



National association for gambling care,
educational resources and training

www.gamcare.org.uk
HelpLine 0845 6000 133

2nd Floor, 7-11 St John's Hill
London SW11 1TR

T 020 7801 7000
F 020 7801 7033
E info@gamcare.org.uk

BRIEFING PAPER 2

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Prevalence

The key survey is the Gambling Commission's 2007 British Gambling Prevalence Survey, which built on the 1999 survey commissioned by GamCare.

Definitions used by the Gambling Commission:

"problem gambling" means gambling to a degree that compromises, disrupts or damages family, personal or recreational pursuits

"prevalence of problem gambling" means estimating the number of adults who at any one time meet these criteria. Two measures were used (DSM IV and PGSI screens)

Key findings:

- 68% of population (c32 million) had gambled within the past year (cf 72% 1999)
- Problem gambling estimated at 0.5-0.6% (237-284,000 adults) (cf 0.6% 1999)
- Problem gambling is more prevalent among men and younger age groups; and significantly associated with being Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British, separated/divorced or having fewer educational qualifications
- Problem gambling in Britain at 0.6% is lower than Hong Kong (5.3%), USA (3.5%), and RSA (1.4%); higher than Norway (0.2%), Canada (0.5%) and New Zealand (0.5%); and the same as Sweden

Only 250,000 people - what's all the fuss?

- The Survey is a snapshot at a point in time - problem gambling is dynamic, with people moving in and out all the time
- Problem gambling affects partners, families and friends - if every gambler has an impact on 4 others (a conservative estimate) that means over 1.25 million people are affected
- Survey also found that a further 1.4% of the population - over 660,000 people - were at "moderate risk" of becoming problem gamblers, and 5.1% - over 2.4 million people - displayed some risk factors.
- Current best estimates suggest that only between 0.5-1% of those in need of treatment actually embark on a treatment programme
- Compares with c327,000 problem drug users in UK (British Crime Survey)

[August 2009]