

Research Report Round-up

Gambling & gaming during COVID-19

Overview

Efforts to minimize the health impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) around the world have impacted many sources of enjoyment, such as live events, concerts, and sports matches. As a result, many people have had few activities they can participate in during the pandemic. Two activities that may have replaced these sources of entertainment are online gaming and online gambling. A report titled *Gambling and Gaming During COVID-19: Prevalence, Implications and Strategies to Stay Safe* provides an overview of the impacts of COVID-19 on the gambling and video gaming sectors. This issue of Research Report Round-up provides a plain language summary of the report.

What this report is about

Efforts to minimize the health impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) around the world have impacted many sources of enjoyment. For example, live events, concerts, games, matches or races have been cancelled to help “flatten the curve” of new COVID-19 cases. As a result, many people have few activities they can participate in during the pandemic.

Two activities that may have replaced these sources of entertainment are online gaming and online gambling.

A report titled *Gambling and Gaming During COVID-19: Prevalence, Implications and Strategies to Stay Safe* provides an overview of the impacts of COVID-19 on the gambling and video gaming sectors. The report outlines the following impacts:

- For gambling participation, the closure of physical gambling spaces has not led to a decrease in gambling participation around

the world. Instead, more individuals are participating in online gambling and more organizations have seen this as an opportunity to move into the virtual gambling space.

- For video gaming participation, the amount of time spent and the number of people playing video games has increased.

The report also looks at the following risks and harms associated with gambling and gaming in the general population and in youth:

- For the general population, if someone is gambling or gaming frequently or for long periods of time, they may set aside less time for other responsibilities such as work, chores or personal wellness. This may also cause them to neglect their relationships. People may also be spending more money on gaming or gambling than they can afford, which may put added stress on them and on their relationships.
- For children and youth, gaming and gambling carry risks that are often different from those

seen among adults. First, problem gaming or gambling can negatively impact the social, emotional and psychological development of youth. Many of the protective aspects of a young person's life (such as sports, art classes, social gatherings and school) are no longer available to them during the COVID-19 pandemic due to measures to limit transmission of the virus. This means the young person has more time to commit to gaming and gambling online and may no longer be participating in other activities that bring them joy. In addition, youth may have less access to disposable income, especially during the pandemic, and may experience greater financial harm if they overspend on gambling or gaming.

Finally, the report outlines ways that people can continue to participate in these activities while protecting themselves from the potential risks. Some suggestions include:

- setting a time and money limit and tracking wins and losses
- researching the games and websites before signing up
- taking breaks to participate in other activities (for example, through the YMCA's programming at <https://www.ymcahome.ca> and other free activities available online, such as learning to play an instrument or another language, touring a museum, or attending a virtual workout class)
- connecting with loved ones through video chats.

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Title and link to report

[Gambling and Gaming During COVID-19 - Prevalence, Implications and Strategies to Stay Safe](#)

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How can this report be used

This report may be useful to policymakers and public health professionals looking to reduce the risks associated with gambling and gaming among youth.

Populations addressed

Children, adolescents, young adults

Keywords

Early psychosis intervention; fidelity; assessment; monitoring; program standards; quality improvement.

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Language

English