GAMBLERS & CO-OCCURING CONDITIONS

GAMBLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS: A 2015 SURVEY OF ADULT IOWANS

Report 3 of 6

Prepared for
Iowa Department of Public Health
Iowa Gambling Treatment Program

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GAMBLERS AND CO-OCURRING CONDITIONS[1]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GAMBLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS: A 2015 SURVEY OF ADULT IOWANS

Prepared for the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Gambling Treatment Program
Prepared by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research, University of Northern Iowa

May 2016

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

The 2015 Survey of Public Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors Toward Gambling was conducted by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research (CSBR) at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) and funded by the Iowa Gambling Treatment Program (IGTP) at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH).

The 2015 Survey of Public Attitudes and Behaviors toward Gambling used a dual-frame (land and cell) random digit dial (DF-RRD) telephone sampling methodology. A total of 1,825 interviews (549 landline and 1,276 cell phone) were completed from September 10th, 2015 to December 8th, 2015. Similar studies were conducted in 2011 and 2013.

The primary purpose of this study was to collect data from adult Iowans to assess:

- types and frequency of gambling activities,
- prevalence of problem gambling, and
- awareness and opinions of publicly-funded gambling treatment services.

The 2015 data have been weighted in order to obtain point estimates to allow generalization to the population of non-institutionalized adults in Iowan (weighting variables included age, ethnicity, race, education, place, and telephone status).

KEY FINDINGS

Among those who gambled in the past 12 months, 2% said that someone important in their lives told them they should cut back, stop, or try to control their gambling. These were all at-risk gamblers (8% of total at-risk gamblers).

About one in ten adult Iowans (10%) who reported gambling said they wanted to decrease the amount of time or money they spent gambling or they wanted to quit gambling altogether. Among at-risk gamblers, 26% said they wanted to decrease the amount of time or money they spent gambling or quit gambling altogether.

Among those who gambled in the past 12 months, at-risk gamblers were more likely to use tobacco (48%) than were not-at-risk gamblers (27%). Likewise, at-risk gamblers (48%) were more likely to say that their mental health was not good than not-at-risk gamblers (37%).

When asked about family experiences growing up, at-risk gamblers were more likely to report that someone in their family had problems with either alcohol (at-risk: 47% vs. not-at-risk: 30%), gambling (at- risk: 17% vs. not-at-risk: 4%), or mental health (at-risk: 38% vs. not-at-risk: 21%) than did not-at-risk gamblers.

[1] This is the third report of a series (six in total) produced from the 2015 Survey of Public Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors toward Gambling.

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SECTION C1. GAMBLERS DEMOGRAPHICS AND DESIRE TO QUIT

In this section, adult Iowans who gambled in the past 12 months (68%) are further described with a focus on their demographic characteristics, co-occurring conditions, social support networks, and help seeking behaviors (see Figure C-1).

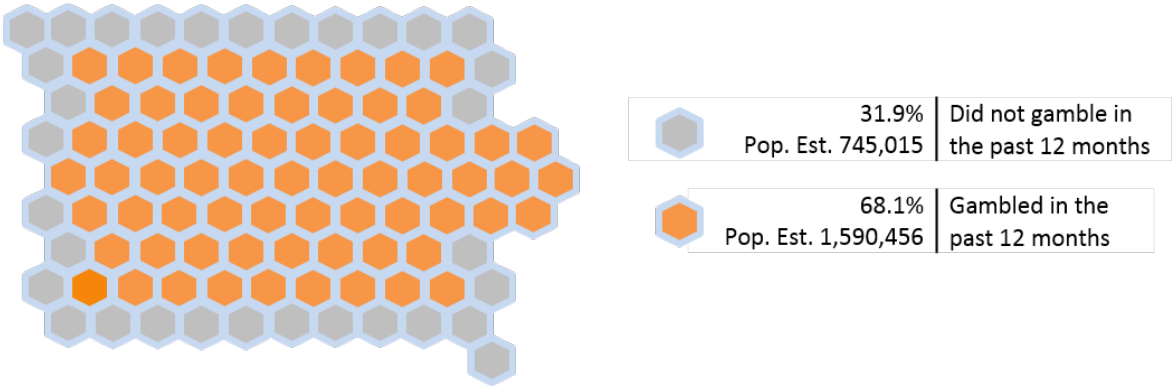

Figure C-1. Adult Iowans who gambled in the past 12 months

When comparing the sub-groups of gamblers, this report uses at-risk gamblers and not-at-risk gamblers in the past 12 months. These sub-groups are represented in the Figure C-2.

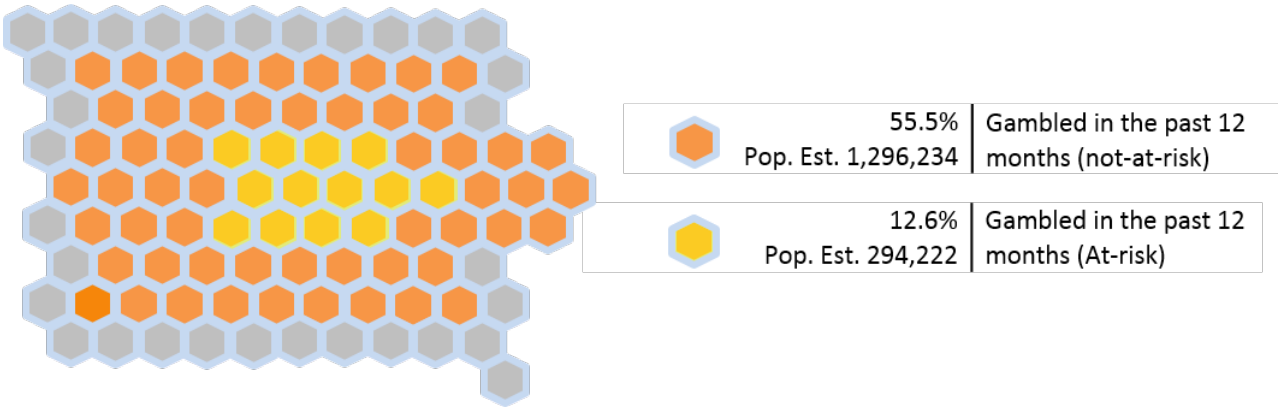

Figure C-2. Sub-groups of adult Iowans who gambled in the past 12 months

The demographic characteristics of at-risk gamblers indicate they are more likely than not-at-risk gamblers to be white and not married, and less likely to have a household incomes of $75,000 or more (see Table C-1.)

Table C-1. Demographic characteristics of those who gambled in the past 12 months

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
	Not-at-risk %	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Gender			
Male	49	58	51
Female	51	42	49
Age group			
18-24 years old	9	9	9
25-34 years old	19	31	21
35-44 years old	14	14	14
45-54 years old	20	18	19
55-64 years old	19	13	18
65 years or older	19	15	18
Race*			
White Non-Hispanic	94	88	93
All Other (Including Hispanic)	6	12	7
Employment status			
Employed	67	73	68
Unemployed	33	27	32
Marital status*			
Married or cohabitating	61	47	58
Not married (divorced, widowed, or separated, never married)	39	53	42
Education			
HS graduate or less	36	39	37
College 1 year to 3 years	35	37	35
College 4 years or more	29	23	28
Household income*			
Less than $25,000	19	27	21
$25,000 - $49,999	26	26	26
$50,000 - $74,999	20	25	21
$75,000 or more	36	22	33
Place of residence			
Farm/Rural/Small Town	42	33	41
Large Town (5,000 - 25,000)	18	25	19
Small City (25,000 - 150,000)	34	35	34
Large City (>150,000)	6	7	6

** $p < .05$*

ENCOURAGED TO QUIT GAMBLING

Few (2%) adult Iowans said they had gambled in the past 12 months and also said that someone important in their lives told them they should cut back, stop, or try to control their gambling. These were all at-risk gamblers (see Table C-2).

Few adult Iowans tried to reduce their gambling. Specifically, 3% wanted to decrease the amount of time spent gambling, 6% wanted to decrease the amount of money spent gambling, and 7% wanted to quit altogether. When aggregated these responses, about one in ten adult Iowans (10%) who reported gambling said they wanted to decrease the amount of time or money they spent gambling or they wanted to quit gambling altogether.

Among those who experienced problem gambling symptoms during the past 12 months, 26% said they wanted to decrease the amount of time or money they spent gambling or quit gambling altogether. These findings were similar to 2011 and 2013 (see Table C-2). In the 2015 survey, of those experiencing problems in the past 12 months,

- 13% said they wanted to cut-back on the amount of time they spent gambling,
- 18% said they wanted to decrease the amount of money they spent gambling, and
- 14% said they wanted to stop betting or wagering altogether.

Table C-2. Percent of gamblers who were told to cut-back, or try to control their gambling

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
	Not-at-risk %	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Have people who are important to you said they thought you should cut-back, stop, or try to control your gambling?*	-	8	2
Do you want to…cut-back on the amount of time you spend betting or wagering?*	1	13	3
Do you want to… decrease the amount of money you spend betting or wagering?*	3	18	6
Do you want to… stop betting or wagering altogether?*	5	14	7
Aggregated: Cut back… on the amount of time you spend betting or wagering?*	6	26	10

** $p < .05$*

SECTION C2. CO-OCURRING CONDITIONS

Respondents were asked about a variety of life experiences and potential co-occurring health conditions they may have had "recently" (i.e., during the past 30 days). Questions about overall health status, a list of specific life experiences, tobacco use, alcohol use, illicit drug use, and prescription drug abuse were asked of respondents.

The questions were primarily an adaptation of existing measures from sources such as Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for health status, Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) client outcome instrument for substance abuse[2], Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes System (IGTO).

OVERALL HEALTH STATUS AND LIFE EXPERIENCES

About two-thirds of adult Iowans stated that their health status was either excellent (23%) or very good (40%). About one in ten adult Iowans stated that their overall health status was either fair (8%) or poor (2%)(see Figure C-3). There was not a significant difference between adult Iowans not at risk for a gambling disorder and Iowans who were classified as at-risk gamblers. This result is similar to the 2011 and 2013 survey.

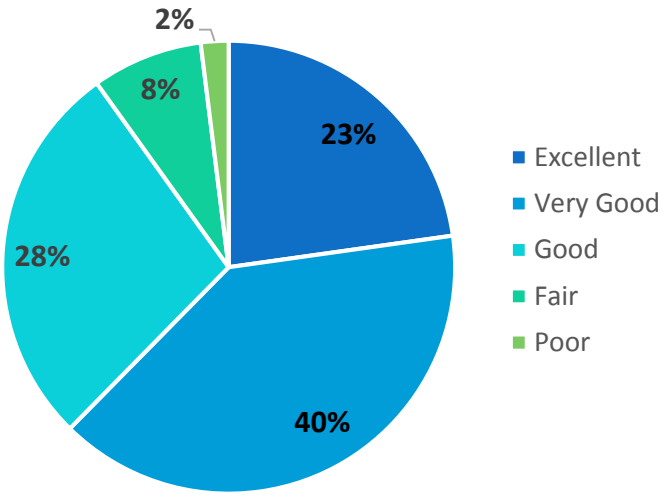

Figure C-3. Overall health status for adult Iowans

[2] See instrument at *http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/CSAT-GPRA/services.aspx* for substance abuse.

About 8% of adult Iowans who gambled in the past 12 months said they had been late paying their bills in the past 30 days. In addition, 6% said they had concerns about the gambling behaviors of people close to them. About 2% of respondents said they have been concerned about the gambling/gaming behaviors of people close to them, and a similar percent of respondents has been concerned about their own gambling/gaming behaviors. These levels were not significantly different when comparing gamblers and non-gamblers. However, at-risk gamblers (16%) had consistently higher rates of difficulty paying bills than those with no problem gambling symptoms (6%). Similarily, at-risk gamblers were more likely to be concerned about others or their own gambling (see Table C-3).

Table C-3. Life experiences in the past 30 days

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
	Not-at-risk %	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Been late paying bills*	6	16	8
Had an argument with a loved one about gambling or gaming	1	6	2
Been concerned about the gambling or gaming behaviors of people close to you*	4	14	6
Been concerned about your own gambling or gaming behaviors*	1	8	2

** p < .05*

Other health conditions related to gambling behaviors have been assessed (see Table C-4). About one in five adult Iowans (22%) said they have suffered concussions, about six in ten (59%) experienced events that were traumatic, and less than 1% were diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. The prevalence estimate did not differ significantly among those who gambled in the past 12 months. However, at-risk gamblers (69%) were significantly more likely to say that they have experienced events that were traumatic than those who were not-at-risk gamblers (60%).

Table C-4. Special health conditions

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
	Not-at-risk %	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Suffered a concussion	22	24	22
Experienced an event that was traumatic*	60	69	62
Been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease[3]	-	-	<1

** p < .05*

[3] Prevalence estimate is too small to report the subgroup analysis.

SUBSTANCE USE

Slightly fewer than three in ten adult Iowans (28%) reported using some kind of tobacco products in the past 30 days and more than half of adult Iowans (58%) used alcohol at least once in the past 30 days. Among those who drank alcohol, about one in three (35%) became intoxicated during that time (this is 20% of adult Iowans). A small portion of adult Iowans reported use of either illegal drugs (3%) or misuse of prescription medications or over-the-counter medications (2%). Finally, about two in five adult Iowans (38%) stated that their mental health was not good at least one day during the past 30 days prior to the survey (see Figure C-4).

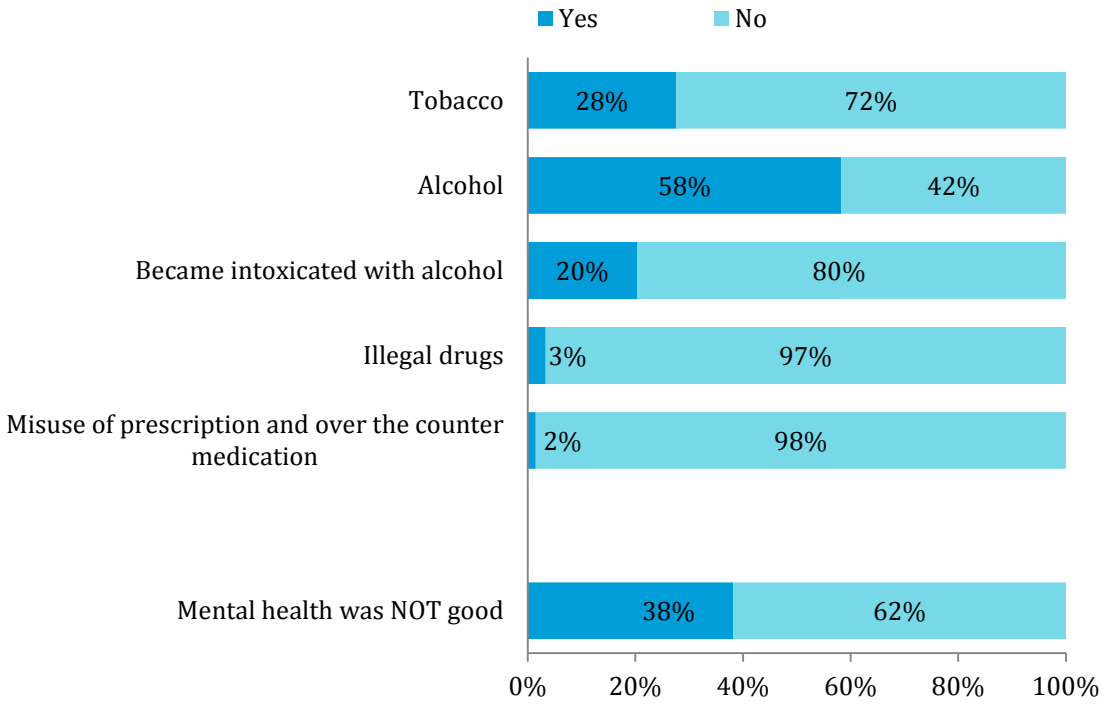

Figure C-4. Substance use and mental health in the past 30 days (at least one day) among adult Iowans

At-risk gamblers were significantly more likely to use tobacco products than were not-at-risk gamblers (48% vs. 27% respectively). Also, at-risk gamblers were significantly more likely to drink alcohol and become intoxicated (at least for a day) than not-at-risk gamblers (34% vs. 22% respectively). Likewise, at-risk gamblers were more likely to report that their mental health was not good on one or more days compared to the adult Iowa population (48% vs. 39%) (see Table C-5).

Table C-5. Substance use and mental health in the past 30 days

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
At least one day	**Not-at-risk %**	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Used tobacco*	27	48	31
Used alcohol	65	69	66
Drunk alcohol and became intoxicated*	22	34	24
Used illegal drugs	4	8	5
Used any prescription drug or any over the counter medication in ways other than directed	1	3	2
ANY substance use	66	71	67
Mental health was NOT good*	37	48	39

*$p < .05$

SELF-REPORTED PROBLEMS AND TREATMENT

When asked if they have ever experienced "problems with, been dependent on, or addicted to" substances, slightly less than one in five adult Iowans (19%) said they have experienced problems with cigarettes or other tobacco products. About 3% of adult Iowans said that they have experienced problems with alcohol. Around 1% of adult Iowans said that they have experienced problems with illegal drugs, about 2% reported misuse of prescription medications and 1% have experienced problems with over the counter medications (see Figure C-5). As noted in Section B[4], the proportion endorsing a self-reported gambling problem was 3% in the state.

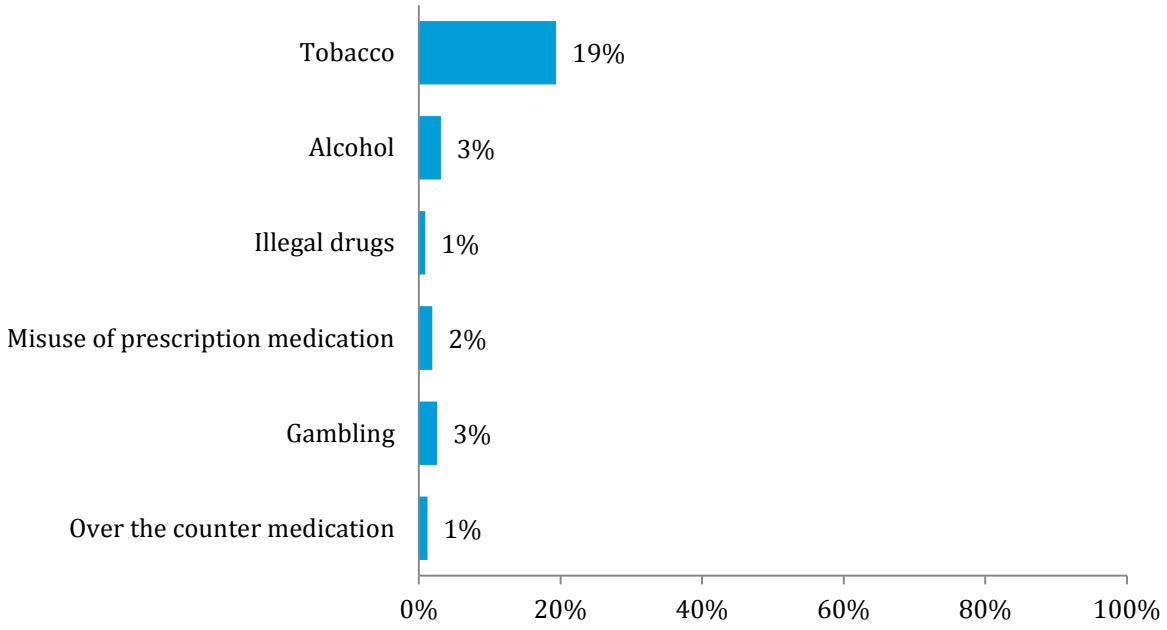

Figure C-5. Self-reported problems with substance use and gambling

When asked if they have ever sought treatment for a mental health condition such as depression or anxiety, about three in ten adult Iowans (29%) had sought mental health treatment. About 8% of adult Iowans had sought treatment for substance use related problems including alcohol, drugs, misuse of prescription medications, or over the counter medications. Less than 1% of adult Iowans had sought treatment for gambling problems (see Figure C-6).

[4] Park, K. & Losch, M. E. (2016). *Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2015 Survey of Adult Iowans. Gambling Behavior.* Cedar Falls, IA: Center for Social and Behavioral Research, University of Northern Iowa.

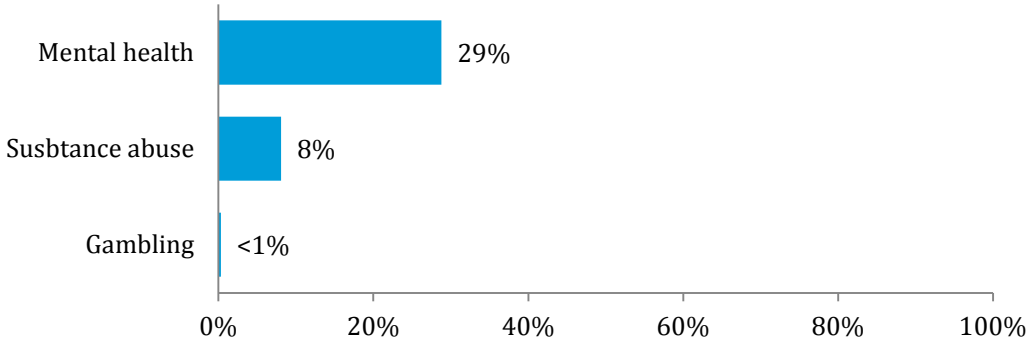

Figure C-6. Adult Iowans who have sought treatment

At-risk gamblers were significantly more likely to have reported that they sought treatment for substance abuse than were not-at-risk gamblers (16% vs. 7% respectively) (see Table C-6).

Table C-6. Gamblers who have sought treatment

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
	Not-at-risk %	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Substance abuse problem including alcohol, drugs, abuse of prescription medications, or over the counter medication?*	7	16	9
Mental health condition such as depression or anxiety?	27	32	28

** p < .05*

EXPERIENCES IN THE PAST

Another question assessed the respondents' family lives related to gambling and substance use problems when they were growing up. Slightly less than half of Iowans (44%) may have experienced someone in their family having a gambling or substance abuse problem when they were growing up (see Figure C-7).

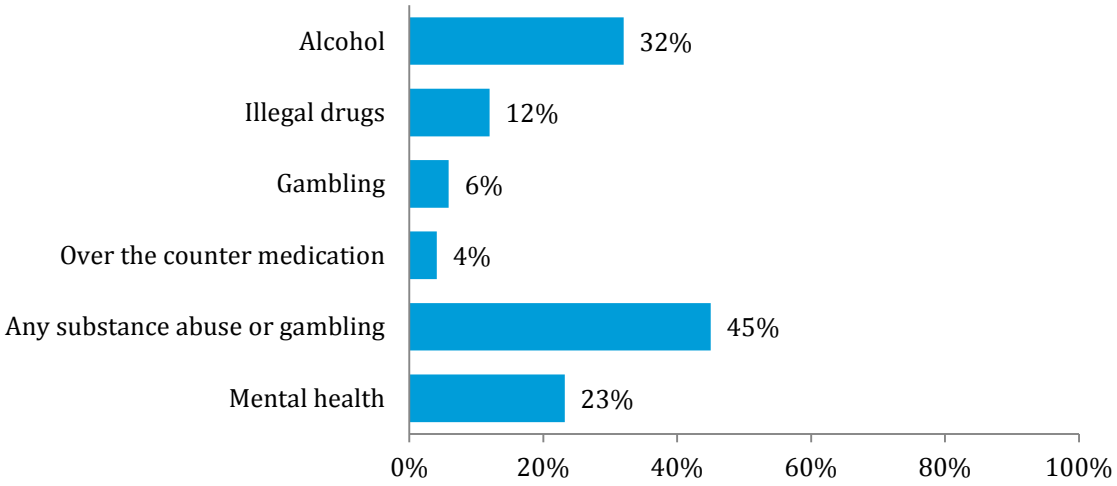

Figure C-7. Past experiences and problems

Past experiences of family problems were greater for at-risk gamblers than not-at-risk gamblers. About three in five at-risk gamblers (65%) experienced some problems growing up, compared to two in five among the not-at-risk gamblers (41%) (see Table C-7).

Table C-7. Past experiences when growing up among gamblers

	Gambled in the past 12 months		
Anyone in the family had a problem with	**Not-at-risk %**	**At-risk %**	**Total %**
Alcohol*	30	47	33
Illegal drugs	12	17	13
Gambling*	4	17	7
Over the counter medication	4	7	4
Mental health*	21	38	24
Any past experience*	41	65	45

*$p < .05$