Advising Gamblers: Development of Lower-risk Gambling Guidelines

SNSUS Conference

David Hodgins, PhD

June, 2019

Tampere, Finland

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by la Fondation Mise sur toi Inc.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of la Fondation Mise sur toi Inc or CCSA.

Acknowledgement

Lower Risk Gambling Guidelines Scientific Working Group

Matthew Young, PhD,
Canadian Centre on Substance use and Addiction (CCSA) & Carleton University

Shawn Currie, PhD,
University of Calgary

Magali Dufour, PhD,
Université que Québec à Montréal

Louise Nadeau, PhD,
Université de Montréal

Sarah Atif, MA
CCSA

David Hodgins, PhD,
University of Calgary

Natacha Brunelle, PhD,
Université de Québec à Trois-Rivières

Marie-Claire Flores-Pajot, MSc,
CCSA

Catherine Paradis, PhD,
CCSA

Objectives of the Talk

- Introduce the Lower-Risk Gambling Guidelines (LRGGs) project

- Describe the rationale, the methods and processes being used to derive the guidelines

- To obtain feedback usefulness and dissemination ideas.

Why Gambling Guidelines?

- Commercial gambling has expanded world-wide since the 1990s.

- Gambling-related harm has become a recognized as a significant and preventable public health issue

- There is a lack of evidence-based guidelines about how to gamble in a manner that poses minimal risks to the gamblers and those around them.

- **The advice we give to people who gamble is improving but is still vague**

Source: http://www.aglc.ca/

Source: http://www.aglc.ca/

Play. Smart Tips

Play.Smart

Home | How Gambling Works ⌄ | PlaySmart Resources ⌄ | OLG's PlaySmart Program ⌄ | Self-Exclusion Program ⌄ | Finding Help ⌄

PlaySmart Tools | **PlaySmart Tips** | PlaySmart Centres | PlaySmart Brochures | Kids and Gambling | Helpful Links

If you choose to gamble follow these important tips:

✓ **Don't bring extra money with you**

Make a budget and stick to it. If you need to keep going back to the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) for money, you've probably spent more than you planned, and maybe more than you can afford.

✓ **Set a time limit**

If you have a firm idea of when you need to leave, it'll keep you from losing track of time – as well as how much you're spending.

✓ **Take breaks on a regular basis**

Regardless of whether you're up or down, it's important to walk away from time to time and get some perspective.

✓ **Balance your activities**

Yes, gambling is fun, but it shouldn't be the only thing that you do on a regular basis. A balance of activities will help you resist the temptation of playing more than you should.

✓ **Get support**

Don't wait. If you start losing more money than you can afford, or if you think you might have a problem, reach out and speak to a professional.

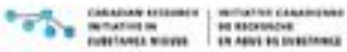Source: http://gamesense.bclc.com/

Example of Guidelines

Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG)

Recommendations

- Cannabis use has health risks best avoided by abstaining
- Delay taking up cannabis use until later in life
- Identify and choose lower-risk cannabis products
- Don't use synthetic cannabinoids
- Avoid smoking burnt cannabis—choose safer ways of using

- If you smoke cannabis, avoid harmful smoking practices
- Limit and reduce how often you use cannabis
- Don't use and drive, or operate other machinery
- Avoid cannabis use altogether if you are at risk for mental health problems or are pregnant
- Avoid combining these risks

The LRCUG are an evidence-based intervention project by the Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM).

The LRCUG have been endorsed by the following organizations:

Reference: American Journal of Public Health, 2017

Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health (in principle)

Source: Fischer, B., Russell, C., Sabioni, P., van den Brink, W., Le Foll, B., Hall, W., Rehm, J. & Room, R. (2017). Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG): An evidence-based update. American Jour nal of Public Health, 107 (8). DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2017.303818

Example of Guidelines

Source: Canada.ca/FoodGuide

Example of Guidelines

- Low Risk Drinking Guidelines

Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

Know your maximum limits

2 drinks /day
10 drinks /week
for women

3 drinks /day
15 drinks /week
for men

Beer
341 ml
(12 oz.)
5%
alcohol
content

Cider/ Cooler
341 ml
(12 oz.)
5%
alcohol content

Wine
142 ml (5 oz.)
12% alcohol
content

Distilled Alcohol
(rye, gin, rum, etc.)
43 ml (1.5 oz.)
40% alcohol content

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Why Gambling Guidelines?

- There is a need for evidence-informed lower-risk gambling guidelines (LRGGs):

    — To help individuals who gamble make well-informed decisions about their gambling behaviours;

    — To help and support social networks to identify at-risk gambling.

    — To help industry and regulators to set parameters.

Project Governance

Advisory Committee
Co-chairs:
Louise Nadeau
Rita Notarandrea

Scientific Working Group
Co-chairs:
David Hodgins
Matthew Young

Guide and facilitate uptake and mobilization

Provide expert advice and conduct research

Action Plan

Perspectives

A research plan to define Canada's first low-risk gambling guidelines

Shawn R. Currie [iD] * and the Low Risk Gambling Guidelines Scientific Working Group[†]

Consultation with peers, stakeholders and individuals who gamble

DETERMINE HARMS

DEVELOP INVENTORY OF POSSIBLE DATASETS

ASSESS DATASET SUITABILITY

CONDUCT RISK CURVE ANALYSES ON SUITABLE DATASETS

ADDRESS RESEARCH GAPS

DERIVE DRAFT LRGG's

LRGG's QUALITATIVE VALIDATION

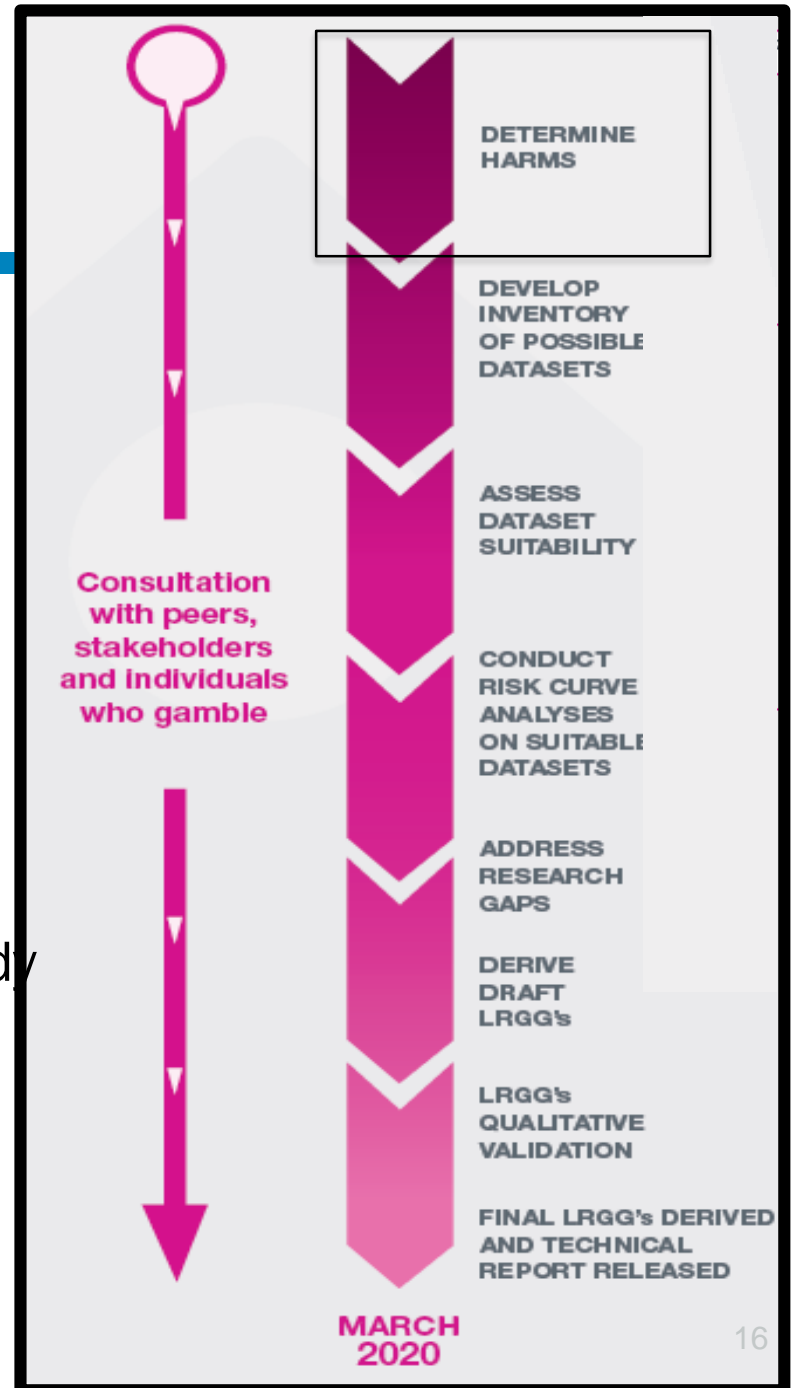FINAL LRGG's DERIVED AND TECHNICAL REPORT RELEASED

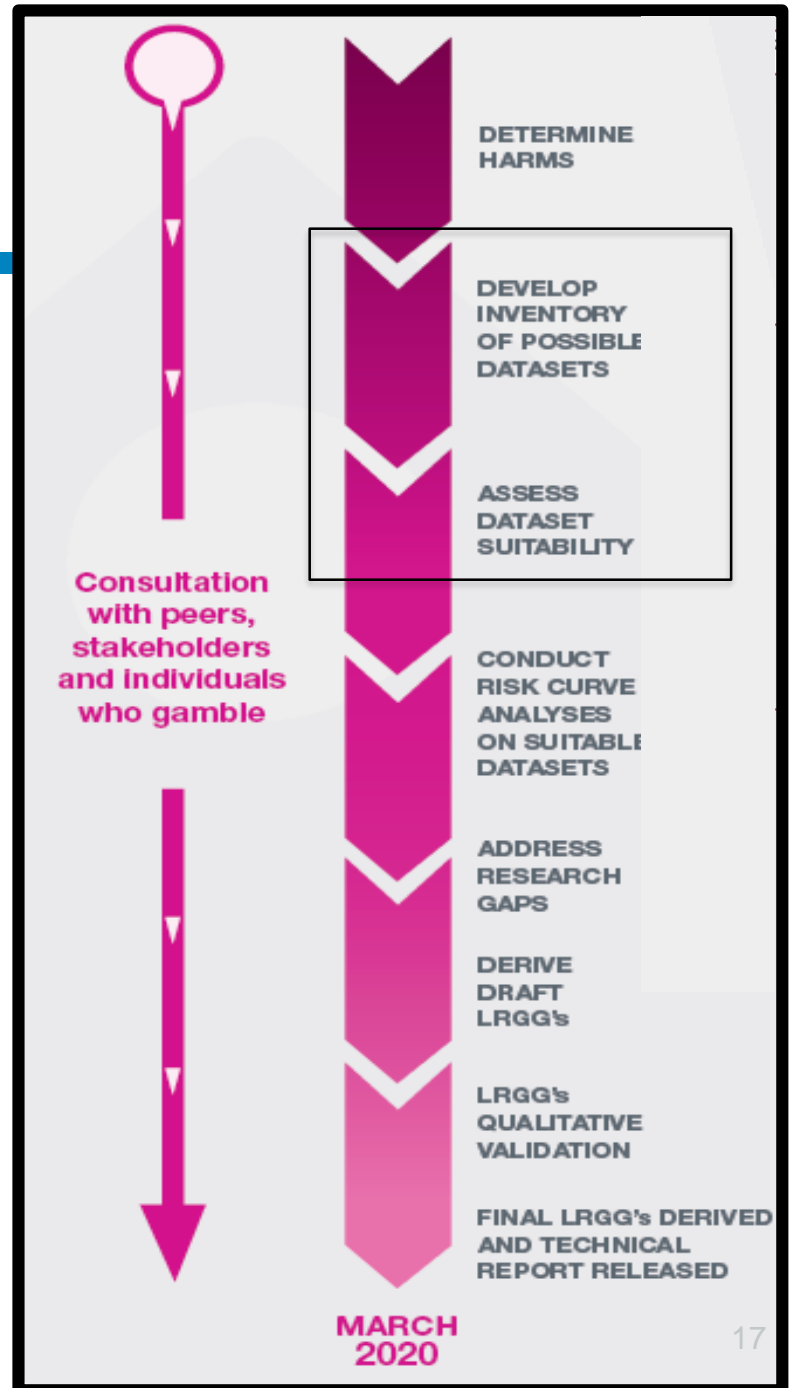MARCH 2020
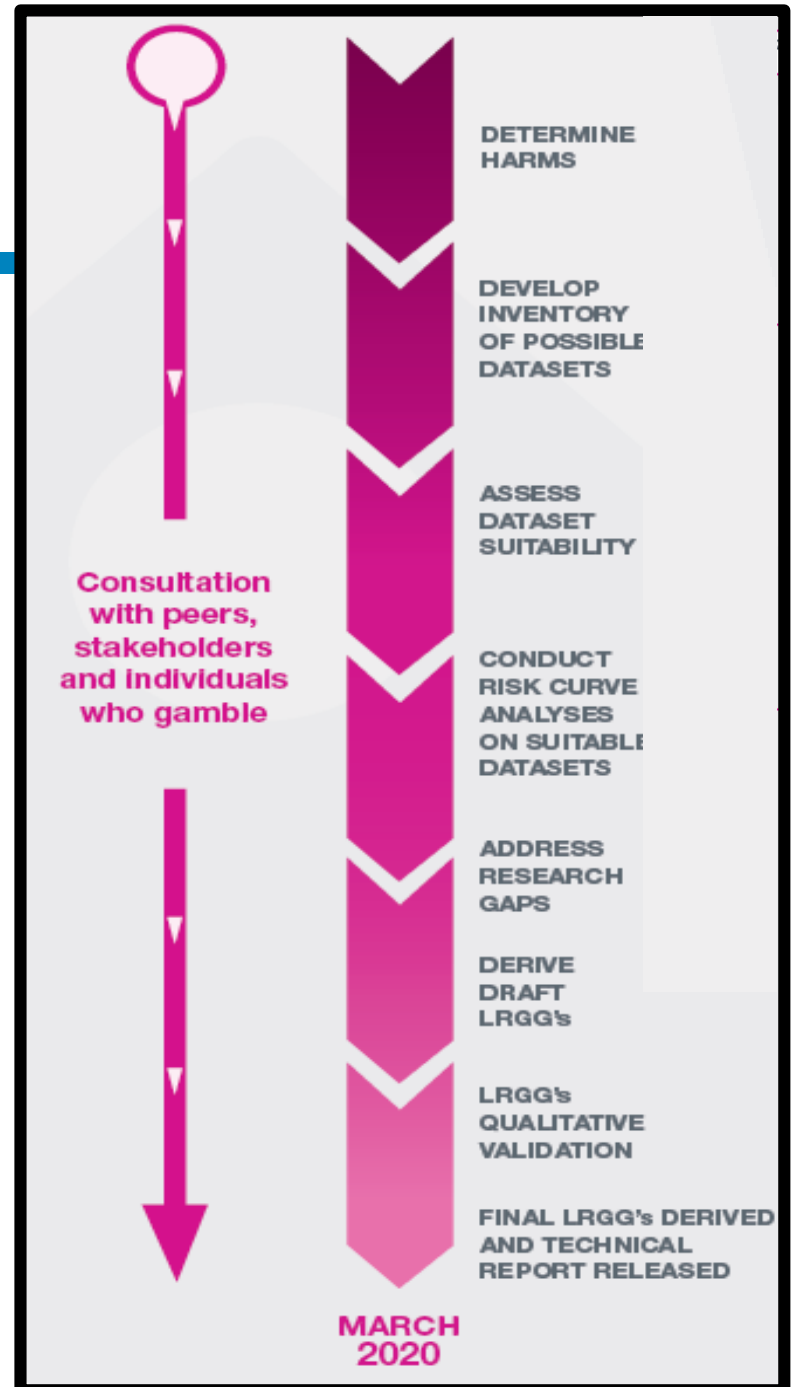
Determine Harms

Low risk of what?

1. Financial harms

2. Relationship conflicts

3. Emotional or psychological distress

4. Physical health problems

5. Cultural harms

6. Reduced performance at work or study

7. Criminal activity

Source: Langham, E., Thorne, H., Browne, M., Donaldson, P., Rose, J., & Rockloff, M. (2016). Understanding gambling related harm: a proposed definition, conceptual framework, and taxonomy of harms. *BMC Public Health*, *16*, 80.
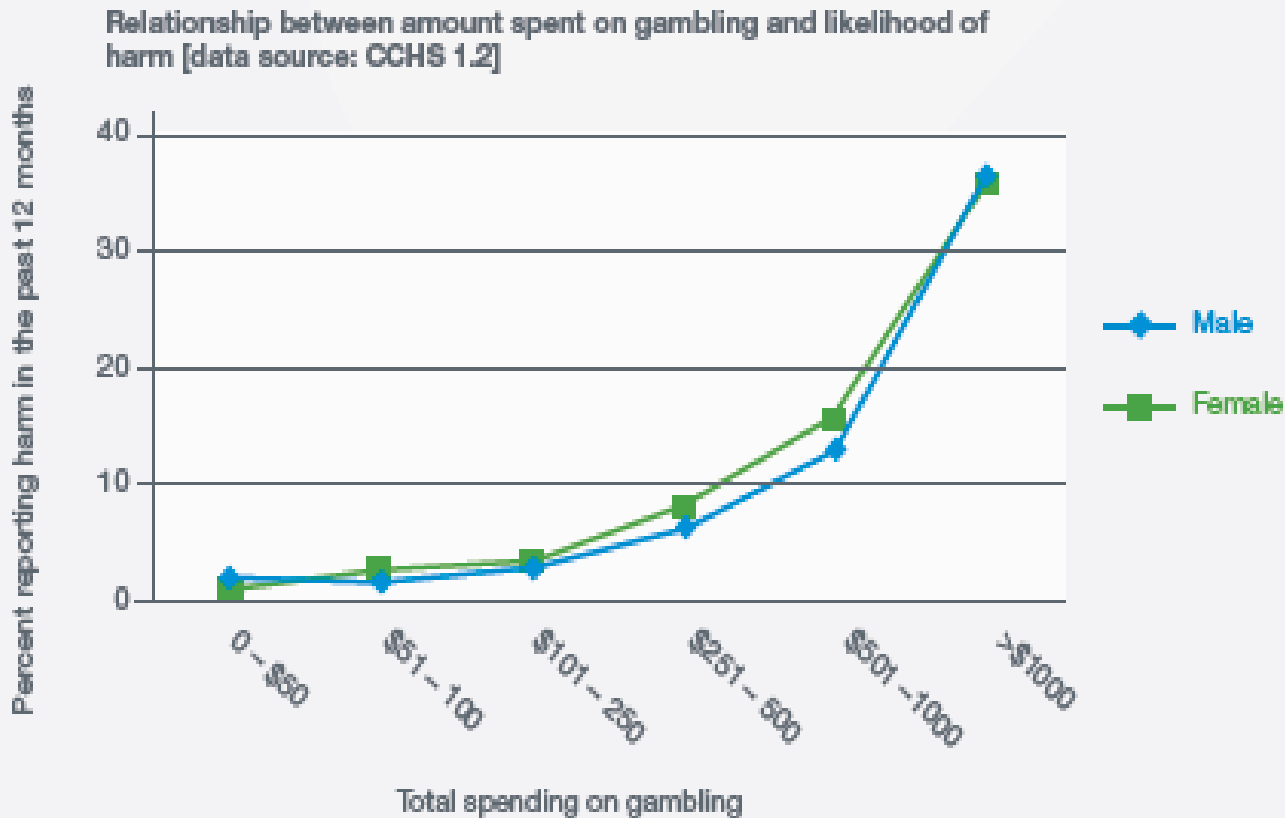
Consultation with peers, stakeholders and individuals who gamble

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Consultation with peers, stakeholders and individuals who gamble

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Risk Curve Methodology

Example of risk curve

Relationship between amount spent on gambling and likelihood of harm [data source: CCHS 1.2]

Reproduced with permission from Shawn Currie, University of Calgary

Datasets

Icelandic Gambling Project

Leisure, Lifestyle, Lifecycle Project (LLLP)

ENHJEU-Quebec

SWELOGS (Sweden)

Finnish Gambling Population Survey

Quinte Longitudinal Study (QLS)

Enjeu 2014 - Enquête nationale sur les jeux d'argent et de hasard (France)

The Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort (MAGIC Study)

Victorian Gambling Study (Australia)

New Zealand 2012 National Gambling Study

Action Plan

Risk Curves

- Met with international collaborators in Banff, Canada (April 2017), and agreed upon a similar methodology to analyzing the data.

- As agreed in Banff, contracted custodians of the identified datasets to conduct risk curve analyses on core Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) items that assess our core harm domains, as well as other survey items that assess these harms.

Risk Curve Analyses

Gambling Involvement variables

- Frequency of any gambling (days) in a typical month

- Expenditure

    - Net loss on all forms of gambling in a month

    - Percent of gross monthly income spent on all forms of gambling in a month

- Duration of a typical session (in minutes)

- Number of gambling formats played in the past year

Risk Curve Analyses

Harm categories and how they are operationalized

Harm Category	PGSI items
Financial	Bet more than you could afford to lose (PGSI 1) Borrowed money (PGSI 4) Financial problems (PGSI 8)
Relationship	Criticized by others (PGSI 7)
Emotional/psychological	Felt that you have a problem (PGSI 5) Felt guilty (PGSI 9)
Physical health	Health problems (PGSI 7)
Cultural harm	none
Work or study	none
Criminal activity	none

Risk Curve Analyses

- Presented our methods and draft limits (ranges) to international colleagues in October 2018
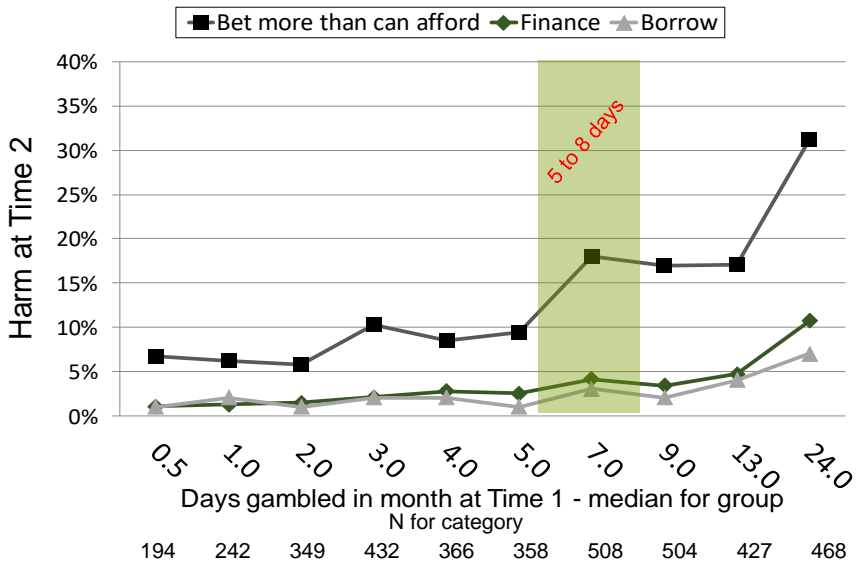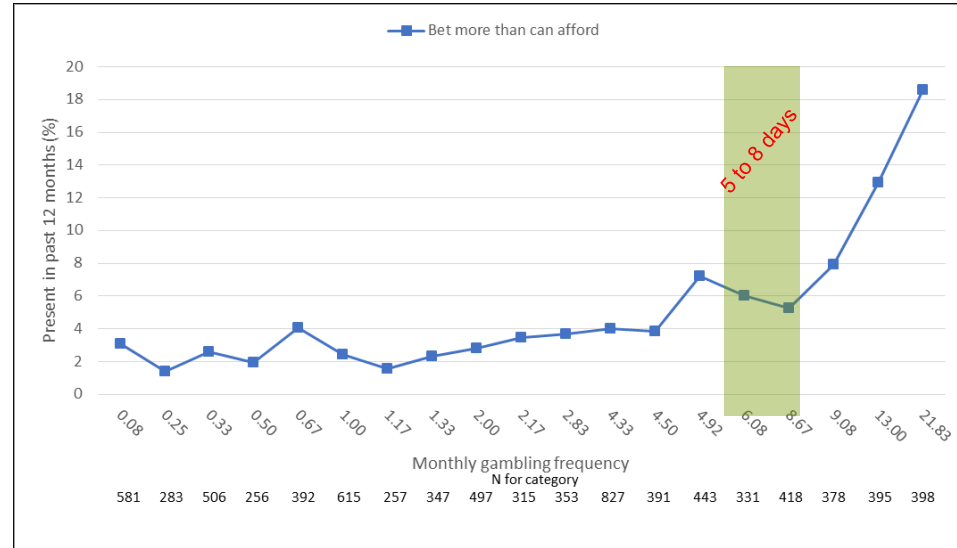
Action Plan
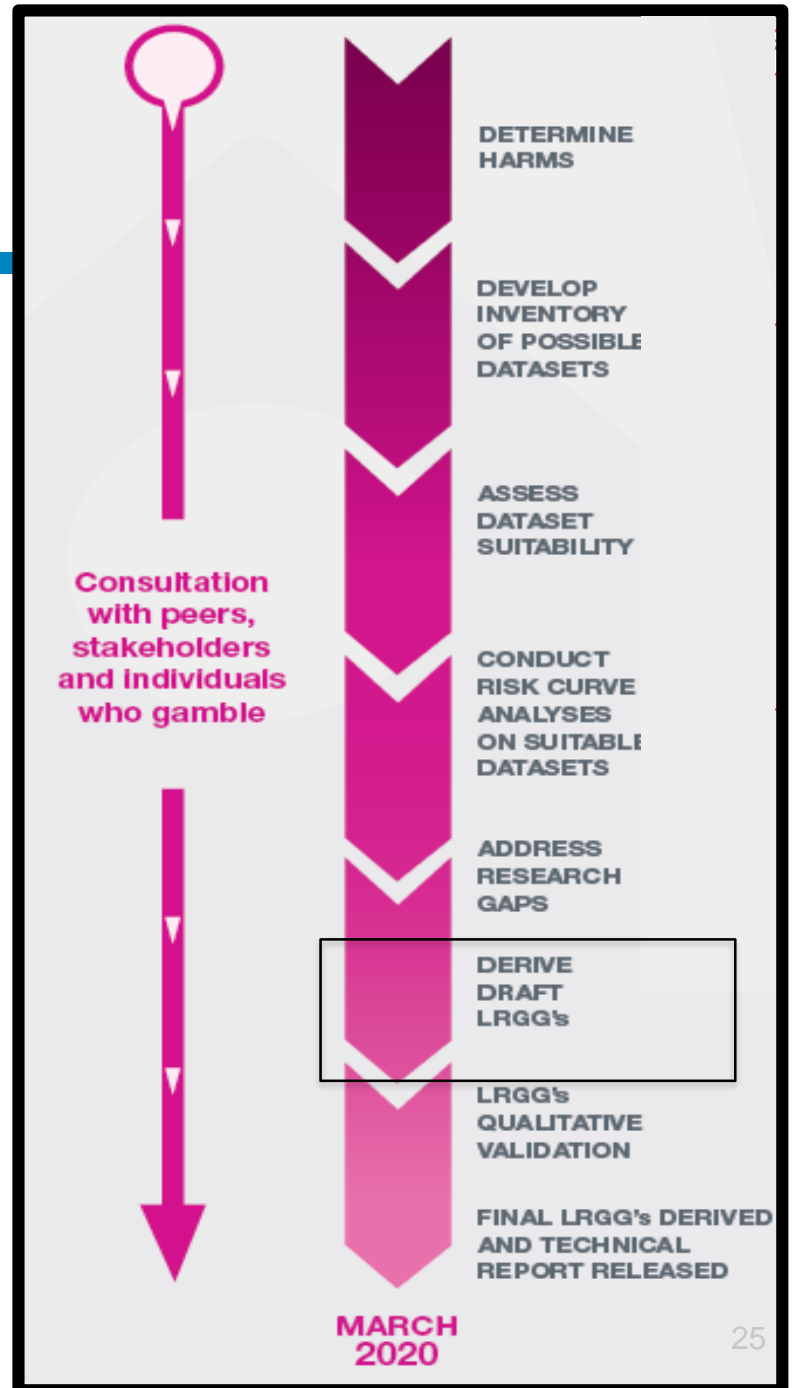
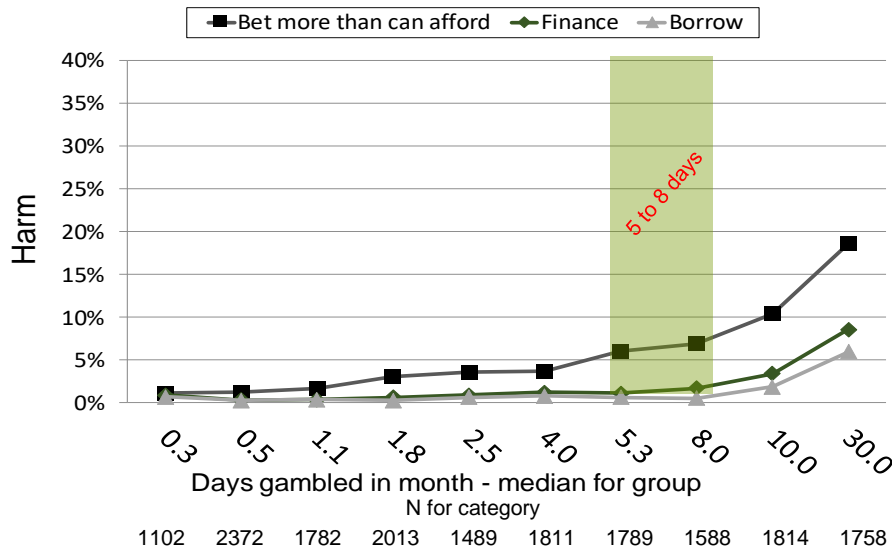# Example: North American Data: Gambling Frequency and Financial Harms
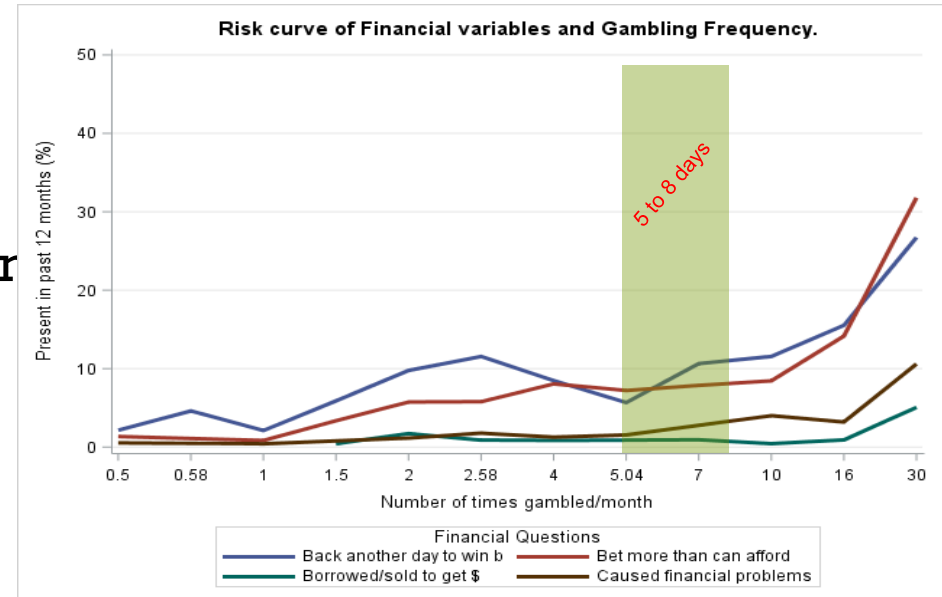

CAN — longitudinal (Alta. & Ont.)

Quebec 2012 — cross-sectional (Model C)
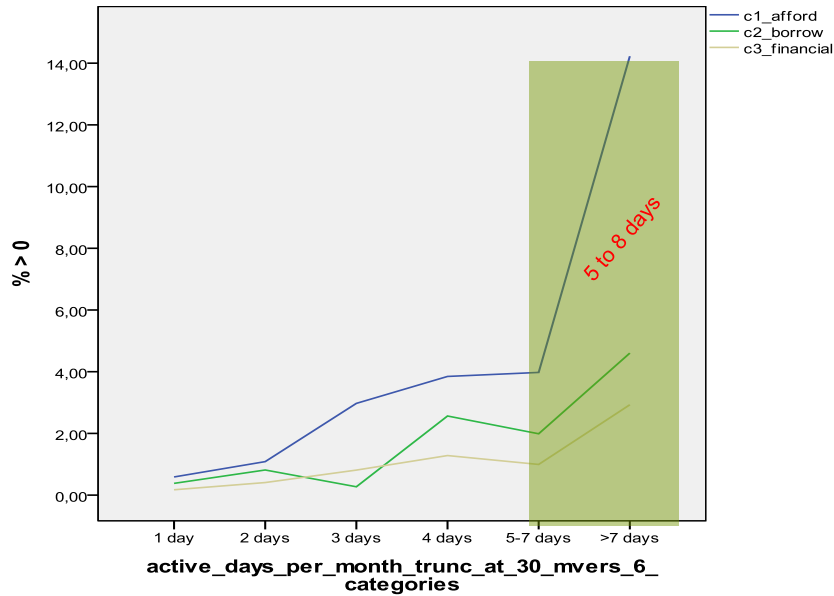
CAN — cross-sectional
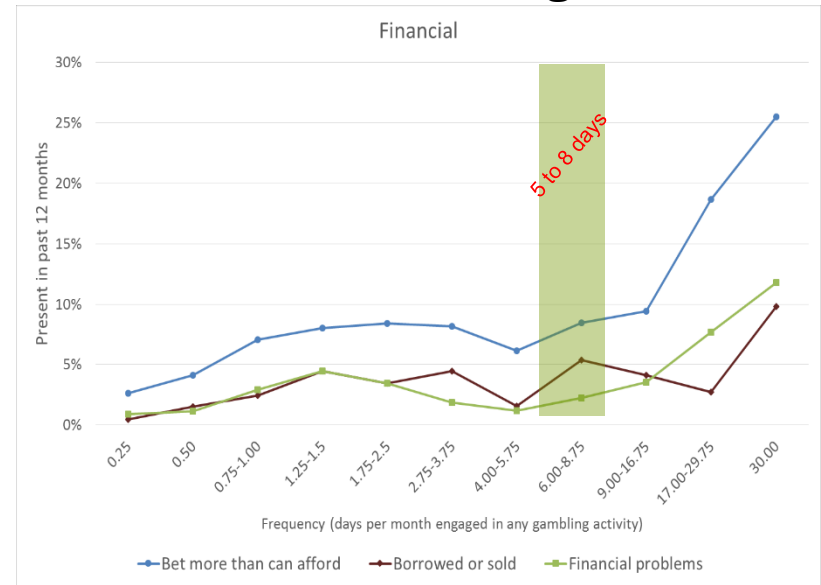
US MAGIC — longitudinal

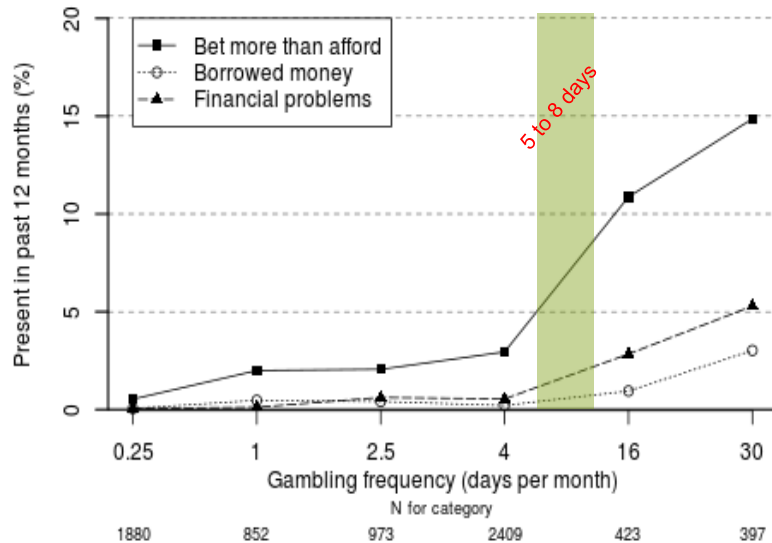# Example: International Data: Gambling Frequency and Financial Harms

Iceland — cross-sectional

Sweden — longitudinal

Finland — cross-sectional
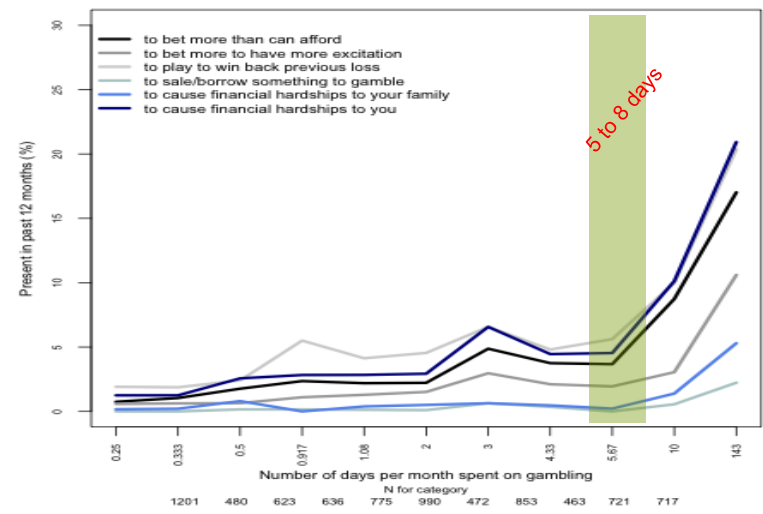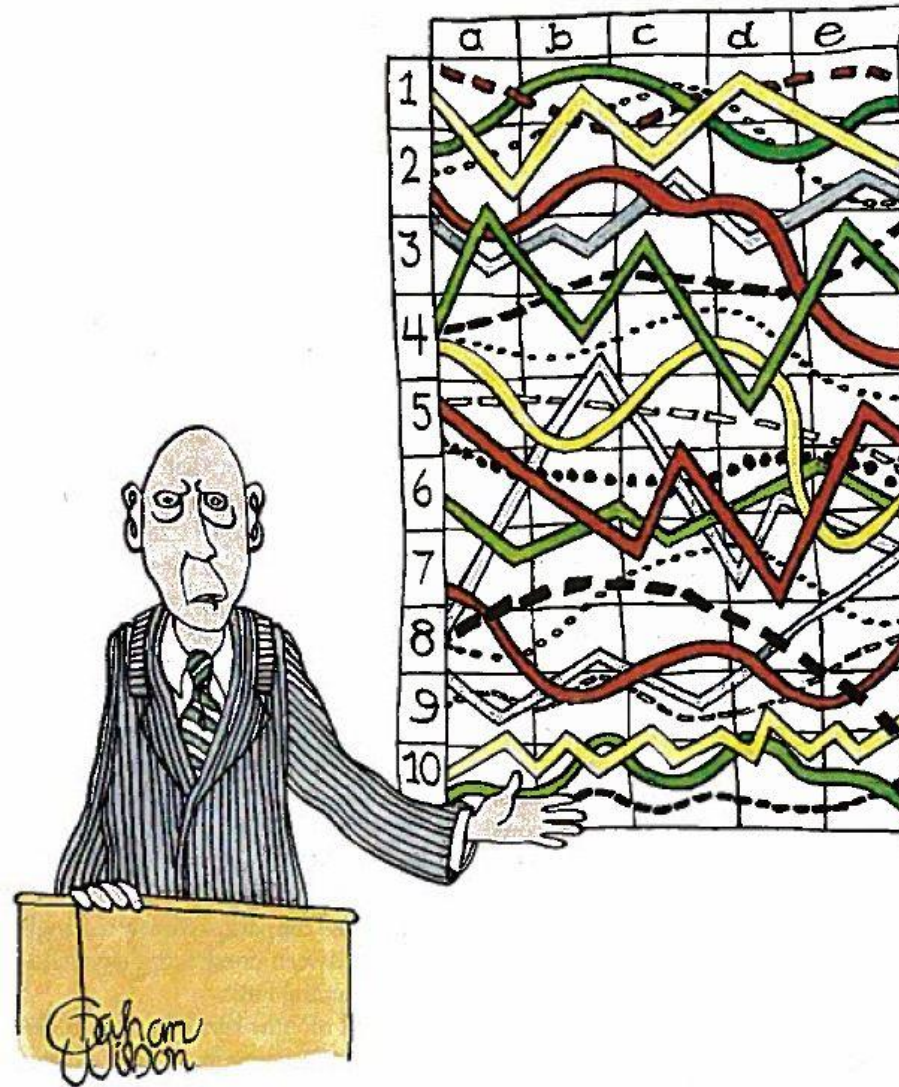

France — general

"I'll pause for a moment so you can let this information sink in."

An Amazing Result…

There is convergence among the datasets:

- *The shape of all the curves are similar.*

- *The thresholds are similar.*

Deriving Lower-risk Gambling Ranges from means

	Lower risk gambling draft range
Frequency	5 to 8 days per month
Expenditure	
- as CAD/month	$55.00 to $120.00 per month
- as % income	1.0% to 3.0% of monthly gross income
Duration	Insufficient quality data to assess at present
Number of gambling formats	2 to 6 different game types in a month

Deriving Draft Limits from means: Frequency

Change in risk occurring when number of days per month gambling predicts financial, relationship, emotional/psychological and health harms

Possible lower risk gambling limit (days per month)

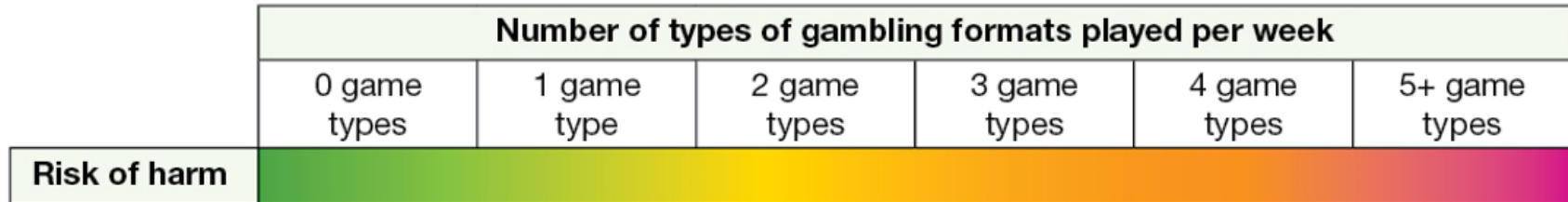| Canadian Cross sectional dataset	≤1 day (reference group)	2 days	5 days	7 days	9 days or more
Sample size in category	4963	1937	1284	317	3185
% of sample gambling below cutoff	23%	39%	65%	75%	82%
Harm					
Financial (any PGSI financial harm)					
Percent with harm	2.0%				
Δ risk from reference group[1]	0%	145%	310%	600%	1180%
Relationship (criticized by others)					
Percent with harm	1.0%				
Δ risk from reference group[1]	0%	180%	340%	775%	2100%
Emotional/psychological (any PGSI emotional harm)					
Percent with harm	3.0%				
Δ risk from reference group[1]	0%	160%	115%	495%	690%
Health problems					
Percent with harm	0.0%				
Δ risk from reference group[1]	0%	100%	210%	360%	1120%
2+ harms (PGSI items)					
Percent with harm	4.0%				
Δ risk from reference group[1]	0%	170%	170%	500%	760%

Presenting the final LRGGs - Ideas

To reduce your risk of experiencing negative consequences due to gambling, on a typical week, avoid:

- Spending more than **$20** (or more than **0.5%** of your weekly pay-check),
  AND
- Gambling **2** or more days,
  AND
- Gambling on more than **1** type of game.

Presenting the final LRGGs - Ideas

Risk of experiencing negative consequences due to gambling:

Gambling days per week							
0 days	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days	6 days	7 days

Risk of harm

Money spent gambling per week							
$ 0	$ 5	$ 10	$ 15	$ 20	$ 25	$ 30	$ 35	$ 40+

Risk of harm

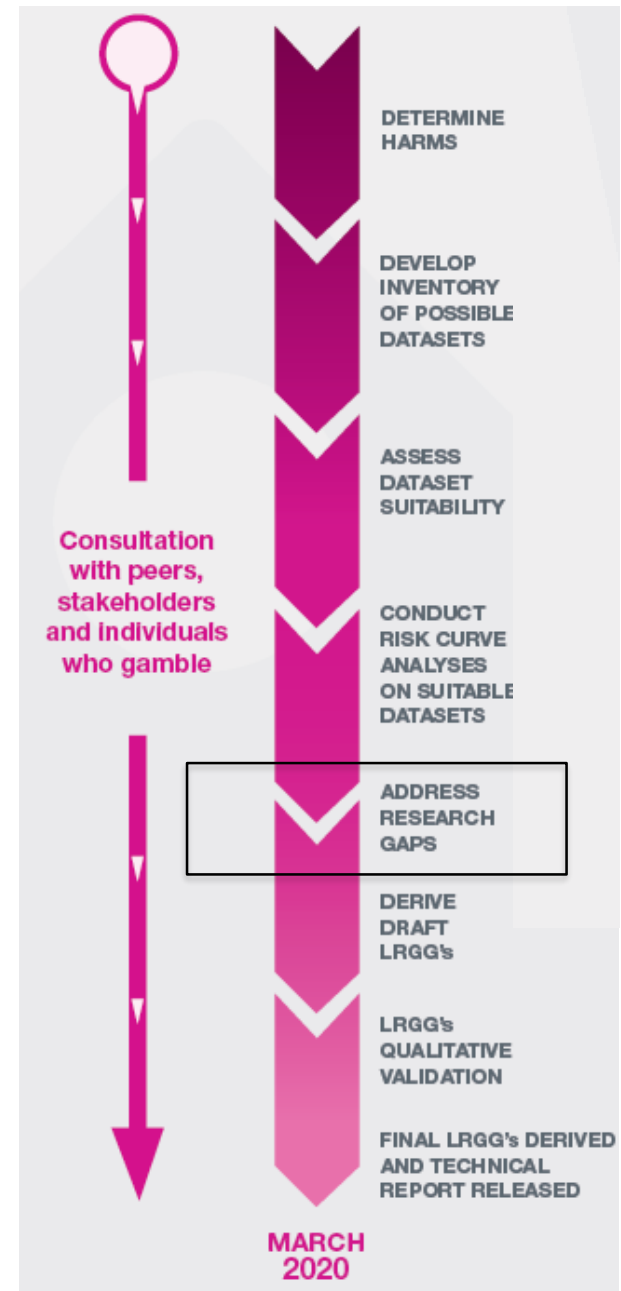| Number of types of gambling formats played per week					
0 game types	1 game type	2 game types	3 game types	4 game types	5+ game types

Risk of harm

Action Plan

Address Research Gaps

- Commission two literature reviews
    - Effect of substance use on gambling behavior
    - Risk of harm in special populations
- Focus groups with gamblers
- Collaborate on a national online gambling survey

Consultation with peers, stakeholders and individuals who gamble

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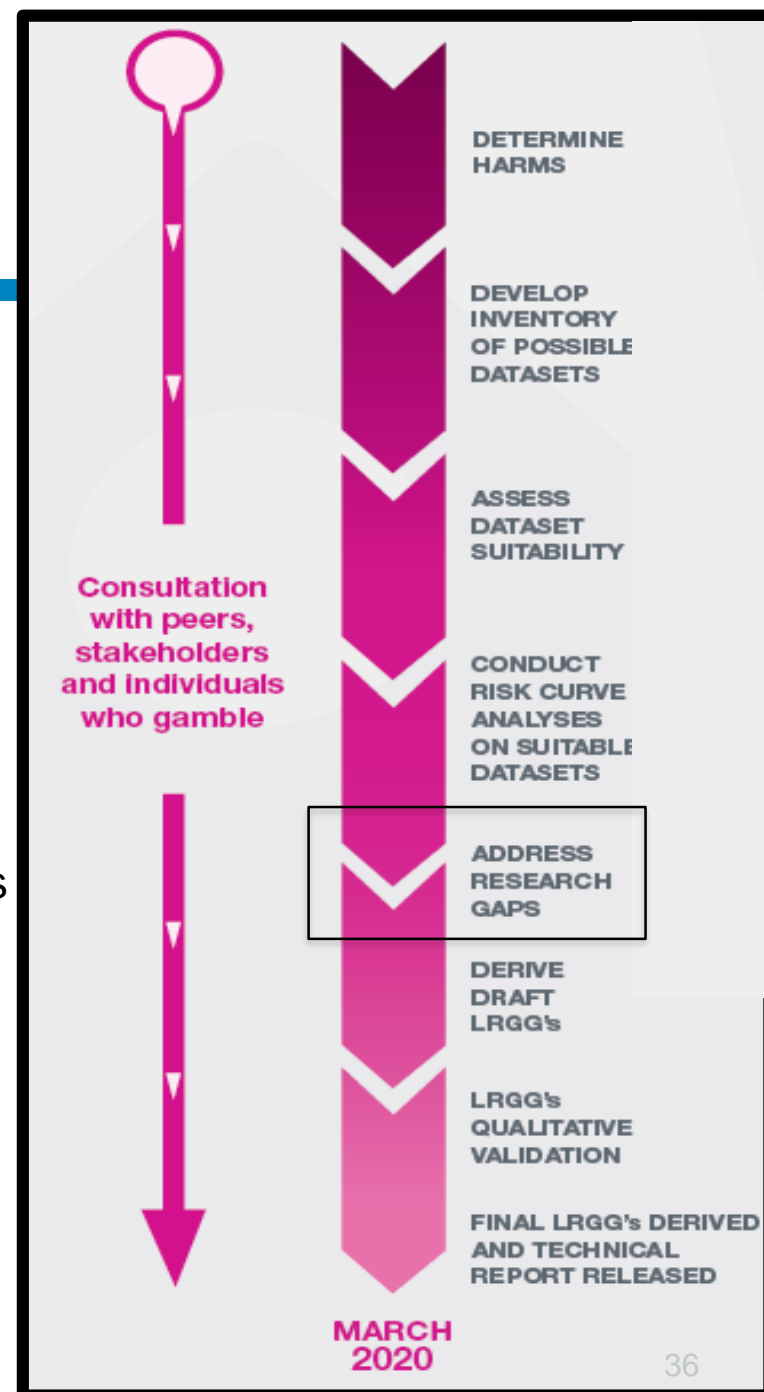
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Action Plan

Address Research Gaps

Collaborating on a national online gambling survey (with Alberta Gambling Research Institute):

- To assess the low-level harms gamblers wish to avoid when they gamble "too much"; and
- To better understand self-regulation strategies employed.
- Two waves: August 2018 and follow-up on August 2019
- Participants: Approximately 10,000 online panelists from across Canada who **gamble regularly**

Consultation with peers, stakeholders and individuals who gamble

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Addressing Research Gaps

- **Currently collaborating with the Alberta Gambling Research Institute on a national online survey:**

- To assess the low-level harms gamblers wish to avoid when they gamble "too much"; and

- To better understand self-regulation strategies employed.

- Two waves: August 2018 and follow-up on August 2019

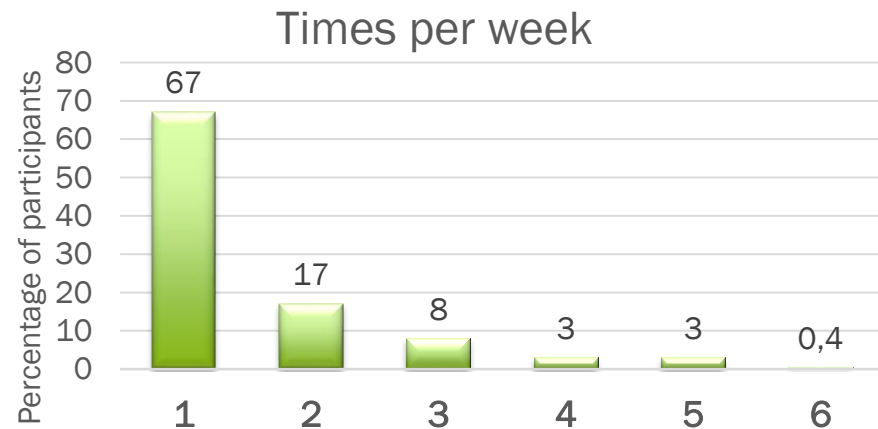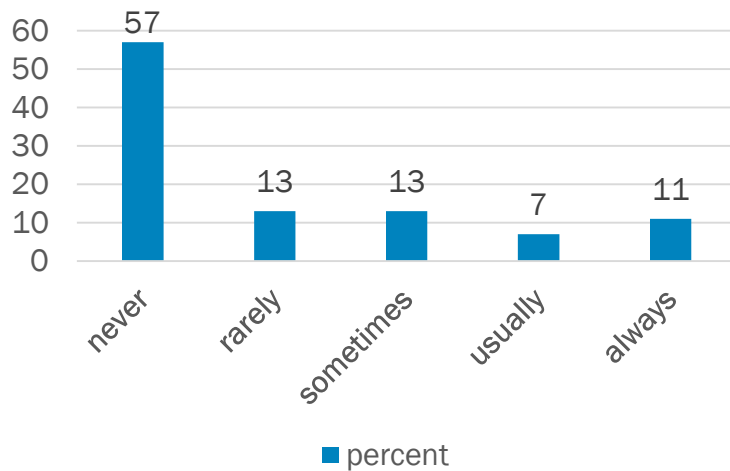- Participants: Approximately 10,000 online panelists from across Canada who are "regular gamblers"

# Do You Generally Keep Track of the Following Details?
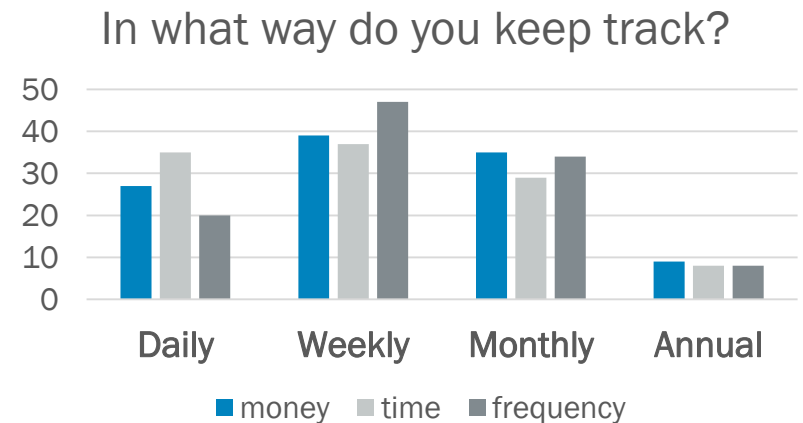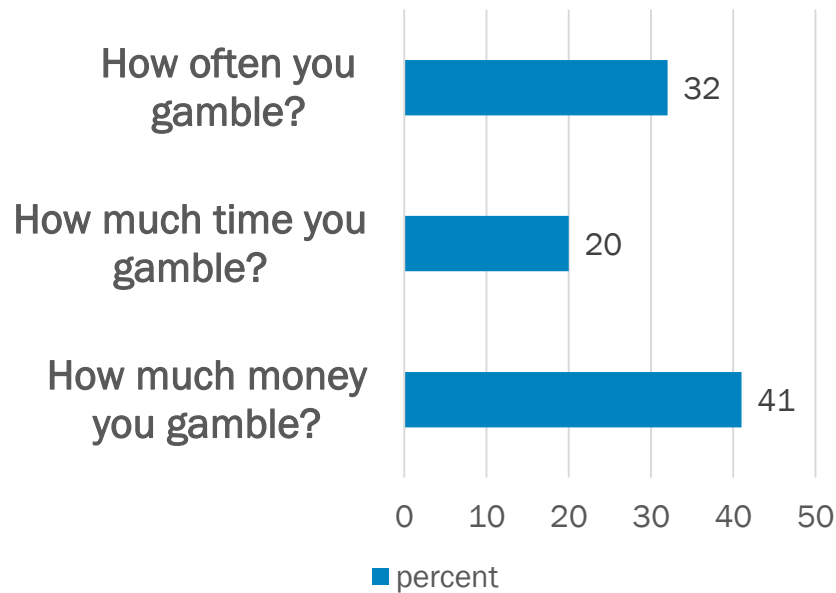
How Often Do You Set a Predetermined Spending Limit to Control Your Gambling?
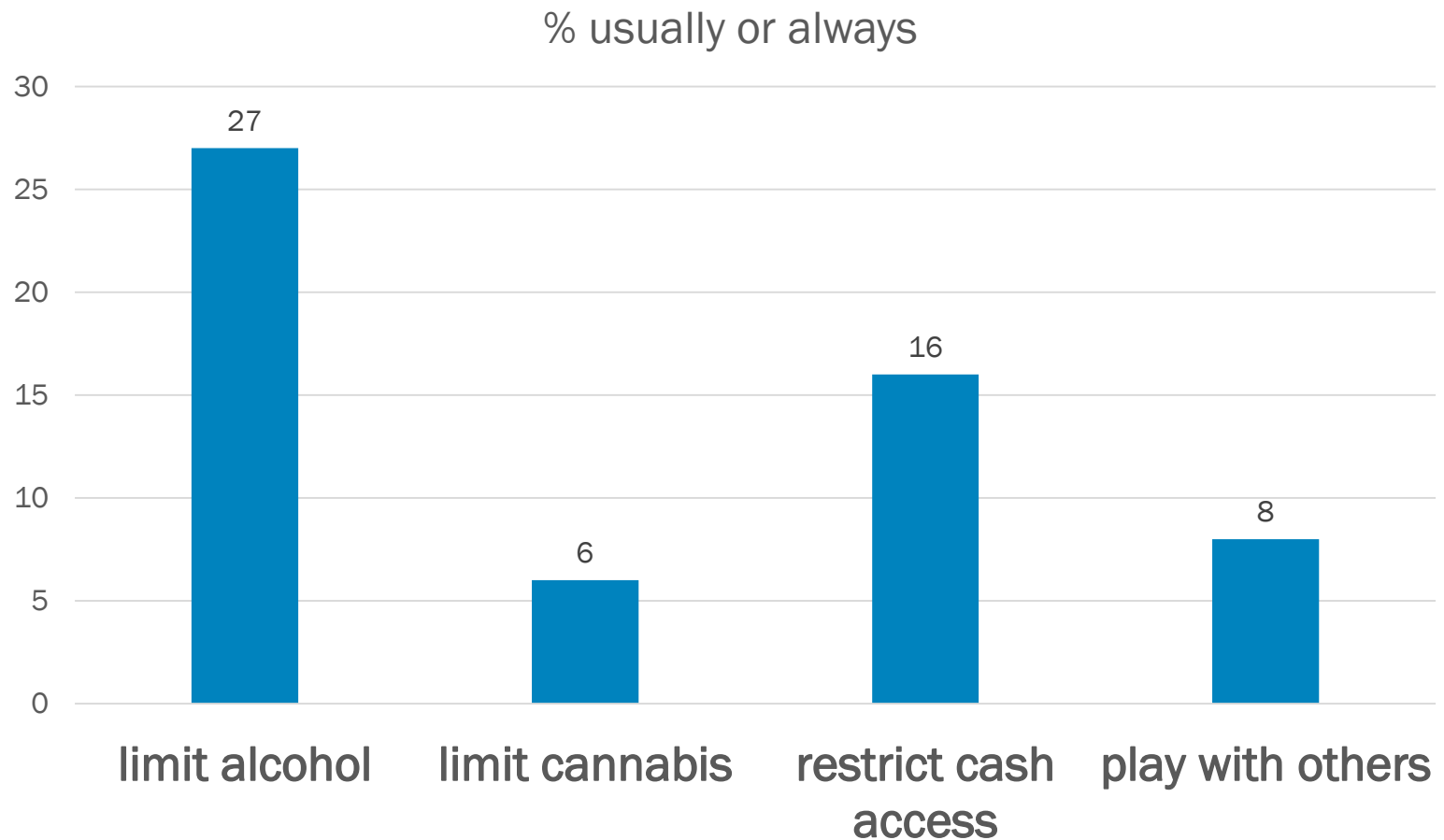

What spending limit do you typically use?
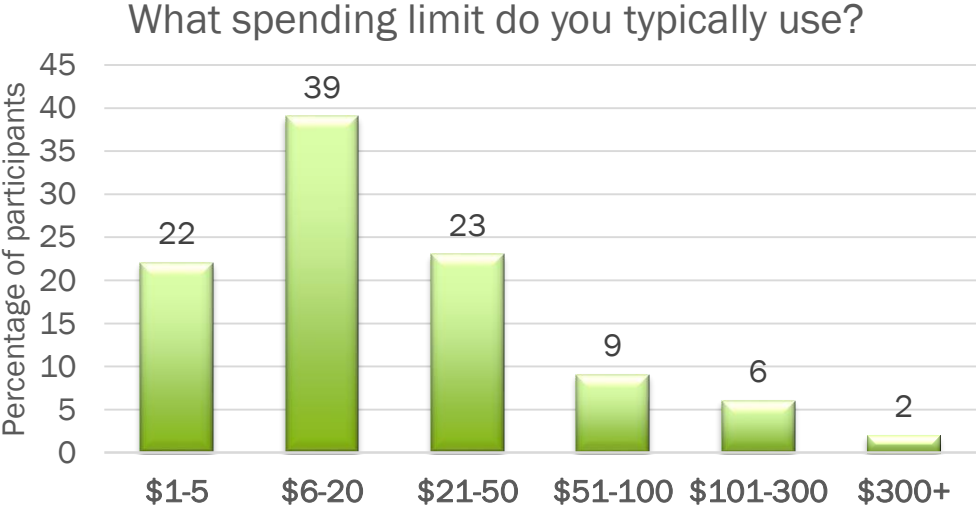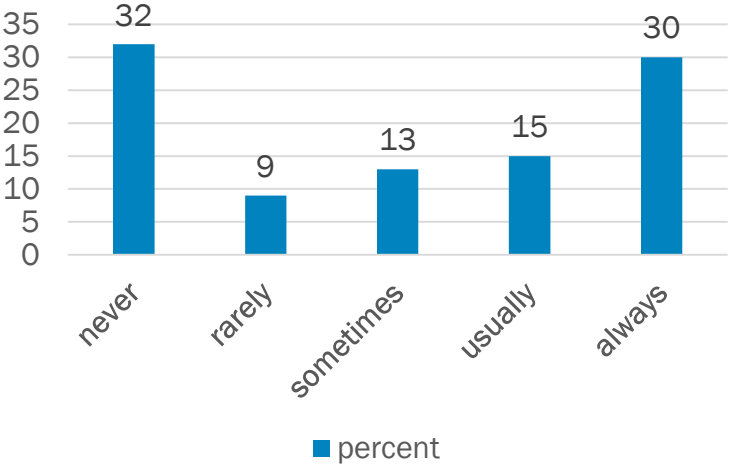
How Often Do You Limit How Often You Play To Control Your Gambling?

How Often Do You Limit the Amount of Time Playing to Control Your Gambling?

percent

■ amount of time

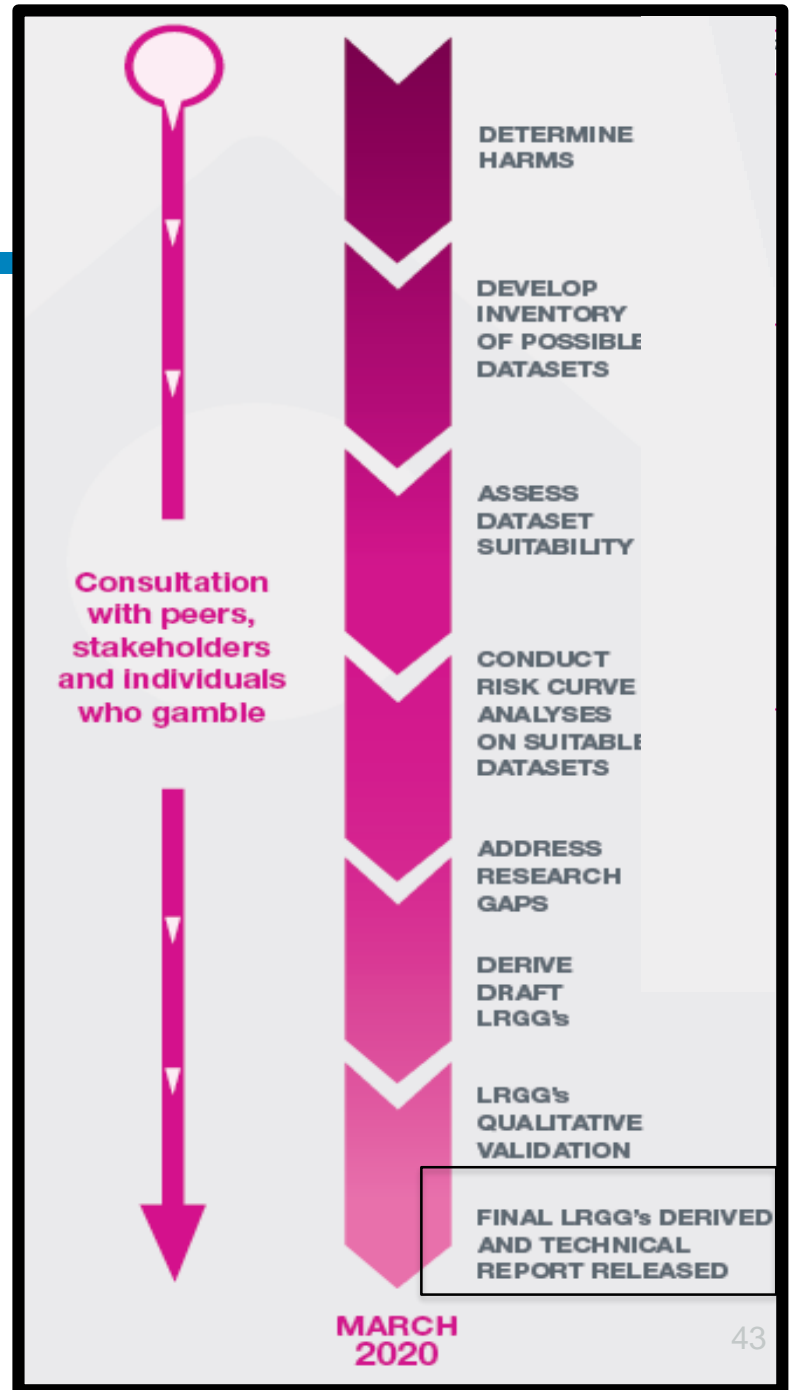## What time limit do you typically use?
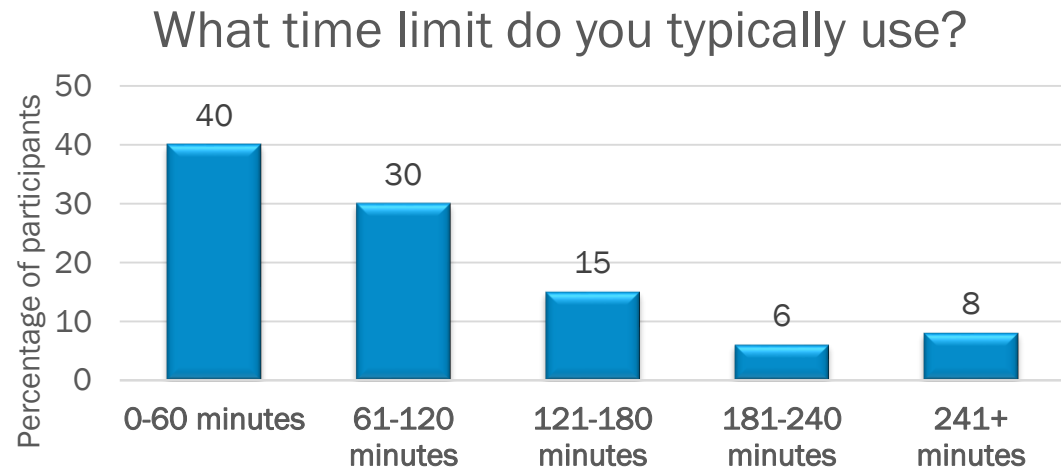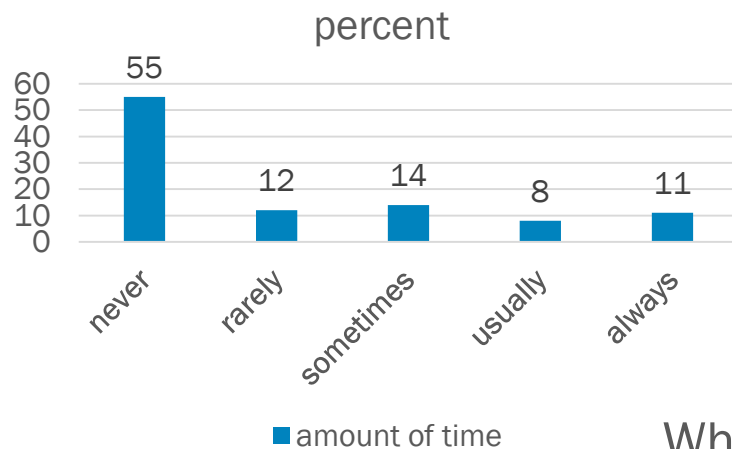
Other Strategies to Control Gambling

% usually or always

Action Plan- Next Steps

Expected Outcomes

Increased awareness of LRGG's and their value

LRGG's help gamblers identify and adhere to time and money limits

Reduction of gambling-related harms among the population

GAMBLERS

Development of the LRGGs: necessary but insufficient

Project funding

Expert knowledge

Timeline: 4 years

Establishment of committees and working groups

Collaboration among stakeholders

Increased prevalence of gambling within the guidelines

Knowledge mobilization

Increased reach of the products

Increased prevalence of gambling within the guidelines

Increased prevalence of gambling within the guidelines

Prevention and reduction of gambling related harms among population

Other strategic areas **?**

Other strategic areas **?**

Other strategic areas **?**

Discussion?

To learn more about the LRGGs please contact gambling@ccsa.ca or the scientific working group co-chairs:

David C. Hodgins, Ph.D.

Professor,
Department of Psychology
University of Calgary
dhodgins@ucalgary.ca

Matthew M. Young, Ph.D.

Senior Research & Policy Analyst
500–75 rue Albert Street, Ottawa, ON K1P 5E7
myoung@ccsa.ca

Adjunct Research Professor,
Department of Psychology,
Carleton University, Ottawa, ON
www.carleton.ca