

29 July 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

DECREASE IN GAMBLING PARTICIPATION RATE IN 2020

The 2020 Gambling Participation Survey, conducted by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), has shown that there has been a decrease in Singapore's gambling participation rate while probable pathological and problem gambling rates continued to remain low. Nevertheless, social safeguards, public education and help treatment services remain crucial.

2. This is the sixth survey that the NCPG has conducted on gambling participation. The survey found that 44% of Singapore residents aged 18 and above participated in at least one form of gambling activity, compared to 52% in the 2017 survey. This decrease was observed across most demographic groups and gambling products such as 4D, TOTO and social gambling. On the whole, about half the population in Singapore gambles since the inception of the survey in 2005.

	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020
Gambling Participation Rate	58%	54%	47%	44%	52%	44%

Gambling participation rate from 2005 to 2020

3. The survey also found that the overall probable pathological and problem gambling (PPPG) rates¹ among Singapore residents remained low at 1.2%. Specifically, the probable pathological gambling rate for 2020 was 0.2%, compared to 0.1% in 2017. The probable problem gambling rate for 2020 was 1.0%, compared to 0.8% in 2017. The differences in the rates from 2017 to 2020 were not statistically significant.

4. The median monthly betting amounts of gamblers decreased from \$30 in 2017 to \$15 in 2020, with 89% of gamblers betting \$100 or less per month. Only a very small

¹ Pathological gambling indicates more severe addiction compared to problem gambling. Refer to Annex A for the full definitions of probable pathological and problem gambling.

proportion (0.3%) gambled with large amounts (i.e. average monthly betting amount of more than \$1,000).

5. The 2020 survey found that frequent gamblers (i.e. those who gambled at least once a week) were more likely than non-frequent gamblers to have poor self-control² in gambling. The survey also found that gamblers with poor self-control in gambling were more likely to regret the way they had gambled their money and experience negative outcomes due to gambling.

Prevention of Problem Gambling Remains NCPG's Priority

6. Problem gambling remains a concern as the negative consequences affect not just the gamblers but their families too.

7. Mr Tan Kian Hoon, Chairman of the NCPG said, "The gambling landscape continues to evolve rapidly. NCPG will work with the government to study gambling-related developments and advise on measures to strengthen protection of those vulnerable to the harms of gambling. To mitigate the risks of online gambling and gambling risks in electronic games, especially amid the pandemic, the NCPG will be stepping up our public education efforts on the risk of problem gambling. The NCPG will also continue to work with our partners to ensure that help services continue to remain accessible to everyone."

8. Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development, said, "The Government regularly reviews our regulatory framework and social safeguards across all gambling products to ensure they remain relevant in addressing new gambling products and trends. Amid emerging gambling products and risks, we must and will continue to protect individuals and their families from the harms of problem gambling – especially those who are more vulnerable. Families and the community continue to play an important role, including encouraging those affected by problem gambling to seek help early."

9. For those who wish to seek help, you may 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 2020 Gambling Participation Survey will be available on the NCPG website (www.ncpg.org.sg) from 29 July 2021, 6.30pm.

² A gambler is defined to have poor self-control if he/she gambled: (i) for a longer period of time or (ii) with more money or (iii) more frequently than planned.

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 eighth term (2019 - 2021). The Council is committed to address problem gambling in Singapore, across all forms of gambling, through public education programmes and the provision of help services. NCPG also administers Casino Exclusions and Casino Visit Limits for those who are affected by or who are vulnerable to problem gambling. Those who wish to seek help may call the National Problem Gambling Helpline at 1800-6-668-668 or use the WebChat service at www.ncpg.org.sg.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is probable pathological and problem gambling (PPPG)?

Pathological and problem gambling are forms of gambling disorders and are defined using the DSM-V scale, which is typically administered by a professional. As the DSM-V results for the Gambling Participation Survey are not based off a clinical assessment but rather on self-reported behaviour, the report uses the term 'probable' pathological and problem gambling.

Pathological gambling refers to a more severe form of gambling disorder than problem gambling. It involves a pattern of excessive and destructive gambling behaviour. A person with a score of at least 4 out of 9 on the DSM-V scale is considered a probable pathological gambler.

Problem gambling refers to a form of gambling disorder which results in a wide range of adverse consequences as a result of gambling, but does not meet the full criteria on the DSM-V scale to satisfy a diagnosis of probable pathological gambling (score of 2 – 3 out of 9 on the DSM-V scale).

2. Why did the Probable Pathological and Problem Gambling (PPPG) rate increase from 2017 to 2020 despite the decrease in the gambling participation rate?

This means that the increase may be due to factors such as random differences in the samples drawn from the population, rather than reflect an actual increase in the pathological and problem gambling rates within the Singapore Resident population. Our overall PPPG rate continued to remain low.

3. Is the Gambling Participation Survey 2020 still comparable with previous surveys in light of COVID-19?

To account for COVID-19 restrictions on gambling operations and in-person interviews, adjustments were made to the 2020 survey to ensure comparability with past surveys.

First, the survey questionnaire was revised in June 2020 to ask respondents about their gambling behaviour in 2019 (pre-COVID-19), instead of the last 12 months, to minimise the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on their reported gambling behaviour. Nonetheless, restrictions on gambling activities during the period of survey may still have affected responses. This may partly explain the lower reported gambling participation rate of 44% for the 2020 survey.

Second, as the Circuit Breaker and safe management measures disrupted face-to-face interviews, respondents were given the option to complete the survey via video conferencing, in addition to face-to-face interviews in line with safe management measures. 18% of respondents completed via videoconferencing while the remaining 82% of respondents completed their survey via face-to-face interviews.

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

The Helpline averaged about 13,842 calls and webchats per annum over the last 3 years (2018 – 2020).

Year	2018	2019	2020
No. of Calls	13,580	11,694	7,592
No. of Webchats	2,999	3,213	2,449
Cumulative Total	16,579	14,907	10,041

5. What are the help services available for individuals and families affected by problem gambling provided by NCPG and other organisations?

NCPG Appointed Agency:

The Resilienz Clinic

Address: 10 Sinaran Drive #10-03 Novena Medical Center S(307506)

Tel: 6397 7300

NCPG is not affiliated to the following agencies and will only make referrals upon client's request.

Counselling and/or group support meetings for gambling addiction:

Arise2Care Community Services

Address: 5 Harper Road, #02-01A, Singapore 369673

Tel: 6909 0628

Blessed Grace Gamblers Recovery Centre

Address: 18 Arumugam Road, #05-01, Antioch@MacPherson, Singapore 409962

Tel: 8428 6377

The Silver Lining Community Services

Address: 11 Playfair Road, Singapore 367986

Tel: 6749 0400

WE CARE Community Services

Address: 11 Jalan Ubi, Block S, #01-41 Kembangan-Chai Chee Community Hub,
Singapore 409074
Tel: 3165 8017

THK Centre for Family Harmony @ Circuit

Address: 37 Circuit Road, #02-455, Singapore 370037
Tel: 6747 7514

One Hope Centre

Address: 8 New Industrial Road, #04-04B, LHK3 Building, Singapore 536200
Tel: 65471011

Adullam Life Counselling

Address: 151 Chin Swee Road, #08-04 Manhattan House, Singapore 169876
Tel: 6659 7844

Ascending Hope Community Services

Address: 37 Jalan Pemimpin, #07-02, Mapex Building, Singapore 577177
Tel: 9787 7100

Treatment and counselling for various types of addictions, including gambling:**The National Addictions Management Service (NAMS)**

Address: Buangkok Green Medical Park, 10 Buangkok View, NAMS Clinic -
Basement, Blk 9, Singapore 539747
All Addictions Helpline: 6 - RECOVER (6 732 6837)

Changi General Hospital (Addiction Medicine Clinic)

Address: 2 Simei Street 3, Singapore 529889
Tel: 6850 3333 (Please call for appointment)

6. When will the next Gambling Participation Survey be conducted and released?

The Gambling Participation Survey is conducted once every three years. The next survey will be conducted in 2023 and results are scheduled to be released in 2024.

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