

# Technical Report

## Casino Gambling in New Zealand



Since 1994, when the first casino opened in Christchurch, casino gambling has been accessible to New Zealanders aged twenty years and over. New Zealand has six casinos, one each in Auckland, Hamilton, Dunedin and Christchurch, and two in Queenstown.

This report provides a snapshot of people's perceptions of, and risk of harm from casino gambling in New Zealand, from data collected in the 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS).

Please note:

- **The figures presented in this report (except those in the 'Changes since 2007' section) are for those aged 20 years and over, and refer to activities people have participated in over the past 12 months.**
- The term 'casinos' refers to the six New Zealand casinos listed above.
- Casino gamblers are not a mutually exclusive group; they may also play other modes of gambling.
- Figures in brackets, and lines on the bars in Figure 1 are 95% confidence intervals. This means there is a 95% chance the true value of the percentage (if the whole New Zealand population was surveyed) lies between the lower and upper confidence interval values.
- Throughout this report where a proportion is followed by an asterisk, or a superscript 'ns' this indicates that a comparison has been made between the equivalent figure for those aged 18+ years using the 2010 HLS and the 2006/07 Gaming and Betting Activities Survey. An 'ns' means this comparison found no statistically significant difference. An asterisk means that this comparison found a statistically significant difference and is presented in Table 3. See the 'Changes since 2007' section below for more information.

### Participation

- One out of nine (11.1%, 8.6<sup>ns</sup>13.7)<sup>ns</sup> New Zealanders aged twenty years and over gambled at a New Zealand casino in the past year. The majority of these played gaming machines/pokies (10.6%, 8.1<sup>ns</sup>13.1)<sup>ns</sup>, with just 3.0% (1.7<sup>ns</sup>4.3)<sup>ns</sup> of New Zealanders playing table games at the casinos.
- The majority of casino table game players (82.7%, 67.1<sup>ns</sup>98.3) also played casino gaming machines in the past twelve months.
- Just over half of casino gamblers were also non-casino gaming machine players in the past twelve months.
- Further information on the demographics of casino gamblers can be found in *New Zealanders' Participation in Gambling: Results from the 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey* available on the HSC website: <http://www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html>

### People's perceptions

2010 HLS respondents were asked whether *any types of gambling were more likely than others to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should.*

The results of this question show that just over fifty percent of people aged twenty years and over (52.2%, 48.2<sup>ns</sup>56.3)\* thought casino gambling was *more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should.* More specifically:

- fifty-one percent of people (50.8%, 46.3<sup>ns</sup>55.3)\* selected gaming machines/pokies at casinos
- two out of seven people (28.6%, 23.9<sup>ns</sup>33.2)\* selected casino table games

- and just over one-in-four people (27.1%, 22.7631.4)\* selected both casino gaming machines and table games at casinos as *more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should*.

2010 HLS respondents were also asked whether they thought any types of gambling activities were *socially undesirable*.

The results of this question show that just over two out of nine people (22.8%, 19.2626.3) thought casino gambling was *socially undesirable*. More specifically:

- one-in-five people (21.1%, 17.8624.4) selected casino gaming machines/pokies
- one out of nine people (10.6%, 8.5612.7) selected casino table games
- and one out of eleven people (8.9%, 6.9610.8) selected both casino gaming machines and table games at casinos as being *socially undesirable*.

By comparison, one-in-two people (46.1%, 41.9650.4) thought non-casino gaming machines/pokies were socially undesirable.

## Gambling too much at casinos

2010 HLS respondents were asked if they had experienced *a day, or an outing, where at the end of it they looked back and thought to themselves – I really overdid that, I spent more time or money gambling than I meant to*. Respondents were then asked if this had occurred which type, or types they were gambling on.

The results from these questions indicate that 2.3% (0.368.3)<sup>ns</sup> of New Zealanders aged twenty years and over gambled too much at a casino in the past twelve months. Casino gaming machines were played too much by 1.4% (0.165.3)<sup>ns</sup> of New Zealanders, while casino table games were played too much by just under one percent (0.9%, 0.164.1)<sup>ns</sup>. No one appears to have gambled too much on both casino gaming machines and casino table games (0.0%, 0.060.9)<sup>ns</sup>.

Of those who had played at a casino in the past twelve months just over one-in-seven (15.1%, 8.56 24.0)<sup>ns</sup> had gambled too much at a casino in the past twelve months. One-in-ten casino gamblers (10.1%, 5.3616.9)\* had gambled too much on casino gaming machines, while just over five percent (5.3%, 1.4613.4)<sup>ns</sup> had gambled too much on casino table games.

**Table 1: Casino gambling mode gambled on too much in past twelve months, percentages and 95 percent confidence intervals, 2010**

Casino gambling mode overdone	Casino gaming machine players	Casino table game players
Machines	10.5 (5.6 - 17.7)*	4.9 (0.8 - 15.1) <sup>ns</sup>
Tables	3.7 (0.7 - 10.4) <sup>ns</sup>	13.5 (2.8 - 35.1) <sup>ns</sup>
Machines and tables	0.3 (0.1 - 0.5) <sup>ns</sup>	1.0 (0.4 - 1.9) <sup>ns</sup>
Machines or tables	13.9 (7.7 - 22.4) <sup>ns</sup>	17.4 (5.1 - 38.5) <sup>ns</sup>

Note: Casino gambler categories overlap. See *Changes since 2007* below for comparisons over time.

Table 1 presents the proportions of those who gambled too much on machines or tables out of those who played casino gaming machines, and those who played casino table games in the past twelve months. Table 1 shows that one-in-ten casino gaming machine players (10.5%) gambled too much on casino gaming machines. This compares to one-in-five (21.2%, 13.8628.5) non-casino gaming machine players gambling too much on non-casino gaming machines in the past twelve months.

Of those aged twenty years and over who had played casino gaming machines at least once every three months, a third (33.8%, 14.0658.8)<sup>ns</sup> felt they had gambled too much at a casino in the past twelve months, all of these felt they had gambled too much on casino gaming machines (33.8%, 14.0658.8)<sup>ns</sup>, while 1.5% (0.662.9)<sup>ns</sup> of (at least) quarterly casino gaming machine players felt they had gambled too much on casino table games in the past twelve months. By way of comparison, one-in-three (36.5%, 24.6648.4) (at least) quarterly non-casino gaming machine players reported that they gambled too much on non-casino gaming machines in the past twelve months.

2010 HLS respondents were also asked which gambling type they felt they had gambled too much on the *most often*.

Just under two percent (1.9%, 0.267.1) of New Zealanders aged twenty years and over felt that the gambling mode they had overdone their gambling with most often in the past twelve months was casino gambling. Casino gaming machines made up one percent (1.0%, 0.164.0), with table games making up the rest (0.8%, 0.063.7). These figures compare with just under four percent of New Zealanders (3.8%, 2.265.3) citing non-casino gaming machines as the mode they gambled too much on the most often. Lotto was thought to be the mode gambled on too much the most often by one percent of New Zealanders (1.0%, 0.561.8), while betting on horse or dog races was the mode for 0.9% (0.066.9) of people.

Looking at just those people who had played at a casino in the past twelve months, one-in-eight (12.4%, 6.4621.2) felt that casino gambling was the mode they had gambled too much on the most often, while one-in-nine (10.5%, 5.2618.4) felt that non-casino gaming machines was the mode they had gambled too much on the most often. Two percent of casino gamblers (1.9%, 0.664.4) thought they had gambled too much on another mode the most often.

The problem gambling severity index (PGSI) is an indicator of a person's risk of problem gambling. PGSI proportions among types of casino gamblers are presented in Table 2. Further analyses showed that casino gamblers were significantly more likely to be at-risk or problem gamblers, and significantly less likely to be non-problem gamblers than gamblers who did not play at casinos. Analyses also showed that among casino gamblers, those who played casino gaming machines at least quarterly were significantly more likely to be problem gamblers than other casino gamblers, and significantly less likely to be non-problem gamblers than other casino gamblers.

**Table 2: Problem gambling severity index (PGSI) classifications, percentages, 2010**

<b>PGSI gambler classification</b>	<b>Casino table game players</b>	<b>Casino gaming machine players</b>	<b>Quarterly casino gaming machine players</b>	<b>All casino players</b>	<b>Non-casino gaming machine players</b>	<b>Quarterly non-casino gaming machine players</b>
Non-problem	64.0 (41.7 - 82.6)	72.9 (63.2 - 82.7)	42.7 (20.1 - 67.8)	70.1 (59.9 - 80.4)	71.7 (64.1 - 79.3)	58.0 (46.4 - 69.5)
Low-risk	20.1 (6.8 - 40.9)	11.1 (5.6 - 16.5)	25.1 (9.2 - 48.1)	13.6 (7.2 - 20.0)	16.1 (9.8 - 22.5)	22.6 (12.0 - 33.2)
Moderate risk	14.8 (4.1 - 34.0)	11.0 (4.8 - 20.7)	15.3 (2.6 - 41.2)	11.5 (5.4 - 20.8)	8.9 (5.1 - 12.6)	13.1 (7.0 - 19.2)
Problem	1.1 (0.0 - 5.5)	5.0 (1.6 - 11.3)	16.9 (2.9 - 44.9)	4.8 (1.5 - 10.8)	3.3 (1.5 - 6.3)	6.2 (2.9 - 11.6)

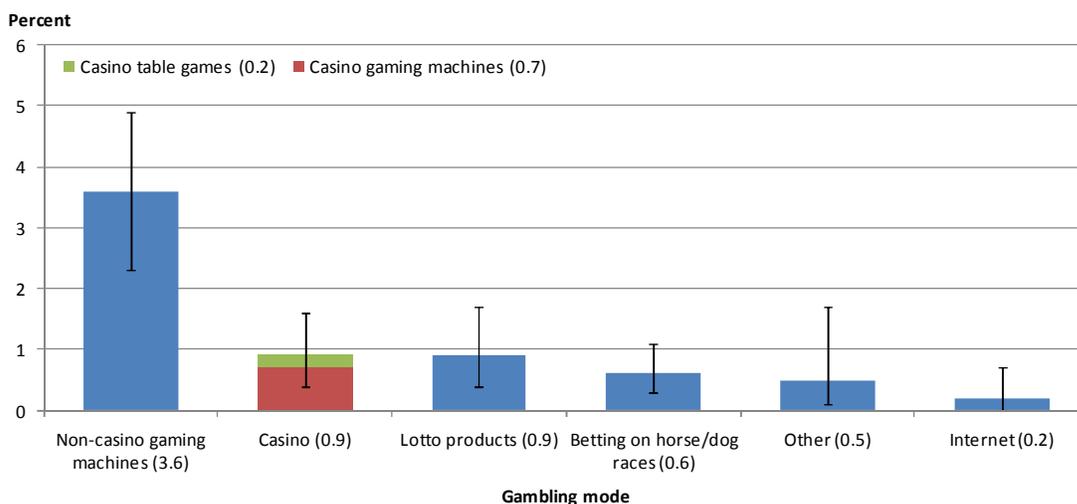
Note: Casino gambler categories overlap. The sample size is too small to present figures for quarterly casino table game players.

## Whānau/Household Harm

2010 HLS respondents were asked whether *an argument about time or money spent on gambling had happened among their wider family or household in the past twelve months; or whether anyone had had to go without something they needed or some bills weren't paid because too much was spent on gambling by another person in their wider family or household*. Respondents were then asked which type of gambling this happened *most often* with.

Results are presented in Figure 1, and show that while non-casino gaming machines were most often associated with household harm (ie, experience of either of the above situations), Lotto and casino gambling were the second most often with just under one percent of New Zealanders aged twenty years and over experiencing whānau/household harm that was most often associated with each of these types of gambling.

**Figure 1: Gambling mode associated most with whānau/household harm in the past twelve months, 2010**



2010 HLS respondents were asked if, over the past twelve months, they have felt that someone close to them, like a friend, family member, or partner has had a day or occasion where they spent much more time or money than they meant to on gambling. Respondents were then asked which type this happened most often with.

Four percent of New Zealanders aged twenty years and over (4.0%, 2.565.5) thought that a friend or family member had gambled too much at casinos. Casino gaming machines made up 2.6% (1.26 4.1), and casino table games 1.4% (0.662.7). These figures compare with 9.9% (8.0611.9) who felt non-casino gaming machines were gambled on too much by friends/family, 3.6% (2.364.9) thought it was betting on horse or dog races, while 1.8% (0.962.6) believed friends/family gambled too much on Lotto products.

## Changes since 2007

Some of the questions included in the 2010 HLS were also in the 2006/07 Gaming and Betting Activities Survey and the 2008 HLS. Where possible comparisons have been made between these surveys, however due to the age group variables previously used these could only be done for those aged 18 years and over, rather than those aged 20 years and over. Where these comparisons showed there has been no significant change since 2007 this has been indicated above with a superscript <sup>ns</sup>. Where a significant change from 2007 has occurred this has been indicated above with an asterisk.

Table 3 presents the figures for those **aged 18 years and over** for questions where there has been a significant change since 2007. These figures show:

- there have been significant decreases in the proportions of people who thought that types of casino gambling were more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should.
- the proportion of casino gamblers who gambled too much on casino gaming machines has halved since 2007.

**Table 3: Significant changes found between the 2006/07 GBAS and the 2010 HLS, 18 years and over**

	2007	2010
People who thought casino gambling was more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should	69.2 (65.8 - 72.6)	52.2 (48.0 - 56.3)
People who thought casino gaming machines/pokies were more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should	67.2 (63.7 - 70.7)	50.7 (45.9 - 55.5)
People who thought casino table games were more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should	51.4 (47.5 - 55.4)	28.7 (23.7 - 33.7)
People who thought both casino gaming machines and table games were more likely to attract people into playing more often or for more money than they should	49.4 (45.4 - 53.4)	27.2 (22.5 - 31.8)
Casino gamblers who had had a day or an outing where they spent more time or money gambling than they meant to on casino gaming machines	18.8 (9.7 - 27.9)	9.8 (5.2 - 16.5)
Casino gaming machine players who had had a day or an outing where they spent more time or money gambling than they meant to on casino gaming machines	21.7 (11.2 - 32.3)	10.3 (5.4 - 17.3)

## Conclusion

On almost all the measures presented here, casino gamblers appear to be at least as at-risk of problem gambling as non-casino gaming machine players. However there do not appear to be any significant differences in the proportions of harm between players of casino gaming machines and casino table game players. This is likely to be due to the fact that most table game players are also gaming machine players. There does appear to be a frequency effect, with casino gamblers who play gaming machines at least once every three months being at a higher risk of problem gambling than other casino gamblers. Of these players, one-in-three felt they had gambled too much on casino gaming machines in the previous twelve months.

It is also interesting to note the similar sized proportions of casino gamblers who felt they had gambled too much on casino gambling the most, and those who felt they had gambled too much on non-casino gaming machines the most.

These results show that casino gamblers are at risk of experiencing harm from their gambling; however, fifty percent of people do not believe casino gambling is more likely than other modes to attract people to play too much, and most people do not think casino gambling is socially undesirable.

It is important the risks of casino gambling are recognised so that any resulting harm can be minimised.

## About the Survey

- The HLS is a nationwide in-home face-to-face survey conducted every two years, starting in 2008. The 2010 HLS consisted of a sample of 1,740 New Zealanders aged 15 years and over, who provided information about their health behaviours and attitudes relating to tobacco, sun safety, healthy eating, gambling, and alcohol.
- In 2010, the main sample, with a response rate of 57%, included 1067 people of European/Other ethnicity, 460 M ori, 326 Pacific peoples and 124 Asian people (total response ethnic groups).
- The data have been adjusted (weighted) to ensure they are representative of the New Zealand population.
- A full description of the 2010 HLS survey methodology, questionnaire and further HLS publications can be found online at [www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html](http://www.hsc.org.nz/researchpublications.html).

## About the HSC

The HSC is a crown entity that uses health promotion initiatives to promote health and encourage healthy lifestyles, with a long-term focus on reducing the social, financial and health costs of a number of health behaviours.

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