

## **Problems shared: gambling by Aboriginal adults in Victoria, Australia – correlations, harms and support**

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**Introduction:** We report here on a study initiated by the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) to understand the distribution of gambling and gambling help service access within the Community they serve.

**Method:** An online survey of Aboriginal Community adults who had gambled in the previous year yielded information on indices and correlates of gambling harm and supports accessed to contain this harm, based on responses from 89 people. Gambling types and frequency of use are reported.

**Key Findings:** Almost half of survey participants fell into the high-risk category as defined by the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). Younger respondents had significantly lower proportions of high-risk gamblers than did people aged over 50. Half of participants experienced negative effects from their own gambling and gambling by others, and this was prevalent across lower and higher PGSI risk categories. Around double the number of positive as compared to negative experiences associated with gambling were recorded. Gambling was for the most part a communal experience, rather than being done alone. Despite reporting harms and having high PGSI scores, only a minority of participants had approached an organisation for support regarding gambling-related problems, and these tended to be higher risk gamblers. Many more people used friends or family for support to limit or manage gambling and its harms than services.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** Gambling, gambling harm and help seeking are influenced by the communitarian nature of Aboriginal Communities. Many people who are affected by their or another person's gambling are not accessing services. Implications for Practice or Policy It is important to embed responses within Community-controlled organisations and ensure that welcoming Community activities are offered for those who might benefit from financial advice and therapeutic services.

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