

## Problem gambling: young people most at risk, new statistics show

New study finds overall number of gamblers in B.C. has not changed but problem gamblers are fewer

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Efforts to reduce problem gambling are working, says the B.C. government, but it still plans to step up efforts to help young people with a gambling addiction.

"That younger demographic is where the data and research tells us there is a higher risk in acquiring gambling addictions," said **Finance Minister Mike de Jong** at the New Horizons responsible gambling conference on Tuesday.

De Jong said the new plan will target vulnerable people with several new initiatives focused on youth, education and research.

Although people aged between 18 and 24 are the least likely age group to gamble, they were most likely to become problem gamblers, said de Jong.

### What is problem gambling?

The term "problem gamblers" refers to all moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers as defined by the Canadian Problem Gambling Index.

Moderate risk gamblers are those who experience some negative consequences as a result of gambling, while high-risk gamblers are individuals who report significant negative consequences and may experience a loss of control.

According to the 2014 [Problem Gambling Prevalence Study](#), in 2008 there were 159,000 people identified as problem gamblers in B.C., or about 4.6 per cent of the population.

By 2014 there were 125,000 people identified as problem gamblers, about 3.3 per cent of the province's population.

Among 18 to 24 year olds specifically, 7.3 per cent were classified as problem gamblers, and 18.4 per cent were classified as at-risk/problem gamblers.

## More gambling statistics:

- 7.9 per cent of adults in B.C. are considered to be at low-risk for problem gambling, meaning they experience few or no negative consequences as a result of gambling.
- An estimated 88.8 per cent of the population are either non-problem gamblers, or did not gamble in the 12 months prior to being surveyed.
- The study also found overall levels of gambling in B.C. remain unchanged since 2008 at 72.5 per cent.
- The number of types of gambling in which adults participated increased, with lotteries participation increasing by 23 per cent. Overall 81.6 per cent of those surveyed reported playing lotteries.
- The study also found people with higher incomes were more likely to gamble.

Source: [2014 study conducted by R.A. Malatest & Associates for the B.C. government](#), which included telephone and online sampling, resulting in a total of 3,058 completed surveys, with a minimum of 600 completions in each of B.C.'s health regions. It was the fifth time the research was done since 1993.