gambling initiatives should be directed at three audiences in Manitoba including:

1. ***The general adult population*** – who had misperceptions about the nature of odds, randomness, and outcome control when gambling, especially in relation to electronic gaming machine play.
2. ***Young adults (18-24 years)*** – who engaged in a number of gambling activities more frequently than older Manitobans, had more misperceptions about gambling, and were less knowledgeable about

responsible and problem gambling than older Manitobans.

3. ***Regular players (bingo, casino games, and/or electronic gaming machine once a week or more)*** – these players shared characteristics that may suggest this is an at-risk group.

### **Action-Focused Strategies**

The MGCC is taking action to develop public education initiatives to address the key findings of this study. Audiences that will be targeted in the short term include:

1. The general public (key message: education about odds and randomness).
2. Young adults (key messages: education about luck, odds and randomness, guidelines to gambling responsibly, signs of problem gambling and where to go for help).

Focus groups were conducted in September 2004 and public education initiatives are currently being developed by the MGCC based on these results (for release in late 2005).

3. Regular players - in the short term, the MGCC anticipates that the education campaign currently being developed to clarify gambling-related misperceptions will benefit both regular and more infrequent gamblers in the province.

As regular players visit gaming venues often, these venues may be the best place to provide information about responsible gambling in the future.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Manitobans and Gambling study is a public perception survey developed using a cognitive-behavioural approach. This research is intended to support prevention and education. Its focus is broader than prevalence studies which tend to focus on problem gamblers. Prevalence research was conducted by the AFM in 2002, and by Statistics Canada in 2003. These studies indicate that approximately 1% of Manitobans are problem gamblers and a further 3 to 4% are at moderate risk. In conducting this research, the MGCC has cast a wider investigative net to examine cognitive and behavioural factors related to gambling among adult Manitobans.

Key cognitive variables that were investigated include Manitobans' gambling-related awareness, attitudes and knowledge about gambling. These variables are essential components involved in the precipitation of behavioural change. Key behavioural variables include games played, frequency of play and the use of responsible gambling techniques.

The findings of this study will support ongoing evaluation and refinement of policies, programs and services to improve public knowledge and access to information about gambling and serve as baseline data for monitoring the impact of public awareness initiatives and responsible gambling strategies. In short, information from this study will be used to ensure that upcoming responsible gambling initiatives implemented by the MGCC are based on the needs of Manitobans.



## RESEARCH DESIGN

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### Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research was to examine gambling among Manitobans using a cognitive-behavioural approach. The goal of this research was to describe gambling-related awareness, attitudes and knowledge about gambling and gambling behaviour itself within the adult population of Manitoba.

To achieve this purpose and goal, the research objectives of this study were:

1. To describe and compare the gambling behaviours of adult Manitobans (including preferred activities, frequency of play, and responsible gambling behaviours);
2. To describe and compare knowledge and perceptions about gambling among adult Manitobans;
3. To describe and compare attitudes and opinions about gambling among adult Manitobans;
4. To describe adult Manitobans' awareness of problem gambling and responsible gambling programs and initiatives; and
5. To provide conclusions that may assist the MGCC, MLC, and AFM design public education initiatives to promote responsible play.

### Methodology

The research design is a descriptive telephone survey of adult Manitobans' (aged 18 years and older) gambling participation, behaviour and related cognitions. A Proportional to Population Size (PPS) sample design was used. The survey instrument was developed by the MGCC to address the unique gambling environment in Manitoba, with input from the AFM, MLC, and the Responsible Gaming Council (Ontario). A pre-test was conducted to ensure ease of administration and to finalize question wording. The final 84-item survey was divided into nine domains including:

- Participation and frequency
- Behaviours (including responsible gambling behaviour)
- General knowledge and perceptions of gambling
- Perceptions of specific gambling activities
- Responsible gambling (awareness of)
- Perceptions of problem gambling behaviours
- Perceptions of gambling effects
- Problem gambling (perceptions of effects on self/others)
- Public awareness of the MGCC

Following a request for proposal submission process, Viewpoints' Research was selected to survey Manitobans' about gambling. The fielding was conducted from Viewpoints' call centre in Winnipeg. The sample was generated from listed telephone numbers. Manitobans were

interviewed by telephone between October and November of 2003. When contacting a household, the interviewer identified him/herself as an employee of Viewpoints Research calling on behalf of the MGCC. The interviewer offered a brief explanation of the type of research being conducted, and ensured the respondent all answers would remain confidential. The interviewer then asked to speak to a person in the household 18 years of age and whose birthday comes next. If that person was not at home, the interviewer arranged a time to call back. Four callbacks were attempted during the times arranged. If there was no qualified respondent living in the household, the interview was terminated and callbacks were not attempted. A CATI system (i.e., a computer-aided interviewing system) was used to computer record responses.

In total, 6612 Manitobans were asked to complete the survey. In total, 1849 agreed, of which 1,309 were eligible to participate, resulting in a response rate of 20%. While the response rate in the present study is a limitation of this study, the demographic characteristics of the respondents are similar to the population from which they were drawn (table 1). Data were quantitatively analyzed using SPSS. Variables were nominal and ordinal, thus nonparametric statistics were used. The confidence level was set at .05. The margin of error is  $\pm 2.7\%$  nineteen times out of twenty.

#### **NOTE: THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

There is a common challenge that researchers face when evaluating the ideas and opinions of people. They must apply statistical tests to quantify and objectively measure personal perspectives and experiences, which differs significantly from the measurement of finite information, like height or weight. To illustrate, when measuring the height of a person, it can be assumed there is equal distance between the points that separate 5 feet from 6 feet. However, the opinions and experiences of people cannot be quantified so easily. For example, the magnitude of difference between strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree cannot be quantified in a way that ensures there is equal distance between one point (disagree) and the remaining points (strongly disagree, agree, strongly agree). This type of information is called *ordinal-level*.

Statistical tests can be used to rank ordinal data (e.g., Kendall's tau-b statistic, Mann Whitney U statistic) but these tests are less powerful and less reliable than tests used when equal distances between points on a scale can be accurately assumed (e.g., Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Analysis of Variance). While ordinal-level tests give us information about the ordering of categories (high, medium or low for example) the results are less sophisticated as they do not provide a score from which other scores can be added or subtracted to determine an actual numerical difference.

Further, some answers in social science research cannot even be ranked. For example, one cannot rank gender or political orientation as it would be unfair to classify one higher than another. Such information is termed *nominal-level*. For questions that contain this type of information, responses can only be categorized and less powerful and less reliable statistical tests are applied (e.g., Chi-Square statistic).

In noting this challenge within social science research, the MGCC acknowledges that inferences drawn to a population from a sample must be considered in the context of the power of the statistical tests used. As ordinal and nominal-level statistics tests were necessarily used in this analysis, the findings must be inferred to the general population with caution.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Sample (%)</b>	<b>Actual Population<sup>1</sup> (%)</b>
<b>Region</b>		
Winnipeg	58%	60%
Ring communities <sup>2</sup>	12%	
Rest of province	30%	
<b>Gender<sup>3</sup></b>		
Male	49%	49%
Female	51%	51%
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 24	9%	9%
25 to 34	16%	13%
35 to 44	23%	15%
45 to 54	23%	14%
55 to 64	15%	10%
65+	13%	14%
<b>Education</b>		
High school or less	40%	47%
Some post secondary	15%	12%
University/college graduate	45%	41%
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Full or part time	69%	66%
Unemployed <sup>4</sup>	13%	3%
Retired	19%	
<b>Household Income (before taxes)</b>		
Less than \$10,000	4%	5%
Less than \$20,000	9%	11%
Less than \$30,000	12%	15%
Less than \$40,000	12%	14%
Less than \$50,000	13%	13%
Less than \$60,000	10%	12%

Note: Some cells are blank because the comparable data are either unavailable or unreliable.

<sup>1</sup> Demographics derived from Statistics Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Ring communities were defined as communities that lie outside the perimeter of Winnipeg but toll free when called from Winnipeg.

<sup>3</sup> The gender breakdown for Manitobans aged 18-24 years was also 49% male, 51% female.

<sup>4</sup> In the present sample, the unemployed include students (4%), homemakers (5%) and the currently unemployed (4%).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A Profile of Gambling Activities in Manitoba

The results of this study indicate approximately 96% of adults had participated in some form of gambling at least once in the past year. These activities included provincially operated gaming, charitable gaming, internet gaming, stock market investments, and betting on sporting events/games played with friends.

When stock market investments and betting with friends variables were removed from the analysis, 94% of Manitobans had participated in gambling activities at least once in the past year, with 51% of adults gambling once a month or more and 28% gambling once a week or more in the past year. As shown in table 2, the three most common gambling-related activities in the province (excluding stock market investment) were buying lottery tickets, followed by raffle tickets and scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets.

Table 2. Gambling participation in Manitoba (%)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>1-7 times a week</b>	<b>1-2 times a month</b>	<b>5-6 times a year</b>	<b>Total % Once a year +</b>
Buying lottery tickets	23%	19%	21%	78%
Buying charity raffle tickets	3%	10%	34%	77%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/Nevada tickets	5%	8%	16%	51%
Playing slot machines at a casino	2%	5%	15%	44%
Playing VLTs at a bar/lounge	2%	4%	12%	39%
Playing community bingo	2%	2%	5%	22%
Playing casino bingo	0.2%	1%	2%	10%
Playing casino table games	1%	2%	4%	19%
Betting on horseracing	0.2%	0.4%	3%	15%
Betting on Sport Select	2%	2%	3%	13%
Betting on sports event wt friends	3%	4%	22%	44%
Betting on game with friends	2%	2%	9%	30%
Long/short term stock investment	9%	13%	17%	70%
Internet gambling (sports/casino)	1%	1%	1%	7%

## Demographic Comparisons of Gambling Activity

There were no significant gender differences in overall gambling participation (table 3). Young adults (18-24 years of age), Winnipeg residents, and higher income Manitobans were more likely to have participated in gambling activities at least once in the past 12 months. There were no significant differences in overall gambling participation across education and employment status variables.

Table 3. Demographic comparisons for overall gambling participation (%)

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Once + in past year (%)</b>	<b>Once a month + in past year (%)</b>	<b>Once a week + in past year (%)</b>
Total Sample	94%	51%	28%
<b>Gender</b>			
Females	93%	48%	27%
Males	94%	53%	30%
<b>Age</b>			
18-24 years of age	97%*	51%	27%
25-34 years of age	90%	43%	21%
35-44 years of age	95%	51%	26%
45-54 years of age	95%	52%	30%
55-64 years of age	94%	54%	33%
65 and over	90%	52%	33%
<b>Place of Residence</b>			
Winnipeg	95%*	55%*	31%
Ring communities	94%	52%	34%
Rest of province	91%	42%	21%
<b>Education</b>			
High school or less	93%	52%	30%
Some college or university	94%	51%	33%
College or university graduate	94%	49%	25%
<b>Employment</b>			
Employed full-time	95%	51%	28%
Employed part-time	94%	44%	22%
Unemployed or retired	92%	53%	21%
<b>Household Income (before taxes)</b>			
Less than \$30,000 per year	92%*	51%	30%
\$30,000-\$60,000 per year	95%	48%	26%
More than \$60,000 per year	96%	56%	33%

Note: Variables that involved stock market investments and betting with friends were excluded from this analysis.

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

In terms of specific gambling activities, females were more likely than males to have purchased scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets and played community bingo once a month or more in the past year (table 4). Males were more likely to have played VLTs and bought Sport Select tickets once a month or more in the past year.

Table 4. Gambling activity (once a month or more) and gender status (%)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
Buying lottery tickets	39%	44%
Buying charity raffle tickets	11%	14%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets	15%*	11%
Playing slot machines at a casino	6%	6%
Playing VLTs at a bar	5%*	8%
Playing community bingo	5%*	2%
Playing casino bingo	1%	1%
Playing casino table games	1%	3%
Betting on horseracing	1%	1%
Betting on Sport Select	1%**	7%
Internet gambling (casino/sports)	1%	2%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

Young adults were significantly more likely than older Manitobans to state they had purchased Sport Select tickets, scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets; played casino table games, slots, or VLTs; and gambled on the internet (table 5).

Table 5. Gambling activity (once a month or more) and age status (%)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>18-24</b>	<b>25-34</b>	<b>35-45</b>	<b>45-54</b>	<b>55-64</b>	<b>65+</b>
Buying lottery tickets	29%**	34%	45%	45%	46%	41%
Buying charity raffle tickets	15%	10%	13%	14%	11%	12%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets	24%**	12%	15%	13%	10%	8%
Playing slot machines at a casino	11%*	3%	5%	5%	9%	9%
Playing VLTs at a bar	20%**	5%	6%	4%	6%	5%
Playing community/casino bingo	10%	4%	3%	6%	5%	6%
Playing casino table games	8%**	3%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Betting on horseracing	2%	1%	0.3%	0.3%	1%	0%
Betting on Sport Select	14%**	9%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Internet gambling	5%**	3%	1%	0.3%	1%	0%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

Winnipeg residents were more likely than respondents living outside the city to buy lottery, Sport Select tickets and play slot machines (table 6).

Table 6. Gambling activity (once a month or more) and residence status (%)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>Ring communities</b>	<b>Rest of Manitoba</b>
Buying lottery tickets	46% **	42%	31%
Buying charity raffle tickets	12%	12%	13%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets	13%	11%	14%
Playing slot machines at a casino	8% **	6%	3%
Playing VLTs at a bar	7%	8%	6%
Playing community/casino bingo	5%	5%	4%
Playing casino table games	2%	2%	2%
Betting on horseracing	1%	1%	0.3%
Betting on Sport Select	5% *	3%	2%
Internet gambling (casinos/sports)	2%	3%	1%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .



Respondents who lived in households with an income (before taxes) of less than \$30,000 per year were significantly more likely to buy scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets; play VLTs; and play community bingo once a month or more as compared to adults who lived in households that earned more (table 7). Manitobans who lived in households with an income of \$30,000 to \$59,000 per year were significantly more likely to play slot machines once a month or more as compared to adults who lived in households that earned more or less income. Those who lived in households with an income of \$60,000 per year or more were significantly more likely to buy lottery tickets once a month or more as compared to Manitobans who lived in households that earned less.

Table 7. Gambling activity (once a month or more) and income status (%)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>Less than \$30,000/yr</b>	<b>\$30,000 to 59,000/yr</b>	<b>\$60,000 or more/yr</b>
Buying lottery tickets	38% **	39%	47%
Buying charity raffle tickets	11%	13%	16%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/Nevada tickets	18% **	13%	10%
Playing slot machines at a casino	5% *	9%	4%
Playing VLTs at a bar	10% *	6%	5%
Playing community bingo	7% **	3%	3%
Playing casino bingo	2%	1%	1%
Playing casino table games	3%	2%	1%
Betting on horseracing	1%	1%	0.3%
Betting on Sport Select	5%	3%	5%
Internet gambling (casinos/sports)	3%	1%	1%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

As shown in table 8, Manitobans who had completed a high school diploma or less were significantly more likely to buy scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets; play VLTs; and play community bingo compared to adults who had completed more schooling. Manitobans who had completed some college or university education were significantly more likely to play VLTs, casino table games, and gamble on the internet.

Table 8. Gambling activity (once a month or more) and educational status (%)

Gambling Activity	High school or less	Some college or university	College or university degree
Buying lottery tickets	41%	44%	41%
Buying charity raffle tickets	13%	12%	12%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets	18% **	14%	9%
Playing slot machines at a casino	8%	7%	5%
Playing VLTs at a bar	8% **	9%	4%
Playing community bingo	7% **	4%	1%
Playing casino bingo	2%	1%	1%
Playing casino table games	2% *	4%	1%
Betting on horseracing	1%	1%	1%
Betting on Sport Select	4%	4%	5%
Internet gambling (casinos/sports)	2% *	4%	1%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

Respondents employed full-time were significantly more likely to buy Sport Select and raffle tickets compared to adults who worked less or not at all. There were no other significant differences in terms of employment status (table 9).

Table 9. Gambling activity (once a month or more) and employment status (%)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>Employed full-time</b>	<b>Employed Part-time</b>	<b>Unemployed<sup>5</sup> or retired</b>
Buying lottery tickets	43%	33%	42%
Buying charity raffle tickets	14% *	8%	10%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets	13%	14%	13%
Playing slot machines at a casino	6%	7%	6%
Playing VLTs at a bar	6%	10%	5%
Playing community bingo	3%	6%	5%
Playing casino bingo	1%	2%	1%
Playing casino table games	2%	3%	2%
Betting on horseracing	0.1%	2%	1%
Betting on Sport Select	5% **	3%	2%
Internet gambling (casinos/sports)	1%	2%	1%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

<sup>5</sup> In the present sample, the unemployed include students (4%), homemakers (5%) and the currently unemployed (4%).

### Misperceptions about Gambling <sup>6</sup>

Only 15% of Manitobans believed they were lucky gamblers and 90% agreed gambling was not a way to make money. Similarly, only 4% believed they could win enough money to change their lifestyle, and 2% believed they could make more money gambling than working. Yet, many Manitobans displayed erroneous thinking about gambling-related randomness, odds and outcome control. Respondents were provided 11 statements about gambling and asked to rate each as true or false. Each statement in table 10 is false, but a number of Manitobans rated these statements to be true. Three of the most common gambling misperceptions involved VLTs and slot machines. For example, one third of respondents believed that they could improve their play (i.e. payout) by better understanding how VLTs and slot machines work.

Table 10. Common gambling misperceptions among Manitobans (%)

Gambling Misperception	True (%)
2, 6, 9, 14, 20 as a set of numbers is more likely to win than 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.	41%
It is important to understand how a slot machine/VLT works to play better	36%
If you flip a coin and get heads 5 times you are likely to get tails the next flip	37%
The odds of winning on a slot machine/VLT change as you play	36%
Having a system when gambling increases the chances of winning	26%
Staying at the same slot machine will improve your chances of winning	25%
In a lottery, all numbers do not have the same chance of winning	22%
Betting the same numbers for every draw gives me a better chance of winning	18%
If you have been losing for awhile, odds are you are due for a win	16%

*Conclusion:* The findings suggest that some Manitobans have misperceptions about odds, randomness and outcome control when gambling. Research by Blaszczynski and Nower (2002) suggests that cognitive processes resulting in individual misperceptions about skill and the probability of winning are a common feature in pathway models used to explain the development of problem gambling. Thus, public initiatives to educate adults about gambling-related odds, randomness and outcome control, especially in relation to electronic gaming machines, would be of benefit to Manitobans.

<sup>6</sup>All age groups included.

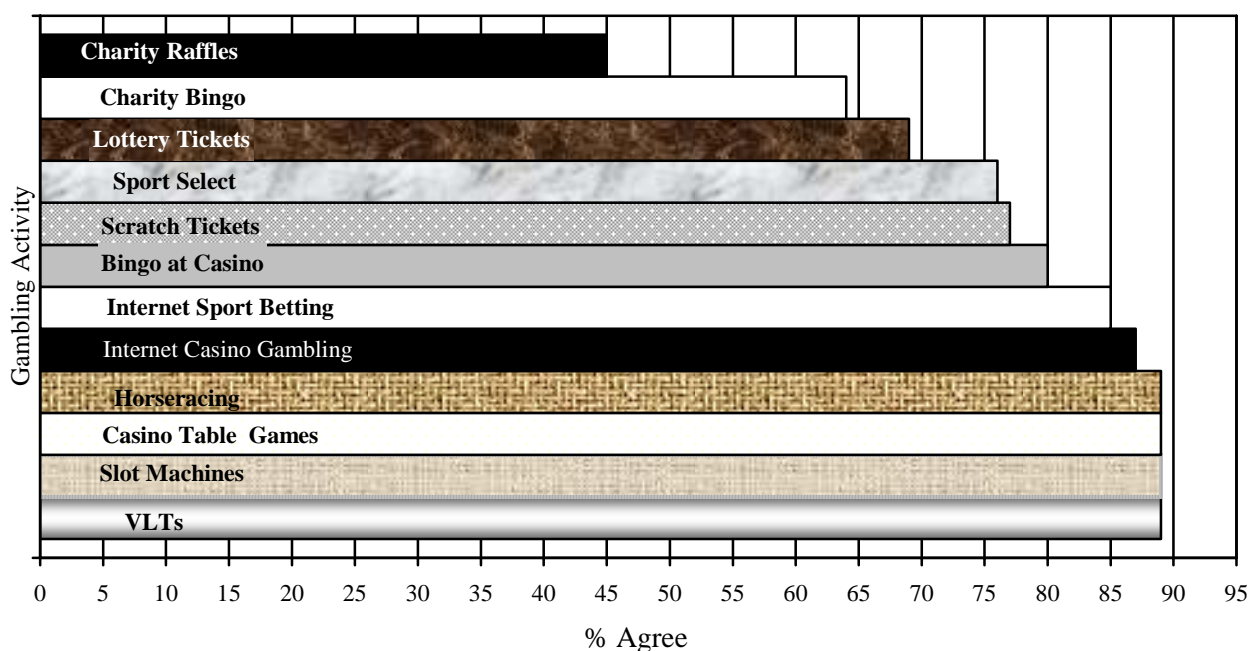
## Attitudes

In total, 47% of respondents perceived gambling to be a social activity. Thirty-five per cent agreed that spending money gambling is no different than spending money to see a movie, concert or go for dinner and 73% agreed that spending money on gambling events run by charities (e.g., raffles, bingos) was a way to make a donation to charity.

### Perceived High Risk Activities

On a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, Manitobans were asked to what extent they believed that specific gambling activities might create problems for some individuals. These responses were collapsed into a two-point scale (agree/disagree). The findings indicate Manitobans were most likely to agree that playing VLTs, slot machines, casino table games and horseracing might create gambling problems for some people (figure 1). In total, 88% of respondents agreed that each of these four activities (agreed, 52%; strongly agreed, 36%) might create problems. A large majority of Manitobans also agreed that internet casino gambling (87%) and internet sports betting (85%) might create problems for some people.

Figure 1. Gambling activities organized by perceived risk



There was an interesting difference in attitudes regarding casino bingo and charity bingo. Manitobans were significantly more likely to agree that casino bingo might create problems for some individuals (80%), as compared to community bingo (64%).<sup>7</sup> It may be that, for some Manitobans, positive attitudes about donating to charity through activities such as community bingo mitigate perceptions of risk.

<sup>7</sup> Kendall's tau-b = .353, n = 1,307, p < .001

## Responsible Gambling

Responsible gambling can be defined as setting a time limit on play, limiting the amount spent, not spending more than you can afford, knowing when to stop, and gambling for entertainment only. The present survey asked Manitobans “*Have you ever heard the term responsible gambling?*” to which 62% answered yes. As shown in table 11, significantly more men than women said they had heard the term.<sup>8</sup>

Table 11. Responsible gambling awareness (%)

Have you heard the term responsible gambling?	Females	Males
Yes (%)	55%	68%

Manitobans were also asked “*What do you think responsible gambling means?*” Respondents provided their own answers (i.e., a list of possible meanings/responses was not provided). Manitobans said responsible gambling meant:

- Setting a spending limit (54%)
- Setting a time limit (34%)
- Not spending more than one can afford (32%)
- Knowing when to walk away (16%)
- Gambling for entertainment only (12%)

When asked “*Do you think Manitobans gamble responsibly?*” 37% of Manitobans said yes (table 12). Women were more likely than men to say Manitobans did not gamble responsibly.<sup>9</sup> As well, Manitobans who knew someone with a gambling problem<sup>10</sup> or those affected by the gambling of another<sup>11</sup> were more likely to say Manitobans did not gamble responsibly, suggesting their personal experiences may have influenced their perceptions.

Table 12. Responsible gambling in Manitoba (%)

Do you think Manitobans gamble responsibly?	Total sample	Females	Males	Know someone with a problem	Affected by another’s gambling
No (%)	63%	70%	56%	71%	75%

<sup>8</sup>Chi-Square = 26.61 (2, n=1,309), p <.001

<sup>9</sup>Chi-Square = 22.72 (1, n=1,105), p <.001

<sup>10</sup>Chi-Square = 35.41 (1, n=1,099), p <.001

<sup>11</sup>Chi-Square = 22.26 (1, n=1,105), p <.001

## Setting Limits When Gambling

It has been found that people who set time and spending limits when gambling are more likely to gamble responsibly. We asked Manitobans if they set a spending or time limit when they gambled, and if they then adhered to the limits they set. Respondents had five options (always, often, sometimes, rarely or never). Two-thirds of Manitobans said they always or often set time or spending limits when they gambled. This simple action was very helpful as 91% of Manitobans said they always or often stuck to the limits they set for themselves. Limit setting and adherence varied demographically (table 13). Females and respondents living in Winnipeg were more likely to set gambling limits. As household income and education increased, so did the likelihood for limit setting and adherence to those limits.

Table 13. Demographic characteristics of Manitobans who set and stick to gambling limits (%)

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Always/often set a limit</b>	<b>Always/often stick to limit set</b>
Total Sample	66%	91%
<b>Gender</b>		
Females	69% **	91%
Males	61%	90%
<b>Age</b>		
18-24 years of age	65%	91%
25-34 years of age	69%	96%
35-44 years of age	66%	90%
45-54 years of age	66%	88%
55-64 years of age	59%	89%
65 and over	60%	92%
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Winnipeg	68% **	91%
Ring communities	61%	89%
Rest of province	59%	91%
<b>Education</b>		
High school or less	60% *	89%
Some college or university	66%	91%
College/university graduate	68%	92%
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed full-time	67%	92%
Employed part-time	64%	91%
Unemployed or retired	61%	89%
<b>Household Income (before taxes)</b>		
Less than \$30,000 per year	58% **	89%
\$30,000-\$60,000 per year	66%	92%
More than \$60,000 per year	72%	91%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ , \*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

Limit setting and adherence also varied by game preference. As shown in table 14, Manitobans who bought lottery tickets or played slots once a month or more were significantly more likely to set limits, but less likely to adhere to those limits, as compared to Manitobans who bought lottery tickets or played slots less frequently. Manitobans who played VLTs once a month or more were also less likely to adhere to the limits they set.

Table 14. Limit setting and adherence by game preference (%)

<b>Gambling Activity (once a month or more)</b>	<b>Always/often set a limit</b>	<b>Always/often stick to limit set</b>
Total sample	66%	91%
<b>Buying lottery tickets</b>		
Once a month or more	72% **	88% **
Less than once a month	60%	94%
<b>Buying charity raffle tickets</b>		
Once a month or more	74% *	89%
Less than once a month	63%	91%
<b>Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets</b>		
Once a month or more	71%	89%
Less than once a month	64%	91%
<b>Playing slot machines at a casino</b>		
Once a month or more	76% *	78% **
Less than once a month	64%	92%
<b>Playing VLTs at a bar/lounge</b>		
Once a month or more	64%	73% **
Less than once a month	65%	92%
<b>Playing community/casino bingo</b>		
Once a month or more	67%	90%
Less than once a month	65%	91%
<b>Playing casino table games</b>		
Once a month or more	60%	81%
Less than once a month	65%	91%
<b>Betting on horseracing</b>		
Once a month or more	50%	80%
Less than once a month	65%	91%
<b>Betting on Sport Select</b>		
Once a month or more	63%	95%
Less than once a month	65%	90%
<b>Internet gambling (casino/sports)</b>		
Once a month or more	45%	89%
Less than once a month	65%	91%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ , \*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .



Respondents who believed Manitobans gambled responsibly were also significantly more likely to set limits on their own gambling behaviour.<sup>12</sup> Those who were aware of programs to help problem gamblers<sup>13</sup> and educate the public<sup>14</sup> were also more likely to set limits (time and monetary). Manitobans who stated that another person's gambling had affected their lives were less able to follow the limits they set on their own gambling (i.e. this was one of the affects).<sup>15</sup>

*Conclusion:* Setting limits on gambling behaviour is a helpful responsible gambling strategy as most Manitobans who impose time and monetary limits on themselves say they stick to them. It is important to educate Manitobans about the programs that are available to gamblers across the province. Those who are aware of these programs gamble more responsibly. Manitobans who seek help/education from the AFM concerning another person's gambling might benefit from information about the importance of following the time and monetary limits they set for themselves when gambling.<sup>16</sup>

### Problem Behaviours in Manitoba

Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 (not at all serious) to 5 (extremely serious) how serious a problem they thought alcohol abuse, smoking, drug abuse and problem gambling were in Manitoba. As shown in table 15, alcohol abuse was considered the most serious problem, with 63% of residents saying alcohol was a serious (29%) or very serious (34%) problem; this was followed by drug abuse, problem gambling and smoking.

Table 15. Perceived problem behaviours in Manitoba (%)

Behaviour	Serious problem	Extremely serious problem
Alcohol abuse	29%	34%
Drug abuse	25%	31%
Problem gambling	28%	28%
Smoking	22%	32%

<sup>12</sup> *Chi-Square* = 14.57 (4, *n*=1,002), *p* <.01

<sup>13</sup> *Chi-Square* = 19.59 (8, *n*=1,178), *p* <.05

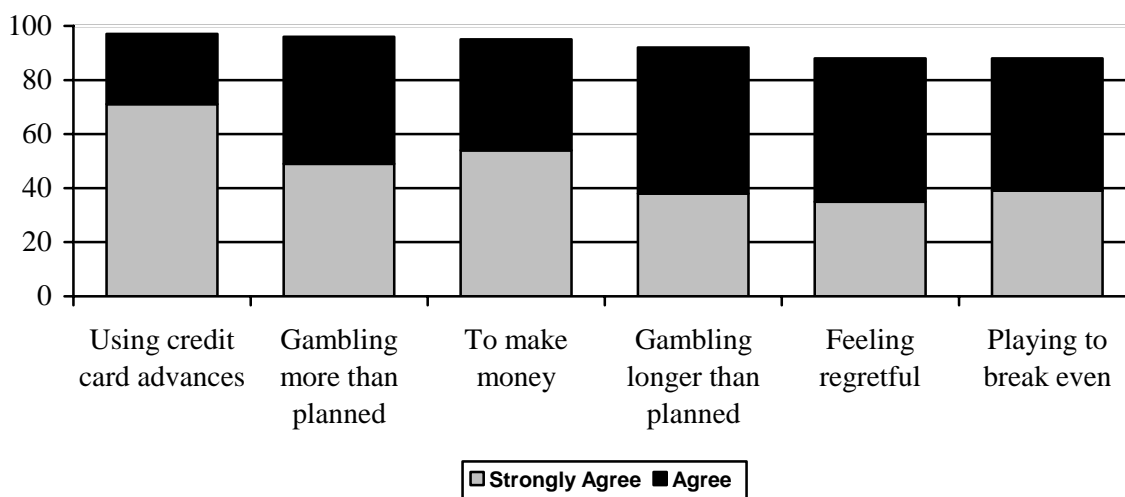
<sup>14</sup> *Chi-Square* = 33.21 (8, *n*=1,178), *p* <.001

<sup>15</sup> *Chi-Square* = 18.44 (4, *n*=823), *p* <.001

### Awareness of the Signs of Problem Gambling

The AFM has noted problem gambling might involve money problems, relationship problems, self-control or self esteem issues, or a combination of all the above. To determine the degree to which Manitobans were aware of common problem gambling warning signs, respondents were asked to rate six behaviours on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). All behaviours provided to respondents were considered warning signs of problem gambling. As shown in figure 2, almost 100% of Manitobans recognized these signs. People most strongly agreed that using credit card advances was suggestive of a gambling problem. Young adults (18-24 years), adults aged 55 and older, and retired respondents were slightly less likely to recognize that using credit card advances and gambling to make money were suggestive of problem gambling. Manitobans who had personal experience with someone who had a gambling problem were more likely to recognize that all six behaviours were warning signs of problem gambling.

Figure 2. Warning signs of problem gambling as defined by Manitobans (%)



*Conclusion:* Most Manitobans are aware of the signs of problem gambling; however, there are gaps in awareness across specific age cohorts in Manitoba. An initiative to educate these cohorts about the signs of problem gambling might be useful.

## The Social Costs and Benefits of Gambling in Manitoba

In the present study, the Commission did query people about their beliefs concerning the impact of gambling in Manitoba. We also asked an overall question about the impact of gambling on respondents' lives. However, the reader should note these answers do not encompass the breadth of information that is necessary to accurately assess the socio-economic impact of gambling in Manitoba.

The MGCC recognizes that accurate and reliable information about the social and economic impacts of gambling is necessary for informed public debate and policy decisions. To understand the broad effects of gambling on society and to minimize potential harmful effects, we need an unbiased, clear accounting of both costs and benefits of gambling within a social and economic context that is multidisciplinary and holistic (Wynne & Anielski, 2001).

One of the key obstacles to such a study is a lack of consensus in the research community on the most effective methodology and indicators to use. To date, studies designed to estimate the costs and benefits of gambling have used a wide range of methodologies that have produced a correspondingly wide range of estimates. There is a need for an accurate and consistent measure that can be used across jurisdictions so that cross-national and cross-international comparisons can be made.

To address this need, the MGCC is part of an expert team of cross-national researchers (including the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation, the BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch, the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, the Alberta Gaming Research Institute and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse among others), that is currently working to develop a socio-economic impact measure that can be used by jurisdictions across Canada, including Manitoba.

### Problem Gambling Prevalence

While the present study found approximately 96% of Manitobans participated in some form of gambling, previous research conducted by the AFM (2002) and Statistics Canada (2003) suggests that approximately 1% of Manitobans are problem gamblers and a further 3 to 4% are at moderate risk (table 16).

Table 16. Gambling Prevalence Research (%)

Gambler Sub-Types	AFM	StatsCan	Difference
Low Risk	Not Assessed	5.3%	N/A
Moderate Risk	2.3%	3.3%	1.0%
Problem	1.1%	0.8%	- 0.3%
Moderate Risk or Problem	3.4%	4.1%	0.7%

### Public Beliefs

In the present survey, Manitobans were asked the question “*In your view what are the problems related to gambling?*” Respondents provided their own answers (i.e., a list of possible answers was not provided) and were permitted to state as many answers as desired.

As shown in figure 3, personal financial problems (n = 826), family problems (n = 628), gambling addiction (n = 375), and job loss were mentioned most frequently (n = 172). Manitobans were also asked the question “*In your view what are the benefits related to gambling?*” Again, respondents provided their own answers and permitted to state as many answers as desired. Manitobans cited entertainment (n = 404), reduced taxes (n = 192), the chance to win money (n = 151) and money raised for charities (n = 128) among others (figure 4).

Figure 3. Manitobans’ beliefs about the problems related to gambling in Manitoba (%)

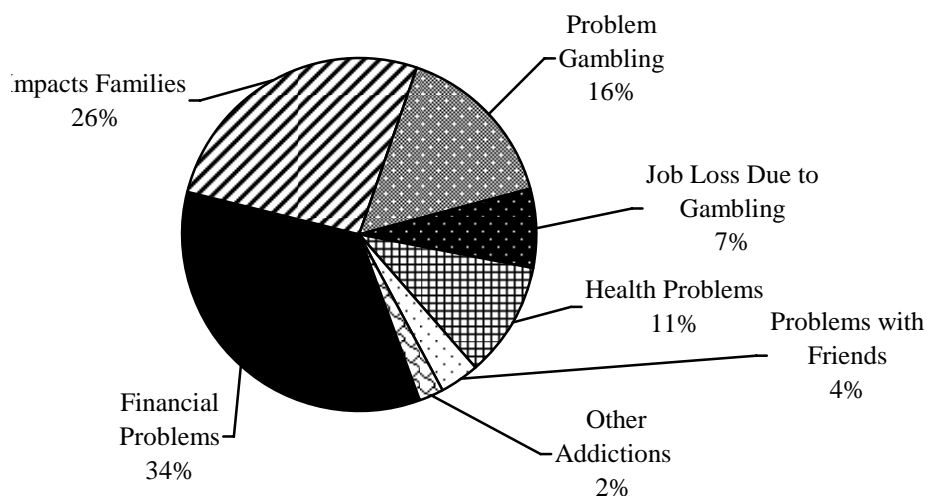
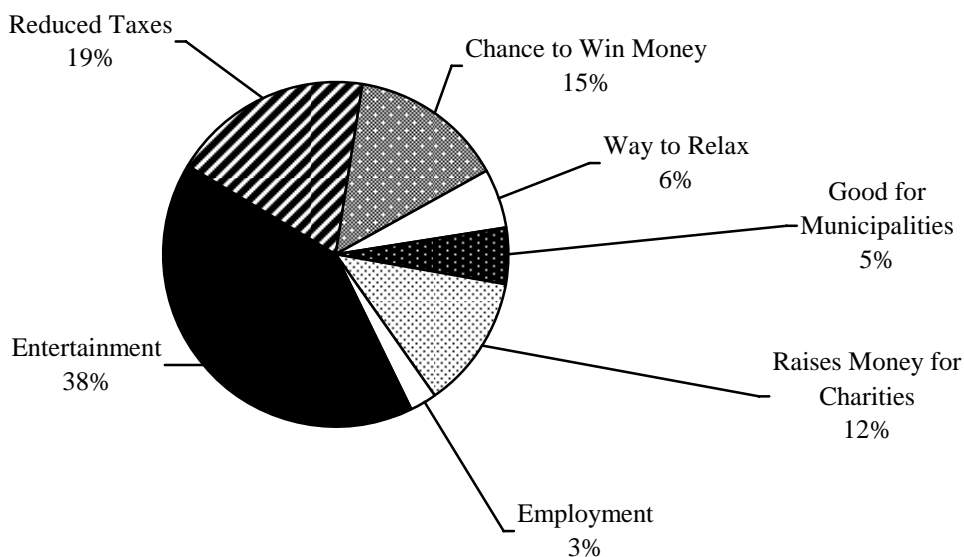


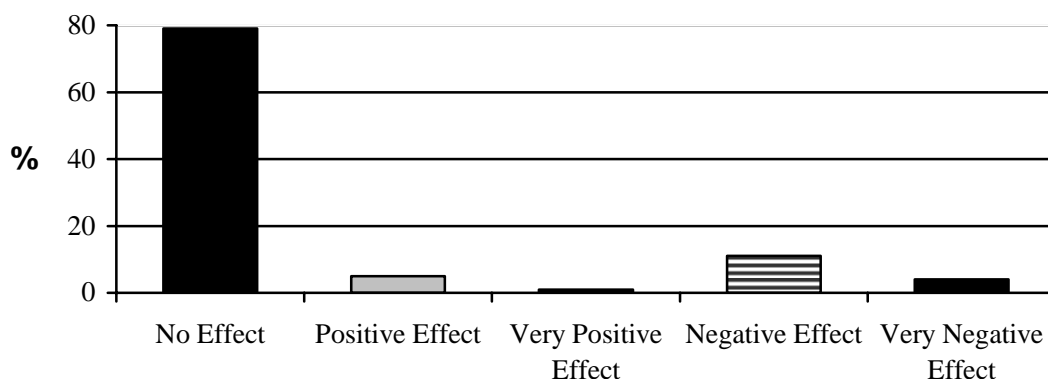
Figure 4. Manitobans’ beliefs about the social benefits of gambling (%)



## Impact of Gambling

Manitobans were also asked to rate the overall impact that gambling has had upon them personally on a five-point scale from no effect at all to very negative effect (figure 5).

Figure 5. Effect of gambling on Manitobans (% , n = 1,303)



In total, 85% of Manitobans said that gambling had no effect or a positive effect on their lives and 15% said gambling had a negative effect on their lives. As well, 22% stated they had been affected by another person's gambling at some point in their lives. As shown in table 17, there were significant age and educational differences among individuals who perceived gambling to be having a negative impact on their lives, as well as significant age and employment differences among those who had been affected by another person's gambling.

Individuals who stated gambling was having a negative impact on their lives were also significantly less likely to stick to the time and budgetary limits they set on their play,<sup>17</sup> were more likely to believe winning at gambling was a matter of skill,<sup>18</sup> and were more likely to be negatively affected by someone who had a gambling problem.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Kendall's tau-b = -.169, n = 821, p < .001

<sup>18</sup> Kendall's tau-b = -.146, n = 1303, p < .001

<sup>19</sup> Kendall's tau-b = .325, n = 1303, p < .001

Table 17. Demographic comparisons for gambling impact (%)

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Positive or no effect</b>	<b>Negative effect</b>	<b>Ever affected by another's gambling</b>
Total sample	85%	15%	22%
<b>Gender</b>			
Females	84%	16%	24%
Males	86%	14%	20%
<b>Age</b>			
18-24 years of age	87%	13% **	27% **
25-34 years of age	84%	16%	26%
35-44 years of age	82%	18%	25%
45-54 years of age	85%	15%	24%
55-64 years of age	85%	15%	16%
65 and over	88%	12%	15%
<b>Place of Residence</b>			
Winnipeg	86%	14%	23%
Ring communities	80%	20%	21%
Rest of province	85%	15%	21%
<b>Education</b>			
High school or less	81%	19% **	24%
Some college or university	83%	17%	23%
College or university graduate	89%	11%	21%
<b>Employment</b>			
Employed full-time	85%	15%	23% *
Employed part-time	80%	20%	28%
Unemployed or retired	86%	14%	19%
<b>Income</b>			
Less than \$30,000 per year	81%	19%	25%
\$30,000-\$60,000 per year	84%	16%	23%
More than \$60,000 per year	88%	12%	21%

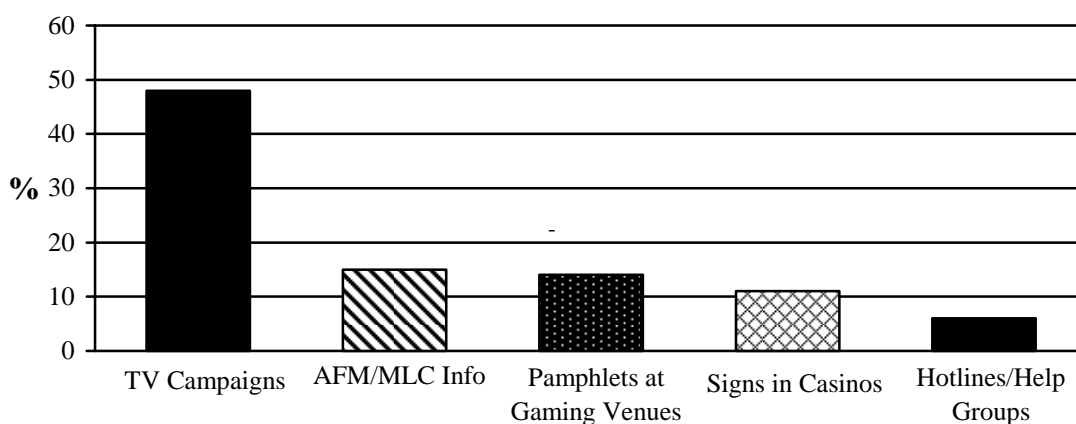
\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ , \*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$

*Conclusion:* Respondents indicated that financial problems were the most prominent social cost of gambling, and entertainment the leading social benefit. For those affected by gambling, it is the aim of the public education campaigns the MGCC is currently developing to lessen the negative affect gambling is having on Manitobans by educating adults about responsible gambling behaviours, odds and randomness. These initiatives will also promote the AFM, which is an important resource for Manitobans who are experiencing a negative affect from their own or another person's gambling.

### Knowledge of Responsible Gambling Initiatives

More than two-thirds of Manitobans (69%) were aware of public education campaigns about responsible gambling in the province. Those with higher annual household incomes and more years of education were more aware of these initiatives while 18-24 year olds were least aware. As shown in figure 6, the most frequently cited educational campaigns included television advertisements, information available from the AFM and MLC, information from pamphlets at gambling venues, and signs placed on machines in casinos.

Figure 6: Manitobans' awareness of public education campaigns about responsible gambling (% , n = 900)

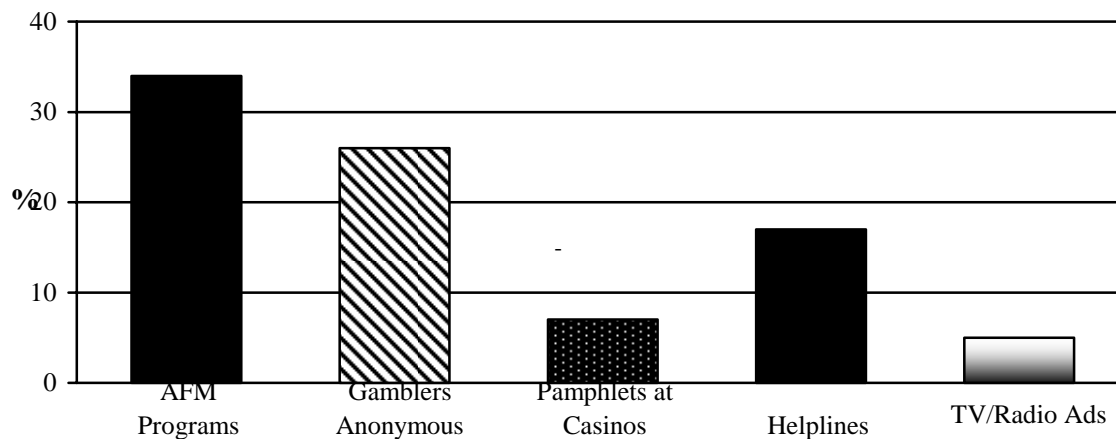


*Conclusion:* The majority of Manitobans are aware of public education campaigns about responsible gambling. Television appears to be the most effective medium to deliver responsible gambling messages in terms of overall public recall.

### Knowledge of Problem Gambling Treatment

In the present study, we asked Manitobans “Are you aware of anything being done to help problem gamblers?” In total, 60% of respondents were aware of problem gambling initiatives in the province. As shown in figure 7, programs at the AFM (34%), Gamblers Anonymous (26%) and problem gambling helplines (17%) were cited most frequently.

Figure 7. Public awareness of problem gambling initiatives in Manitoba (% , n = 779)



When asked who they would personally contact for information about gambling, 37% said the AFM, followed by Gamblers Anonymous (27%), telephone help-lines (18%), and pamphlets at a casino (7%). Only 18% of Manitobans knew someone who had received treatment for gambling. This is interesting, as more than 50% said they knew someone who they believed had a problem. Denying a problem exists was suggested as the most common reason a problem gambler would not seek help, followed by the perceived stigma attached to getting help. It is important to keep in mind that many Manitobans would not be aware if someone were receiving treatment as many problem gamblers would keep this information confidential.

*Conclusion:* The majority of Manitobans are aware of problem gambling initiatives in the province. AFM programs, Gamblers Anonymous and helplines are the most frequently recalled initiatives, as well as the initiatives people would most likely use to gain further information about gambling.

### Awareness of the MGCC

Gambling in Canada is complex. It is structured differently in almost every province. In Manitoba, 54% of respondents recognized that the MGCC regulates gambling. Fewer respondents recognized the MGCC licenses charitable gaming activities (15%), conducts research and makes policies/decisions about gambling (6%), and ensures the integrity, fairness, and honesty of gambling in the province (7%). Twenty-two percent of Manitobans believed the MGCC operates casino gambling and VLTs in the province, when in fact these activities are carried out by the MLC. Another 10% of Manitobans believed the MGCC helped problem gamblers (i.e., through clinical services), but it is the mandate of the AFM to provide counseling services to problem gamblers across the province.



**SPECIAL POPULATIONS: DEMOGRAPHIC OBSERVATIONS**  
**I. YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 18–24 YEARS)**

Research has documented that across Canada problem gambling rates for adults are highest in the 18-24 year age group. A separate section about young adults was created in this report because, as expected, this cohort (age 18-24 years) was significantly more at-risk in a number of gambling-related areas. In total, 117 of the 1,309 Manitobans surveyed in the present study were 18-24 years of age. A discussion of this cohort will begin with their gambling behaviours.

**Gambling Behaviour**

The gambling behaviour of young adults (18-24 years) differed from that of more mature gamblers (aged 25 and up). The most popular gambling activities for young adults in Manitoba are displayed in Table 18.

Table 18. Activities most commonly played by young adults (% , n = 117)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>1-7 times a week</b>	<b>1-2 times a month</b>	<b>5-6 times a year</b>	<b>Total participating in past year</b>
Buying lottery tickets	10%	19%	21%	50%
Buying scratch tickets	9%	15%	24%	48%
Buying charity raffle tickets	3%	11%	26%	40%
Playing slot machines	4%	7%	26%	37%
Playing VLTs	9%	10%	17%	36%
Playing Sport Select	4%	9%	5%	18%
Playing casino table games	2%	6%	9%	17%

As shown in table 19, young adults were more likely than Manitobans 25 years and older to buy scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets, play slot machines, VLTs and casino games, bet on Sport Select, and gamble on the internet once a month or more over a one-year period. In total, 9% of young adults in the province played VLTs at a bar or lounge once a week or more in 2003 compared to 1.4% of Manitobans aged 25 and up.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Chi-Square* = 60.001 (5, n=1,305), *p* <.001

Table 19. Gambling activity (once a month or more) among young adults as compared to older Manitobans (% , n = 117)

<b>Gambling Activity</b>	<b>18-24 years of age</b>	<b>25+ years of age</b>
Buying lottery tickets	29%	42%
Buying charity raffle tickets	15%	12%
Buying scratch/Breakopen/ Nevada tickets	24% **	12%
Playing slot machines at a casino	11% *	6%
Playing VLTs at a bar	20% **	5%
Playing community bingo	7%	4%
Playing casino bingo	3%	1%
Playing casino table games	8% **	1%
Betting on horseracing	2%	1%
Betting on Sport Select	14% **	3%
Internet gambling (casino/sports)	5% **	1%

\*\*Statistically significant,  $p < .01$ .

\*Statistically significant,  $p < .05$ .

## Gender

Although more females between 18-24 years of age had gambled at least occasionally in the past year as compared to males in the province (Table 20) this difference was not statistically significant. In fact, there were no significant gender differences between males and females in terms of gambling behaviours and frequency of play with the exception of Sport Select; which young adult males were significantly more likely to play.<sup>21</sup> In terms of attitudes, awareness, and misperceptions about gambling, there were no significant gender differences in this cohort.

Table 20. Gender and Gambling Activity (%)

<b>Gambled in the Past Year</b>	<b>% of Sample</b>
Males aged 18-24 years	96.5%
Females aged 18-24 years	98%

<sup>21</sup>  $Chi-Square = 15.734$  (4,  $n=106$ ),  $p < .003$

### Gambling Misperceptions

In the present study, young adults in Manitoba (18-24 years) were significantly more likely to believe they were lucky (33%) when compared to Manitobans aged 25 and older (14%)<sup>22</sup> Young adults were also more likely to believe that they might win enough money to change their lifestyle.<sup>23</sup>

As shown in Table 21, young adults were also significantly more likely than older adults to believe the odds of winning on a slot/VLT changed as they played; that all numbers did not have the same chance of winning in a lottery; that betting the same numbers for every draw would give them a better chance of winning; and that if they had been losing for awhile they were due for a win.

Table 21. Gambling misperceptions among Young Adults compared to Older Manitobans (%)

Gambling Misperception	18-24 yr olds Yes	25 yrs + Yes
The odds of winning on a slot or VLT change as you are playing	45%*	35%
A random series of numbers is more likely to win than a series in sequence	44%	40%
It is important to understand exactly how a slot machine/VLT works to play better	41%	36%
In a lottery, all numbers do not have the same chance of winning	37%**	21%
Having a system when gambling increases the chances of winning	29%	26%
Staying at the same slot machine will improve our chances of winning	27%	24%
Betting the same numbers for every lottery draw gives me a better chance of winning	26%*	17%
If you have been losing for awhile, odds are you are due for a win	24%*	15%

$p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

*Conclusion:* The findings suggest young adults in Manitoba are more likely to have misperceptions about odds, randomness and outcome control when gambling. It is well documented in the research literature that the conformance of subjects' statistical predictions to statistical reality increases, roughly, with age (Wildman, 2004). That is, younger adults are more likely to have misperceptions related to gambling, compared to older adults. Research suggests these misperceptions may contribute to an increased risk for problem gambling within adolescent and young adult cohorts (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004). Public initiatives to educate young adults about gambling-related odds, randomness and outcome control would be of benefit to these Manitobans.

<sup>22</sup>  $Chi-Square = 30.136$ , 3,  $n=1,247$ ,  $p < .001$

<sup>23</sup>  $Chi-Square = 17.728$ , 4,  $n=1,247$ ,  $p < .001$

### Attitudes and Awareness

Research suggests that young people tend to have more positive attitudes about gambling and typically take part in the activity for emotive (i.e., fun or excitement) rather than monetary reasons (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004). Similarly, young adults in the present study generally had more positive attitudes about gambling than older adults in Manitoba. For example, they were more likely to agree that gambling was fun even though they might lose.<sup>24</sup>

However, as compared to older Manitobans, young adults were less aware of public education initiatives<sup>25</sup> and programs to help problem gamblers in Manitoba.<sup>26</sup> They were significantly less likely to agree that at-risk gambling behaviours could be signs of problem gambling, including gambling to make money, gambling more money than planned, spending more time gambling than planned, gambling to break even, and feeling regretful about gambling.

*Conclusion:* Research suggests that adolescents are aware of the risks associated with their behaviour but modify their thinking about these risks in order to facilitate continued participation in those behaviours (Gerrard et al., 1996). Different conceptions of risk related to gambling behaviours combined with a lack of knowledge about where to go for help may indicate young adults would likely benefit from public initiatives to educate young adults about common gambling myths, the signs of problem gambling and where to seek help.

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<sup>24</sup> *Chi-Square* = 30.187, 5,  $n=1,247$ ,  $p < .001$

<sup>25</sup> *Chi-Square* = 16.274, 2,  $n=1,305$ ,  $p < .001$

<sup>26</sup> *Chi-Square* = 7.186, 2,  $n=1,305$ ,  $p < .05$

## II. REGULAR PLAYERS

In the present study, Manitobans who stated they participated in a gambling activity once a week or more were termed *regular players* of that activity. Regular players had specific and statistically significant characteristics that set them apart from Manitobans who participated in gambling activities less frequently or not at all.

Specifically, regular bingo, casino game, and electronic gaming machine players:

- Were more likely to participate in more than one gambling activity each week;
- Had completed less education and/or had lower annual household incomes;
- Were more likely to have positive attitudes about gambling;
- Were more likely to have misperceptions about gambling;
- Were more likely to say gambling was negatively impacting their lives.

In addition, regular slot machine and VLT players had additional characteristics that set them apart from Manitobans who participated in electronic gaming machine play less frequently or not at all.

These players:

- Were less likely to have heard the term responsible gambling;
- Were less able to stick to the time and money limits they put on their play.

While regular lottery ticket players also shared characteristics (e.g., were more likely to be employed, were older, were more likely to say gambling had no impact on their lives) that set them apart from Manitobans who played the lottery less frequently or not at all, these activities did not place these players at-risk.

*Conclusion:* Manitobans who play bingo, casino games, or electronic gaming machines once a week or more share a group of characteristics that differ them significantly from other Manitobans. Several of these characteristics suggest regular players may be an at-risk group. As these Manitobans visit gaming venues regularly, such venues may be the best place to provide information about responsible gambling. An education campaign that clarified gambling-related misperceptions will help regular as well as more infrequent players to gamble more responsibly. Regular players would also benefit from information about responsible gambling.

## KEY FINDINGS AND ACTION-FOCUSED STRATEGIES

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The findings of the present study suggest that targeted responsible gambling initiatives should be directed at three key audiences in Manitoba. These findings fit into a framework proposed by Ladouceur (2004) for the effective implementation of responsible gambling initiatives within a population. As noted by Ladouceur, responsible gambling initiatives should target three main audiences including:

1. The general public (universal preventive interventions);
2. Population sub-groups with some risk factors (selective preventative interventions);
3. Population sub-group at-risk (indicated prevention interventions).

This framework is a good fit with the key findings of the present study and will be used to structure a discussion of the results.

### 1. General Public (Adults)

*Findings:* The results of this study suggest that Manitobans have misperceptions about the nature of odds, randomness, and outcome control when gambling, especially in relation to electronic gaming machine play.

*Key Message:* Education about odds, randomness, and outcome control

*Action-Focused Strategy:* As research suggests that cognitive processes resulting in individual misperceptions about skill and the probability of winning are a common feature in pathway models used to explain the development of problem gambling (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002), public initiatives to educate adults about gambling-related odds, randomness and outcome control, especially in relation to electronic gaming machines, would be of benefit to Manitobans. The MGCC is currently building a community-informed, educational campaign to address the gambling-related misperceptions of Manitobans.

### 2. Population Sub-Group: Young Adults (18-24 years)

*Findings:* The results of this study suggest young adults buy scratch and/or Breakopen/Nevada tickets, play slot machines, VLTs and casino games, bet on Sport Select, and gamble on the internet more frequently than older Manitobans. This cohort had more misperceptions about gambling and was less knowledgeable about responsible and problem gambling.

*Key Messages:*

1. The nature of luck, odds, and randomness
2. Guidelines to gambling responsibly
3. Signs of problem gambling and where to go for help within and outside of Winnipeg

*Action-Focused Strategy:* Information campaigns that target young adults are currently being designed by the MGCC to increase the gambling-related awareness of young adults in Manitoba. Qualitative information (by way of focus groups) will ensure that the public education initiatives are informed by young adults in the province.

### 3. Population Sub-Group: Regular Gamblers (once a week or more)

*Findings:* Manitobans who engaged in bingo, casino games, and electronic gaming machine play once a week or more were more likely to engage in multiple gaming activities each week, had more misperceptions about gambling (e.g., believed they can earn money from gambling, believed they could win enough money to change their lifestyle) and were also more likely to say that gambling was having a negative impact on their lives; as compared to average Manitobans.

*Key Messages:*

1. The nature of luck, odds, and randomness
2. Guidelines to gambling responsibly

*Action-Focused Strategy:* The MGCC anticipates that the education campaign we are currently building to clarify gambling-related misperceptions will benefit both regular and more infrequent gamblers in the province. As regular players visit gaming venues often, venues may be the best place to provide information about responsible gambling to regular players.

The information gathered in this study was collected before the introduction of onscreen responsible gaming messages on VLTs in Manitoba. The MLC, in partnership with prominent Canadian gambling researchers and the MGCC, is currently conducting an evaluation of its onscreen VLT responsible gaming messages. The MGCC will monitor whether these messages, and further improvements to them, will convey important information about responsible gambling to regular players, and consider other long-term strategies to educate regular gamblers.

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