



MEDIA RELEASE

SURVEY REVEALS PROBABLE PATHOLOGICAL AND PROBLEM GAMBLING RATES IN 2017 REMAIN STABLE

The 2017 Gambling Participation Survey, conducted by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), has found that Singapore's probable pathological and problem gambling rates have remained stable, but social safeguards, public education and help treatment services remain crucial.

2. This is the fifth survey that NCPG has conducted on gambling participation. The survey found that 52% of Singapore residents aged 18 and above participated in at least one form of gambling activity in the last one year, compared to 44% in 2014. This increase was primarily contributed by 4D, Toto and social gambling. However, gambling participation has remained relatively stable over the last 12 years since the first survey in 2005, with about half the population found to be participating in at least one form of gambling activity.

	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017
Gambling Participation Rate	58%	54%	47%	44%	52%

Gambling participation rate from 2005 to 2017

3. The survey also found that the overall probable pathological and problem gambling (PPG) rates¹ among Singapore residents remain stable at less than 1%. Specifically, the probable pathological gambling rate for 2017 is 0.1%, compared to 0.2% in 2014. The probable problem gambling rate for 2017 is 0.8%, compared to 0.5% in 2014. The differences in these corresponding rates from 2014 to 2017 are not statistically significant.

4. Although the proportion who are probable pathological gamblers has been stable, this group of gamblers remains a cause for concern. These gamblers continue to exhibit poor self-control in terms of gambling for longer periods of time, with more money, and more frequently than they had planned to. The survey also found that probable pathological gamblers experienced strained family relations and less satisfaction with family life as a result of their gambling habits.

¹ Probable pathological gambling indicates more severe addiction compared to probable problem gambling.

Prevention of Problem Gambling Remains High on NCPG's Agenda

5. Despite its statistically low rates, problem gambling remains a social ill with negative consequences, not just on the gamblers but also on their families and the community at large. To ensure that gamblers can access help easily, the NCPG has expanded the number of physical help centres from two to six across the island in the last two years. It also introduced a new e-counselling service which can be conducted entirely over the phone or Internet.

6. Mr Tan Kian Hoon, Chairman of the NCPG said, "All segments of the population can be susceptible to gambling addiction and we must keep up our efforts to prevent, identify and treat problem gambling. We are especially concerned with the vulnerable pockets of society, such as our youths who may be lured into online gambling. With World Cup 2018 coming up, the NCPG would also be stepping up our public education efforts to remind gamblers of the perils of gambling addiction. The NCPG will also continue to improve the accessibility of help services."

7. Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development, said, "We must continue to find better ways to help those who are affected by problem gambling. The government will work closely with NCPG to step up and enhance preventive work among young people and vulnerable groups, and improve the help services that are available to problem gamblers and their families. At the same time, we believe that the community can also play a role to reach out and encourage those affected by problem gambling to seek help early."

8. The NCPG urges individuals to exercise personal responsibility, and family members and the community to encourage those with gambling problems to seek help. They can do so by calling the National Problem Gambling Helpline at 1800-6-668-668 or using the WebChat service at www.ncpg.org.sg. The report on the 2017 Gambling Participation Survey will be available on the NCPG website (www.ncpg.org.sg) from 26 March 2018, 11.30am.

About the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)

The NCPG was appointed in August 2005 as part of Singapore's national framework to address problem gambling, and is now into its seventh term (2017-2019). The Council is committed to address problem gambling in Singapore, across all forms of gambling, through public education and outreach programmes and the provision of help services. NCPG offers the National Problem Gambling Helpline and WebChat service, administered by the National Addictions Management Service. NCPG also administers Casino Exclusions and Casino Visit Limits for those who are affected by or who are vulnerable to problem gambling. Don't Let Gambling Become a Problem. Take Action Now! Call 1800-6-668-668 or WebChat www.ncpg.org.sg.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Why does the PPG rate remain stable from 2014 to 2017 despite an increase in the gambling participation rate? How does this compare with other countries?

The PPG rate can remain stable even if there is an increase in the gambling participation rate because the PPG rate is not correlated with the gambling participation rate. The findings from different jurisdictions (shown in table below) indicate that PPG and gambling participation rates are not correlated:

Jurisdiction	Gambling Participation Rate	Probable Pathological and Problem Gambling Rates
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% (2017) • 44% (2014) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.9 (2017) • 0.7 (2014)
Hong Kong ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61.5% (2016) • 62.3% (2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.4% (2016) • 2.0% (2012)
Macau ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51.5% (2016) • 49.5% (2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5% (2016) • 2.8% (2013)
UK ⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48% (2016) • 63% (2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.7% (2016) • 0.8% (2015)
USA ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76.9% (2011-2013) • 82.2% (1999-2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.0% (2011-2013) • 2.4% (1999-2000)
South Australia ⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 68.8% (2012) • 69.5% (2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.6% (2012) • 1.6% (2005)
New Zealand ⁷	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71.0% (2014) • 70.3% (2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.7% (2014) • 0.7% (2012)

2) What is e-counselling?

E-counselling is a form of one-to-one counselling entirely done over the phone or internet by a trained counsellor. It offers a safe, non-threatening mode of counselling for those seeking help for an issue like problem gambling as it allows anonymity; and is a new help-seeking channel for those who may not otherwise seek help due to time constraints or lack of anonymity.

² Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (2017). *Report on the Study of Hong Kong People's Participation in Gambling Activities in 2016*.

³ Institute for the Study of Commercial Gaming, University of Macau (2016). *Report on A Study of Macao People's Participation in Gambling Activities 2016*.

⁴ Gambling Commission (2017). *Annual Report, Gambling participation in 2016: Behaviour, awareness and attitudes*; Anne Conolly, Elizabeth Fuller, Hollie Jones, Natalie Maplethorpe, Annemijn Sondaal, Heather Wardle (2017). *Gambling behaviour in Great Britain in 2015*. NatCen Social Research.

⁵ John W. Welte, Grace M. Barnes, Marie-Cecile O. Tidwell, Joseph H. Hoffman, William F. Wiczorek (2015). *Gambling and Problem Gambling in the United States: Changes Between 1999 and 2013*. J Gambl Stud.

⁶ *Gambling Prevalence in South Australia (2005) / (2012)*

⁷ Tu, D., & Puthipiroj, P. (2017). *New Zealanders' Participation in Gambling: Results from the 2014 Health and Lifestyles Survey*. Wellington: Health Promotion Agency Research and Evaluation Unit.

3) How many help-seeking calls/webchats did the National Problem Gambling Helpline receive over the last 5 years?

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No. of Calls	20,894	21,782	20,801	22,092	18,003
No. of Webchats	NA	357	1,575	1,902	1,625
Cumulative Total	20,894	22,139	22,376	23,994	19,628

4) Where are the help agencies located?

You may contact the following agencies if you require help:

1. THK Centre for Family Harmony @ Circuit
Address: Blk 37 Circuit Road, #02-455 S(370037)
Tel: 6747 7514
2. The Resilienz Clinic
Address: 10 Sinaran Drive #10-03 Novena Medical Centre S(307506)
Tel: 6397 7300
3. Healthway Medical Group (PsychHealth Practice)
Address: The Centrepoint, 176 Orchard Road, #06-01, S(238843)
Tel: 6737 9707
* They have 4 locations and will assign you to the centre that is most convenient for you.

5) When will the next Gambling Participation Survey be conducted and released?

The Survey is carried out every three years. The next one will be conducted in 2020 and is scheduled to be released in 2021.

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