

Local communities' concerns with gambling

Background

The number of electronic gaming machines (EGMs) in New Zealand reached a peak of 25,221 in 2003. Since then the number of EGMs has gradually decreased as the Gambling Act, 2003, set upper limits on the number of EGMs per venue. In New Zealand, territorial authorities (district and city councils) determine whether new EGM venues can be established, where the venues may be located, and whether existing venues can add new EGMs (Gambling Act, 2003, Section 101).

The Health Sponsorship Council's (HSC's) 2010 Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) provides information about New Zealanders' knowledge of who regulates EGMs. The survey also indicates New Zealanders' knowledge of, and participation in, activities to reduce the harms that can be brought about by problem gambling.

Notes

The figures presented here are for New Zealanders aged 15 years and over ('adults').

The term 'gamblers', as used here, refers to anyone who has bet any money, bought tickets or paid to do any activities for money or prizes in the past 12 months. More than 80% of New Zealanders fit this definition.

Appropriate statistical analyses were used to test for ethnicity, age group, level of neighbourhood deprivation, and gender differences.

Responsibility for decisions about gaming machines

Respondents to the 2010 HLS were asked "Do you know who is responsible for deciding whether places in your area can start operating gaming machines, or pokies, and for deciding whether existing places can add more machines?". Those who answered yes to the question (32.9% of all adults) were asked who they thought was responsible. One-quarter (24.7%) of all adults correctly answered that territorial authorities were responsible for decisions related to EGMs.

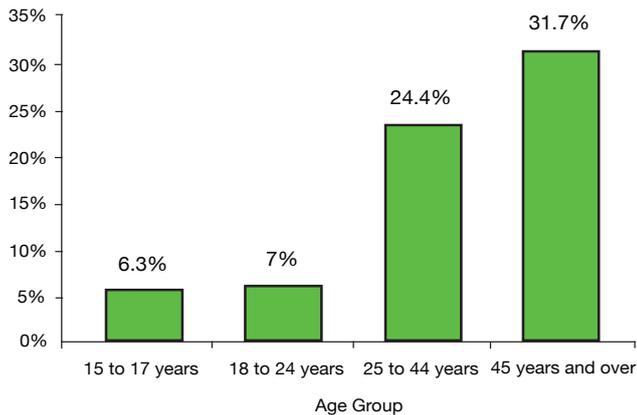
The people more likely to correctly know who was responsible for decisions regarding EGMs were:

- older adults compared to younger adults (see Figure 1)
- gamblers (27.1%) compared to non-gamblers (14.6%)
- New Zealand European/Other adults (25.6%) compared to Pacific adults (15.7%), with no other differences between the ethnicities.

The same question was asked in the HSC's 2006/07 Gaming and Betting Activity Survey (GBAS), but only for people aged 18 years and over. In that survey 26% of people correctly answered that local territorial authorities were responsible for decisions regarding EGMs, which is the same as the figure for the group aged 18 years and older from the HLS (25.7%).

Local communities' concerns with gambling (continued)

Figure 1. Percentage of adults who knew their local territorial authority is responsible for making decisions about electronic gaming machines, by age group, 2010.



Community interactions regarding problem gambling

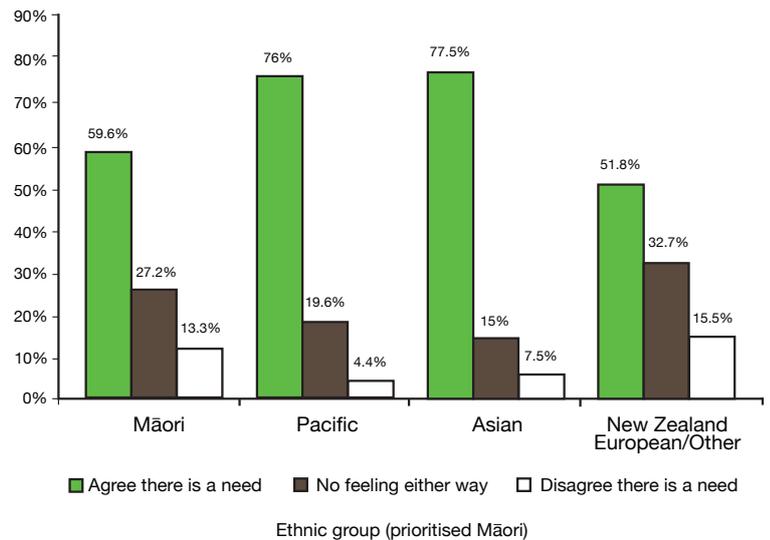
All adults were asked “Would you agree or disagree with the following statement as it applies to your local community – There is a need for your community to talk about problems that come from gambling and to work out local solutions?”. More than half (55.9%) of all adults agreed, with 14% disagreeing and 30% having no feeling either way.

- Pacific and Asian adults were most likely to agree that there was a need for community discussion (see Figure 2), although the difference between Māori and Asian adults was not significant.
- There were no differences in the proportion of people agreeing or having no feeling either way across the levels of deprivation. However, adults from the

least deprived areas were more likely to say there was no need for community discussion than adults from the most deprived areas (21.8% and 8.3% disagreement respectively).

- A small proportion of all adults (3.5%) had taken part in a community discussion about gambling problems in the previous five years.

Figure 2. Responses about the need for community discussion regarding problem gambling, by ethnic group, 2010.



These questions were also asked in the GBAS survey. For GBAS, 46.7% agreed there was a need for community discussion, and 3.9% said they had taken part in a community discussion. The figures for the HLS group aged 18 years and older were 56.8% for agreeing there is a need (a significant increase from the GBAS), and 3.5% for taking part (no significant change).

Local communities' concerns with gambling (continued)

Other activities that people and communities can do to respond to gambling harm

All adults were asked whether they had heard of and taken part in other activities that people and communities can undertake to address issues caused by problem gambling. The specific activities asked about were:

1. Voluntary, sporting, or community organisations seeking funds from sources not associated with EGM gambling (heard of by 30.3% of all adults, taken part in by 7.5% of all adults).
 2. Writing or making submissions to the local council on its gambling policy (heard of by 21.2%, taken part in by 1.3%).
 3. Community action or neighbourhood groups that work towards minimising the harms caused by gambling in their local areas (heard of by 14.7%, taken part in by 1.1%).
 4. Community monitoring of local bars and clubs with EGMs (heard of by 14%, taken part in by 0.4%).
 5. Taking part in an Internet forum or discussion group (heard of by 1.3%, taken part in by 0.2%).
- 47.1% of all adults had heard of at least one of these activities, and 9% had taken part in at least one activity previously
 - Asian people, compared to the other ethnicities, were the least likely to have heard of organisations seeking funding sources not associated with EGM

gambling. Pacific people were less likely to have heard of this activity than New Zealand European/Other ethnicities (see Table 1).

- Asian people were less likely to have heard of writing submissions to the local council than the other ethnicities (see Table 1).

Table 1. Percent of adults who were aware of the “seeking non-electronic gaming machine funding” and “writing submissions to the local council” activities, by ethnicity, 2010.

Ethnic group (prioritised Māori)	Other activity	
	Seeking non-electric gaming machine funding	Writing submission to the local council
Māori	28.4%	21.8%
Pacific	20.1%	24.4%
Asian	5.1%	6.9%
New Zealand European/Other	34.0%	22.5%

Key Points

About a quarter of adults knew who was responsible for making decisions regarding EGMs in their community, with the knowledge being higher for older adults and gamblers. There has been no change in this figure since 2007.

Over half of all adults felt there was a need for their community to discuss the problems caused by gambling and their possible solutions, but fewer than one in 20 people had taken part in such a community discussion. There has been an increase in the proportion of people who see a need for

Local communities' concerns with gambling (continued)

community discussion since 2007, but little change in the proportion who have been involved in a community discussion.

Almost half of all adults had heard of one of the activities people and communities can do to address issues caused by problem gambling, although fewer than 10% of adults had done any of the activities. Asian people were less likely to have heard of the two most common activities (finding funding

sources not associated with EGMs and writing submissions) compared to the other ethnicities.

Please note, although more people indicated taking part in at least one of the other activities than in a community discussion there was no time frame set for the other activities. In contrast, the community discussion had to have occurred within the previous five years.

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 866 people of European/Other ethnicity, 460 Māori, 301 Pacific peoples and 113 Asian people (prioritised Māori 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.

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.

Citation

Murray, S. J. (2011). *Local communities' concerns about gambling*. [In Fact] Wellington: Health Sponsorship Council.