

Study of gambling and health in Victoria

Gambling and health



What is the study?

The Victorian gambling and health study is a telephone survey of 13,554 Victorian adults who were selected randomly from the general population. There were 12,551 surveys using landlines and 1003 using mobile telephones. The study aimed to explore gambling and problem gambling in the Victorian population.

Alcohol and gambling

Around 29.20 per cent of gamblers reported consuming alcohol while they gambled.

About 60.50 per cent of people with a moderate risk* of developing a gambling problem reported consuming alcohol while they gambled.

In comparison, 37.30 per cent of people with a gambling problem and 38.43 per cent of those with a low risk of developing a gambling problem reported they consumed alcohol while they gambled.

General practitioners and gamblers

People with a moderate risk of developing a gambling problem and people with a gambling problem visited general practitioners more often (7 to 8 times per year) than the general Australian population (5.6 times) in the past 12 months.

Mental wellbeing and gambling

People with a gambling problem were more likely to have been diagnosed with depression (41.86 per cent) compared to people with a moderate risk of developing a gambling problem (24.06 per cent).

People with a gambling problem were more likely to have been diagnosed with anxiety disorder (around 39.53 per cent) compared to people with a moderate risk of developing a gambling problem (around 20.00 per cent).

Quality of life

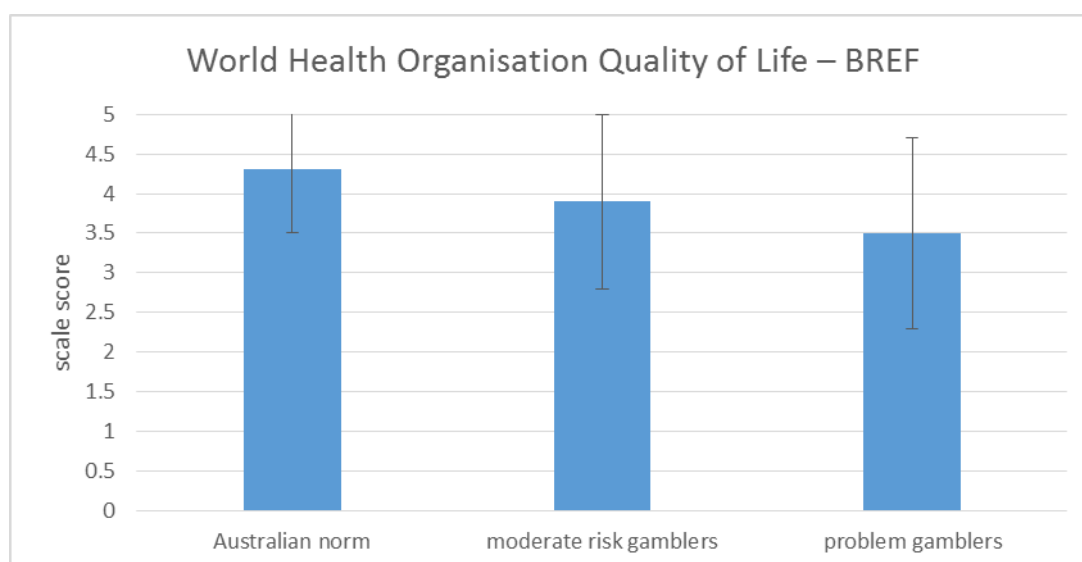
The survey asked moderate-risk and problem gamblers to rate their overall quality of life in the past four weeks according to the following scale: 1) very poor, 2) poor, 3) neither poor nor good, 4) good, 5) very good.

This question is from an instrument developed by the World Health Organisation called the World Health Organisation Quality of Life – BREF (WHOQOL – BREF)**. According to this instrument, the Australian population has an average quality of life score of 4.3 (ranging from 3.5 to 5.0).

In the study, moderate-risk gamblers scored an average of 3.9 (ranging from 2.8 to 5) and problem gamblers scored an average of 3.5 (ranging from 2.3 to 4.7).

Therefore, moderate-risk and problem gamblers have a lower quality of life compared to the Australian population. Quality of life tends to decrease with higher gambling risk.

Quality of life scores for Australian norm, moderate-risk gamblers and problem gamblers



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* The categories for risk of gambling harm used in this study are based on the Problem Gambling Severity Index. They are:

- Non-problem gambler – gambles with no negative consequences.
- Low-risk gambler – experiences a low level of problems with few or no identified negative consequences.
- Moderate-risk gambler – experiences a moderate level of problems leading to some negative consequences.
- Problem gambler – gambles with negative consequences and a possible loss of control.

For more information about what these categories mean, see fact sheet 2: Categories for risk of gambling harm.

** The question is from an instrument developed by the World Health Organisation called the World Health Organisation Quality of Life – BREF. This instrument assesses how a population rates its quality of life within the context of the population's own value systems, standards, culture and concerns. It covers physical health, psychological health, social relationships and environment. A Quality of Life scale score of the Australian population was estimated by the Melbourne Health Organisation Quality of Life Field Study Centre in 2000. This score is used as a point of reference in various research studies to compare the quality of life of population sub-groups.