

# **REPORT ON SURVEY ON PARTICIPATION IN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES AMONG SINGAPORE RESIDENTS, 2023**



**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING  
28 Nov 2024**

## REPORT ON SURVEY ON PARTICIPATION IN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES AMONG SINGAPORE RESIDENTS, 2023

1. This report summarises the findings from the 2023 Survey on Participation in Gambling Activities among Singapore Residents. This is the seventh survey conducted on participation in gambling activities among Singapore Residents, following similar studies conducted since 2005. The last survey was conducted in 2020. Findings from the 2017 and 2020 surveys are also included in this report to provide additional context to the 2023 survey findings.
2. The objectives of this survey are to:
  - a. Assess the extent and pattern of gambling among adult Singapore residents; and
  - b. Ascertain the prevalence of problem gambling.
3. In addition to the overall gambling participation rates and probable pathological and problem gambling rates, the report highlights key findings on gambling behaviours from the survey (e.g., most popular gambling activities, most commonly used channel). It also publishes findings on online gambling in view of global trends.
4. Details of the survey methodology are provided in [Annex A](#).

### GAMBLING PATTERNS

#### ***Overall gambling participation decreased to 40%***

5. 40% of Singapore residents aged 18 and above reported that they had participated in at least one form of gambling activity in the 2023 survey (henceforth referred to as “gamblers”). This was a decrease from 52% in the 2017 survey and 44% in the 2020 survey<sup>1</sup> (see [Annex B, Table B1](#)).

#### ***The most popular types of gambling activities continued to be 4D and TOTO***

6. A large proportion of respondents continued to bet on lotteries, followed by social gambling, similar to gambling patterns from the 2017 and 2020 surveys. The 2023 survey found that the most popular types of gambling activities were 4D (30%), TOTO (29%), Singapore Sweep (8%) and social gambling (8%) (see [Annex B, Table B2](#)).
7. About 1% of respondents engaged in illegal online gambling. This was a 0.7%-point increase from the 2020 survey. This increase is aligned with the rising trends in online gambling globally.

---

<sup>1</sup> The decreases from the 2017 survey to the 2020 survey, and from the 2020 survey to the 2023 survey, were both statistically significant at the 5% level. All tests for statistical significance in this report were based on the 5% level.

***Median monthly gambling expenditure increased slightly, but remained lower than the amount found in the 2017 survey***

8. Among gamblers, the reported median monthly gambling expenditure was \$25, an increase from the 2020 survey (\$15). Nevertheless, it was still lower than the 2017 survey (\$30). In addition, as the absolute amount was not large, the increase in expenditure from the 2020 survey was not deemed to be worrying (see Annex B, Table B3).

***Majority of gamblers bet less than once a week***

9. Majority of gamblers (69%) bet less than once a week across all products, similar to the 2017 and 2020 surveys (see Annex B, Figure B4). For gamblers who bet at least once a week, most (97%) tended to bet on lotteries (see Annex B, Table B5).

***Most gamblers continued to bet through legal channels***

10. Similar to findings from the 2017 and 2020 surveys, most gamblers (92%) bet through or at Singapore Pools (i.e., legal channel), which has safeguards and responsible gambling measures in place (see Annex B, Table B6).

**PROBABLE PATHOLOGICAL AND PROBLEM GAMBLING<sup>2</sup> (PPG)**

***The overall PPG rate remained low and stable at 1.1%***

11. The proportion of respondents classified as probable pathological gamblers remained low at around 0.2%, similar to that found in the 2017 and 2020 surveys (see Annex B, Table B7). Similarly, the proportion of respondents classified as probable problem gamblers also remained stable at around 1%. The overall PPG rate is thus 1.1%<sup>3</sup>.

**SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FROM THE SURVEY ON PARTICIPATION IN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES, 2023**

12. The key findings of the 2023 Survey on Participation in Gambling Activities among Singapore Residents are summarised as follows:
  - a. The overall gambling participation rate in the 2023 survey decreased to 40% from 44% in the 2020 survey, and the overall PPG rate continued to remain

---

<sup>2</sup> Probable pathological and problem gamblers were identified by their responses to screening questions that were based on the diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-V), developed by the American Psychiatric Association (see Annex C). Pathological gambling represents a more severe form of gambling addiction compared to problem gambling.

<sup>3</sup> All reported figures were rounded to 1 decimal point. As such, the probable pathological (0.2%) and problem (1.0%) gambling rates reported will not sum up to the overall figure (1.1%) due to rounding.

low at around 1%. This is indicative that our social safeguards continue to work.

- i. While the median monthly gambling expenditure increased from \$15 in the 2020 survey to \$25 in the 2023 survey, the amount was still lower than that in the 2017 survey (\$30). Gamblers generally bet on lotteries and social gambling, and through legal channels, which have safeguards in place.
  - ii. We note an increasing trend in illegal online gambling, and will continue to monitor the situation closely. We will also strengthen public education efforts to address people's perceptions on online gambling.
- b. Notwithstanding that the PPG rates are low and stable, problem gambling remains a priority for NCPG and MSF.
- i. We will continue to provide help to problem gamblers and promote responsible gambling by educating the public on the social ills and consequences of problem gambling.
  - ii. Families and the community both play an important role, including supporting and encouraging those affected by problem gambling to seek help early.
  - iii. Individuals or families who need help can call the NCPG Helpline at 1800-6-668-668 or use the webchat at [www.ncpg.org.sg](http://www.ncpg.org.sg).

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling and Data Weighting**

The sample is designed to be representative of the local resident population aged 18 years and above. A probability disproportionate stratified sampling method was used to select the subjects. From a sampling frame of residents' addresses, a randomly selected sample of 3,007 Singapore residents was interviewed using a structured questionnaire between July 2023 and March 2024. Minority ethnic groups were over-sampled to allow for meaningful analysis. Post-survey weightings were applied based on the corresponding cohort proportions derived from resident figures provided by the Department of Statistics as of 2022 (i.e., when the sample was obtained). The survey achieved an overall response rate of 73%.

### **Questionnaire Design**

2. Findings from surveys are estimates and are subject to margins of error. Generally, the larger the sample, the smaller the margin of error, notwithstanding factors such as the variability of the data and level of confidence chosen.
3. The Survey on Participation in Gambling Activities, as with all surveys, has some limitations and biases:
  - a. Self-reported information – Since the findings are based on self-reported information, we can only capture “self-professed” behaviour rather than actual behaviour.
  - b. Social desirability bias – Gambling is a sensitive topic and may carry societal stigma in Singapore. This may lead to respondents under-reporting their gambling behaviour, as the survey touches on personal gambling habits. To mitigate this, surveyors were asked to assure interviewees about the strict confidentiality of their individual responses before the interview.
  - c. Recall bias – Respondents were asked to report their gambling behaviour over the past 12 months. Some might have difficulty recalling details over a 12-month period, particularly for older respondents, which might have affected their responses.
4. The screening questions used to identify probable pathological and problem gamblers were based on the diagnostic criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-V) developed by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). The same diagnostic criteria were used in the 2017 and 2020 surveys. Details can be found in Annex C.

**END OF ANNEX A**

**Table B1 – Gambling Participation Rates, by Year of Survey**

	Proportion of Respondents (%)						
	2005	2008	2011	2014	2017	2020	2023
Gambling Participation Rate	58	54	47*	44	52*	44*	40*

Note: Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences at the 5% level and refer to comparisons between that year and the previous survey year only.

**Table B2 – Gambling Participation Rates, by Type of Gambling Activity**

Type of Gambling Activity	Proportion of Respondents (%)		
	2017	2020	2023
<b>Overall</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44*</b>	<b>40*</b>
4D	42	34*	30*
TOTO	36	31*	29
Singapore Sweep	18	17	8*
Social Gambling	21	16*	8*
Illegal Online Gambling	0.9	0.3*	1.0*

Note: Asterisks indicate statistically significant differences at the 5% level and refer to comparisons between that year and the previous survey year only. Survey included other types of gambling activities (e.g., gaming machines in local clubs, horse betting) but numbers have not been included here due to low incidence.

**Table B3 – Median Monthly Gambling Expenditure**

	2017	2020	2023
Median Monthly Gambling Expenditure	\$30	\$15	\$25

**Table B4 – Highest Reported Frequency Across All Gambling Activity**

	Proportion of Gamblers (%)		
	2017	2020	2023
<b>At least once/week</b>	31	29	31
<b>Less than once/week to at least once/month</b>	32	27	31
<b>Less than once/month to at least once/year</b>	37	44	38
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100

Note: If a gambler engaged in 4D at least once a week, and social gambling once every few months, his/her highest reported frequency will be at least once a week. Differences in the proportion of gamblers who bet at least once a week between the 2017 survey and 2020 survey, as well as the 2020 survey and 2023 survey were not statistically significant. Likewise for differences in the proportion of gamblers who bet less than once a week.

**Table B5 – Gambling Activity Associated with the Highest Reported Frequency**

Year	Proportion of Gamblers (%)								
	2017			2020			2023		
Gambling Activity/ Frequency	At least once/ week	Less than once/ week to at least once/ month	Less than once/ month to at least once/ year	At least once/ week	Less than once/ week to at least once/ month	Less than once/ month to at least once/ year	At least once/ week	Less than once/ week to at least once/ month	Less than once/ month to at least once/ year
Lotteries (4D, TOTO, Singapore Sweep)	96	95	75	95	90	81	97	94	85
Social Gambling	4	13	48	5	12	43	4	5	24

Note: The highest reported frequency is across all products i.e., if a gambler engaged in 4D at least once a week, and social gambling once every few months, his/her highest reported frequency will be at least once a week, and the associated activity will be 4D. If a gambler engaged in both 4D and social gambling at least once a week, then 4D and social gambling will be the associated activities. Given that respondents may engage in multiple activities at the same frequency, the columns will not add up to 100%. The survey had included other types of gambling activities (e.g., gaming machines in local clubs, horse betting), but numbers have not been included here due to low incidence.



**Table B6 – Gambling Channel**

Channel	Proportion of Gamblers (%)		
	2017	2020	2023
Singapore Pools (terrestrial and online)	89	90	92

Note: The figure for the 2017 survey included bets placed with Singapore Turf Club for comparability with the 2020 and 2023 surveys as Tote Board Group consolidated horse betting operations under Singapore Pools from 7 Jan 2019 onwards. Differences in the proportion of gamblers who gambled through Singapore Pools from the 2017 to 2020 surveys, and the 2020 to 2023 surveys were not statistically significant.

**Table B7 – Probable Pathological and Problem Gambling Rates**

	2017	2020	2023
Probable Pathological Gambling	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Probable Problem Gambling	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	0.9%	1.2%	1.1%

Note: Changes in probable pathological and problem gambling rates from the 2017 to 2020 surveys, and the 2020 to 2023 surveys were all not statistically significant. The sum of the two rates may not be equal to the total figure reported due to rounding.

**END OF ANNEX B**

**PROBABLE PATHOLOGICAL AND PROBLEM GAMBLING  
SCREENING CRITERIA**

The diagnostic criteria used in the survey was taken from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-V), which was developed by the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

**Table C: DSM-V Diagnostic Criteria for Pathological and Problem Gambling**

<b>Preoccupation</b>	Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences)
<b>Tolerance</b>	Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieved desired excitement
<b>Loss of control</b>	Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
<b>Withdrawal</b>	Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
<b>Escape</b>	Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed)
<b>Chasing</b>	After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses)
<b>Lying</b>	Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
<b>Risked Significant Relationship</b>	Has jeopardised or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
<b>Bailout</b>	Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling

**END OF ANNEX C**