# GAMBLING BEHAVIOR

## GAMBLING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS: A 2015 SURVEY OF ADULT IOWANS

Report 2 of 6

**Prepared for**
Iowa Department of Public Health
Iowa Gambling Treatment Program

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# GAMBLING BEHAVIOR[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

The most common gambling activities in the state were lottery (38%) and raffle tickets (37%) followed by scratch tickets and pull tabs (32%), slot machines (24%), and card games with friends or others (not at casinos) (14%). The point estimates for 2015 gambling activities were slightly lower than they were in 2013.

Among those who gambled in the past 12 months, at-risk gamblers (57%) were significantly more likely to play slot machines than not-at-risk gamblers (30%). Likewise, slot machines were also the favorite gambling activity among at-risk gamblers (40%) and not-at-risk gamblers (23%) followed by the table games in casinos (at-risk gamblers: 17% vs. not-at-risk gamblers: 12%).

When the gambling activities were aggregated, 34% wagered or played in casinos, 49% played lotteries, and 53% were involved in other gambling activities. At-risk gamblers (72%) were significantly more likely to wage or play in casinos than not-at-risk gamblers (46%).

The five most common reasons participants gave for gambling were:

- entertainment or fun (36%)
- support worthy causes (27%)
- socializing (18%) and excitement or a challenge (18%), and
- to win money (17%)

[1] This is the second 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 B. GAMBLING BEHAVIOR

Gambling behaviors can be assessed in many different ways. In this study, gambling behaviors were measured by 19 gambling activities such as playing slots or lottery tickets for three different timeframes: (1) ever (in lifetime), (2) in the past 12 months, and (3) in the past 30 days.

The gambling behavior data are shown below at the population level as well as for subgroups defined by the NODS and PGSI. In order to increase the sample size and thereby the confidence in the resulting inferential statistical tests, the group of participants based on those who experienced one or more symptoms (past 12 months) is generally used in analyses referring to respondents with problem gambling symptoms or defined as "at risk" gamblers.

Unless otherwise stated, references to adults with any problem gambling symptoms or "at risk" gamblers in this section are based on approximately 13% of adult Iowans who said they had experienced one or more negative symptoms of pathological or problem gambling during the past 12 months (see Figure B-1).

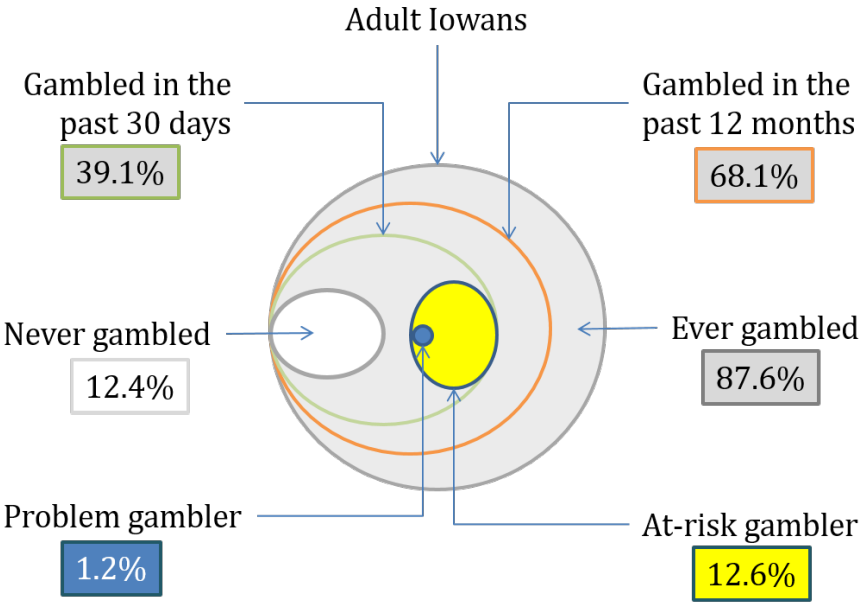


**Figure B-1.** Gamblers, "at risk" gamblers, and problem gamblers

In addition to gambling behaviors within the defined timeframes, this section aggregates 19 gambling activities into three major groups: (1) Any casino, tracks, or organized sport betting, (2) Any lottery, and (3) Other gambling activities.[2]

[2] (1) Any Casino: Slot machines, Table games at casino, Video poker, video keno, or video blackjack, Dice games, Live keno, Bingo, Racetracks either on horses or dogs, Other sport betting on professional, college, or amateur events.
(2) Lotteries: Scratch tickets or pull tabs, Lottery tickets (numbers), Video lottery machines.
(3) Other gambling activities: Card games with friends, family, or others (not at casinos), Personal skills such as pool, bowling, video games, or playing basketball, Betting or wagering on fantasy sports leagues or games, Office pools (including tournament brackets), Raffle tickets (including those supporting charities), High-risk trading of stocks, commodities, or futures, Betting or gambling using some other game, activity, or event, Online gambling using the Internet.

## MOST COMMON GAMBLING ACTIVITIES (PAST 12 MONTHS)

There are a variety of activities that some people consider *gambling* and others may not necessarily consider *gambling*. In this study, gambling was described to respondents as "betting or gambling for money or possessions." The most common types of gambling activities adult Iowans engaged in at least once in the past 12 months are shown below.

The overall ranking of the most common gambling activities of adult Iowans in 2015 remains similar to 2013 and 2011 (see Table B-1). However, the level of gambling activities declined in 2015 compared to 2013 (see Figure B-2).

**Table B-1.** Ranking of most common gambling activities in the state[3]

| | Gambled in the past 12 months (of all adults) | % |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | Lottery tickets (numbers) | 38 |
| **2** | Raffle tickets (including those supporting charities) | 37 |
| **3** | Scratch tickets or pull tabs | 32 |
| **4** | Slot machines | 24 |
| **5** | Card games with friends, family, or others (not at casinos) | 14 |

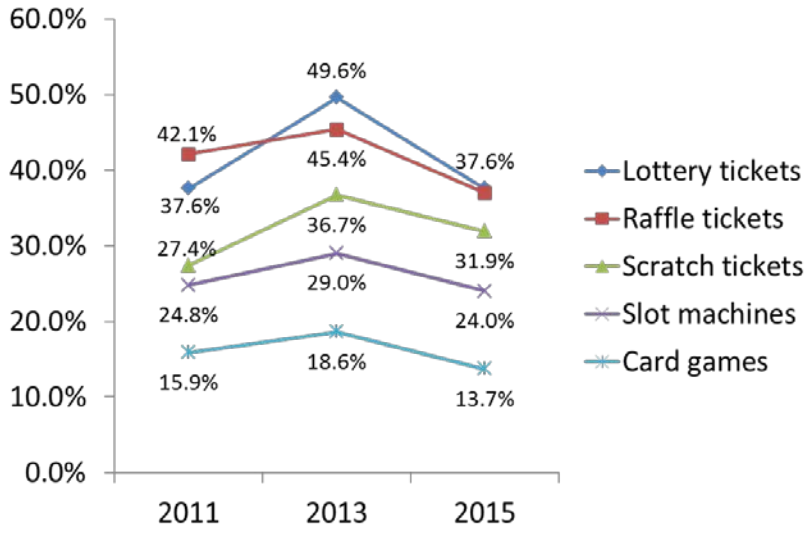


**Figure B-2.** Level of most common gambling activities in the past 12 months from 2011 to 2015

[3] See the complete list of ranking by gambling activities in Appendix 7.

Another way to look at the data is to compare the behaviors of those who gambled in the past 12 months to those who were classified as "at-risk" gamblers. Among the most common gambling activities during the past 12 months, slot machine use increased more than 20% when comparing the gambling activities of those who gambled in the past 12 months to those who were classified as at-risk gamblers (see Table B-2).

**Table B-2.** Rankings of the 5 most common gambling activities and the level of gambling behavior among those who gambled in the past 12 months

| | Gambling Activities in 2015 | Gambled in the past 12 months | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Not-at-risk % | At-risk % | Total % |
| 1 | **Lottery tickets (numbers)** | 55 | 56 | 55 |
| 2 | **Raffle tickets (including those supporting charities)** | 56 | 49 | 54 |
| 3 | **Scratch tickets or pull tabs*** | 44 | 60 | 47 |
| 4 | **Slot machines*** | 30 | 57 | 35 |
| 5 | **Card games with friends, family, or others (not at casinos)** | 19 | 26 | 20 |

* $p < .05$

## Favorite Gambling Activities

The ranking of favorite gambling activities was slightly different than actual gambling behavior. Slot machines were the favorite gambling activity followed by tables games in casinos. At-risk gamblers (40%) were more likely to say that their favorite gambling activity was slot machines than not-at-risk gamblers (23%). Also, not-at-risk gamblers (23%) were more likely to say that they did not have a favorite gambling activity compared to at-risk gamblers (2%) (see Table B-3).

**Table B-3.** Rankings of favorite gambling activities

| | Gambling Activities in 2015* | Gambled in the past 12 months | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Not-at-risk % | At-risk % | Total % |
| 1 | **Slot machines** | 23 | 40 | 26 |
| 2 | **Table games in a casino** | 12 | 17 | 13 |
| 3 | **Lottery tickets (numbers)** | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| 4 | **Scratch tickets or pull tabs** | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| 5 | **Card games with friends, family, or others (not at casinos)** | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| | **No favorite gambling activities** | 23 | 2 | 19 |

* $p < .05$

## AGGREGATED GAMBLING ACTIVITIES

As stated previously, gambling activities were aggregated into 3 groups: (1) Any casino, tracks, or organized sport betting, (2) Any lotteries, and (3) Other gambling activities. When comparing the results from 2011, 2013 and 2015, there is a decline in gambling activities in 2015 compared to 2013 (see Figure B-3). Aggregated lottery activities had the most significant decrease between 2013 and 2015. The complete information about population estimates and their confidence intervals can be seen in Appendix B-1.

| | |
|---|---|
| 34.3%<br>Pop. Est.: 800,571 | Wagered or played in casinos in the past 12 months |
| 48.9%<br>Pop. Est.: 1,141,682 | Played lotteries in the past 12 months |
| 52.6%<br>Pop. Est.: 1,227,841 | Involved in other gambling activities in the past 12 months |

**Figure B-3.** Aggregated gambling activities in 2015

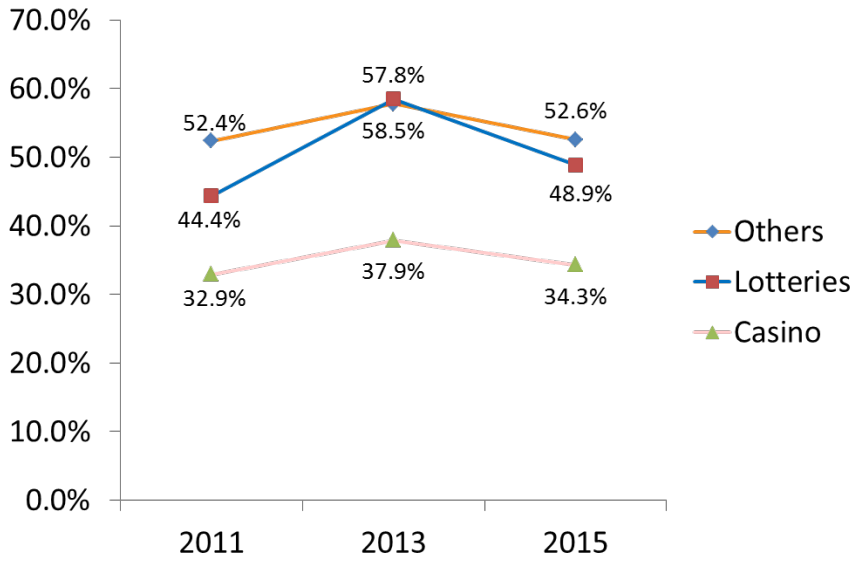


**Figure B-4.** Comparison of aggregated gambling activities in 2011, 2013 and 2015

When comparing the aggregated gambling activities of the general population between 2013 and 2015 (see Figure B-4), the most significant change is observed in the lottery activities. More specifically, the prevalence of all lottery activities decreased significantly from 59% in 2013 to 49%

in 2015. Other aggregated gambling activities also declined in the prevalence points, but these declines were not statistically significant.

The decline in gambling activities in the past 12 months is also supported by reports of the gambling revenues in Iowa. The Iowa Lottery reported $324 million from ticket sales in fiscal year 2015,[4] while the three racetrack casinos and 16 riverboat casinos reported an adjusted gross revenue of 1.4 billion dollars in fiscal year 2015.[5] The casino revenue in 2015 is higher than in 2014, but slightly lower than the casino revenue in 2013 (see Figure B-5).

This suggests that the slight decline of Iowa Lottery revenue is consistent with the decreased number of Iowans who bought lottery tickets, pull tabs, and played lottery video games in the past 12 months. Likewise, the slight decline in the number of adult Iowans involved in casino games may also be reflected by the decrease in revenues in 2015 compared to 2013. [6]

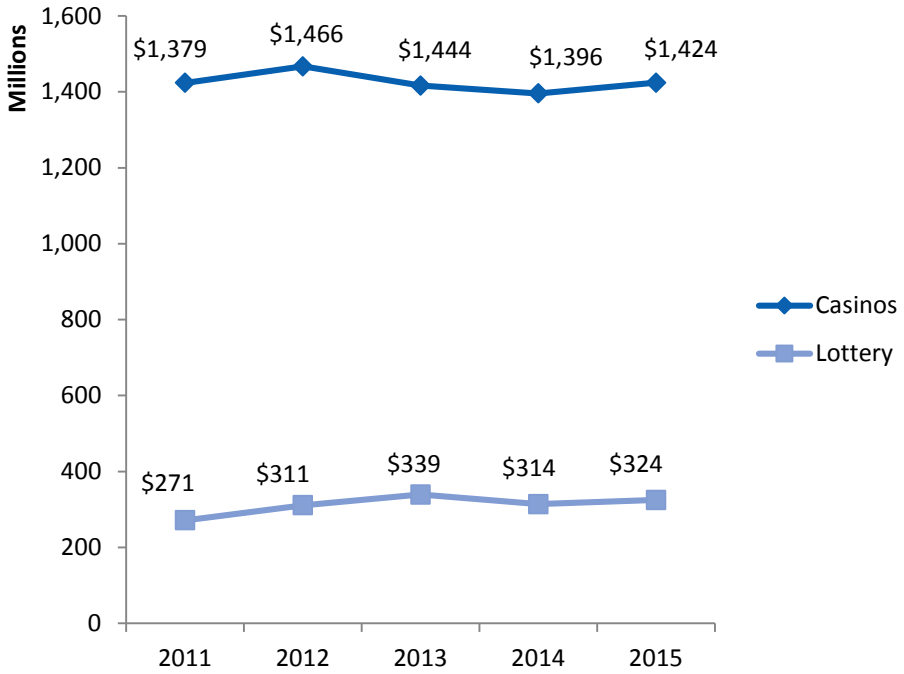


**Figure B-5.** Gambling revenues in Iowa: from 2011 to 2015 in millions

[4] See the 2015 Iowa Lottery revenue report at http://www.ialottery.com/PDF/2015AnnualReport.pdf
[5] Aggregated data from Iowa Gaming Commission website, annual revenue report from casinos and racetracks.
[6] There are several other factors that may affect gambling revenues. For instance, lottery sales may be related to the size of the jackpot. However, this may not be associated with a greater number of players, but rather relatively larger number of tickets per capita.

In addition to the change in aggregated gambling activities at the population level, the following table shows the gambling activities among those Iowans who gambled in the past 12 months and who were classified as at-risk gamblers in either NODS or PGSI screening tools. As expected, the reports of gambling activity increase moving from the general population to at-risk gamblers.

The study suggests that there is significantly more casino gambling among at-risk gamblers compared to those not-at-risk who gambled in the past 12 months. Those at-risk (72%) were much more likely to gamble in *casinos* compared to those were not-at-risk (46%). The differences in aggregated gambling activities in *lottery* and *other* gambling activities were relatively smaller than the *casino* group but were not significantly smaller (see Table B-4).

**Table B-4.** Aggregated gambling activities in the past 12 months by at-risk gambler

| **Aggregated gambling activities in 2015** | **Gambled in the past 12 months** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Not-at-risk %** | **At-risk %** | **Total %** |
| **Any casinos, tracks, or organized sport betting*** | 46 | 72 | 50 |
| **Any lottery** | 70 | 78 | 72 |
| **Other gambling activities** | 75 | 74 | 75 |

* $p < .05$

Likewise, at-risk gamblers were more likely to engage in all types of aggregated gambling activities than not-at-risk gamblers (see Figure B-6). About half of at-risk gamblers (47%) gambled in all three aggregated gambling activities (casino, lotteries, and other gambling) compared to 29% of not-at-risk gamblers.

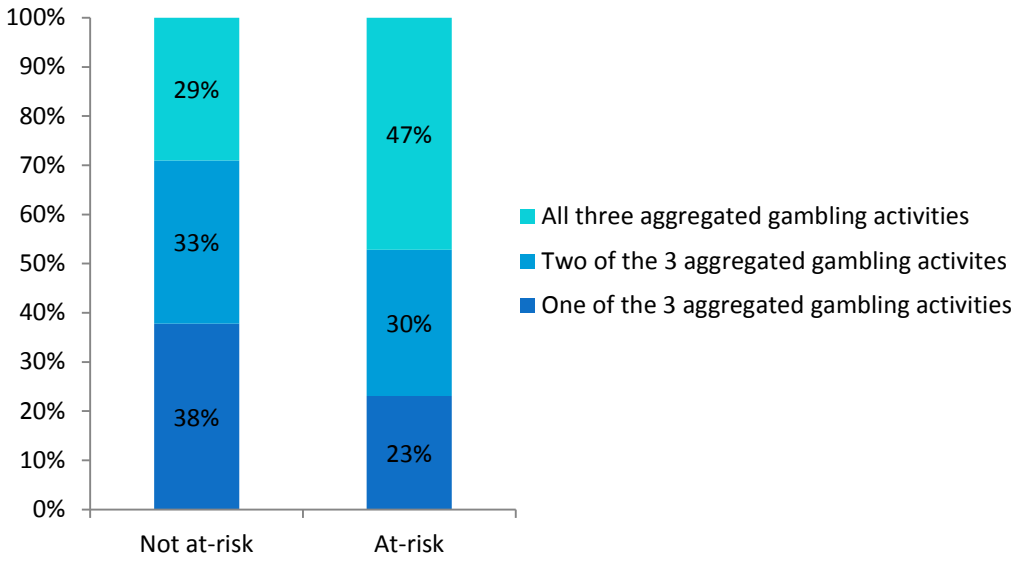


**Figure B-6.** Gambling involvement in aggregated gambling activities by at-risk gamblers and not-at-risk gamblers

## Reasons for Gambling

Reasons for gambling were assessed for those who gambled in the past 12 months. The ranking for reasons for gambling were different between at-risk and not-at-risk gamblers in the state. Of the 5 most frequent reasons for gambling, at-risk gamblers were more likely to state that it was "very important" or "important" that they gamble for entertainment or fun, for socializing, for excitement, as a challenge, or just to win money than not-at-risk gamblers (see Table B-5).

**Table B-5.** Ranking of the reasons to gamble

| | Reason for gambling | "Very important" or "important" reason for gambling in the past 12 months | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Not-at-risk % | At-risk % | Total % |
| 1 | For entertainment or fun | 32 | 52 | 36 |
| 2 | To support worthy causes | 26 | 30 | 27 |
| 3 | For socializing | 16 | 28 | 18 |
| 4 | For excitement or as a challenge | 15 | 33 | 18 |
| 5 | Just to win money | 13 | 34 | 17 |

## Reasons for NOT Gambling

As shown in Table B-6, those who have never gambled provided the following reasons for not gambling:

**Table B-6.** Ranking of the reasons for NOT gambling among those who never gambled

| | Reasons for NOT gambling | "Very important" or "important" % |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Just not interested in gambling | 75 |
| 2 | Possibility of losing money | 74 |
| 3 | Moral and ethical concerns | 52 |
| 4 | Don't have the money to gamble with | 41 |
| 5 | Too busy or don't have enough time | 39 |
| 6 | Distance from betting opportunities | 11 |

## APPENDIX B-1. POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR AGGREGATED GAMBLING ACTIVITES

**Table B-1-a.** Population estimates by aggregated gambling activities: casino or lottery or other gambling activities (past 12 months)

| | Year | Pop Est n | Percent | SE Percent | Lower 95% | Upper 95% | DEFF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Casino** | 2013 | 876,252 | 37.92 | 1.49 | 35.04 | 40.88 | 1.72 |
| | 2015 | 800,571 | 34.29 | 1.32 | 31.74 | 36.92 | 1.41 |
| **Lottery** | 2013 | 1,352,837 | 58.54 | 1.49 | 55.59 | 61.42 | 1.67 |
| | 2015 | 1,141,682 | 48.90 | 1.38 | 46.19 | 51.61 | 1.40 |
| **Other** | 2013 | 1,336,865 | 57.85 | 1.51 | 54.86 | 60.78 | 1.71 |
| | 2015 | 1,227,841 | 52.59 | 1.38 | 49.88 | 55.28 | 1.39 |

## APPENDIX B-2. FREQUENCY OF GAMBLING BEHAVIORS

For most of the gambling activities included in the survey, respondents were asked questions about how often they engaged in each activity and how much money they usually spent per day on that activity. For efficiency reasons and to minimize respondent burden, follow-up questions were asked for only 10 of the 19 types of gambling activities.

Of the gambling activities assessed in this study, playing the lottery with numbers and scratch tickets were the activities reported most frequently. Among adult Iowans who said they bought lottery tickets during the past 12 months, 14% said they usually bought scratch tickets or pull tabs weekly and an additional 25% reported that they bought tickets monthly (see Table B-2-a).

**Table B-2-a.** Frequency of gambling among those have gambled in the past 12 months

| Gambling Activities | Daily or weekly % | Monthly % | Infrequently % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lottery tickets (numbers) | 14 | 25 | 61 |
| Lottery scratch tickets or pull tabs | 7 | 31 | 62 |
| Bingo | 10 | 9 | 80 |
| Card games with friends, family, or others (not at casinos) | 12 | 17 | 72 |
| Personal skills such as pool, bowling, video games, or playing basketball | 21 | 17 | 62 |
| Dice games | 3 | 18 | 79 |
| Slot machines | 7 | 16 | 78 |
| Video poker, video keno, or video blackjack | 4 | 14 | 82 |
| Table games at casino | 5 | 16 | 79 |
| Racetracks (either horses or dogs) | 5 | 13 | 82 |