

YOUTH GAMBLING IN ALBERTA

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In the fall of 2005, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) undertook the second cycle of The Alberta Youth Experience Survey (TAYES) to measure alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and gambling activity among Alberta students in grades 7 through 12.¹ The survey also examined student attitudes, perceptions, and social networks, in relation to substance use and gambling activity. In TAYES 2005, 3,915 students participated in the survey.

Prevalence of Gambling

Of students surveyed, 62.6% reported participating in gambling activities in the 12 months prior to the survey. As shown in Table 1, students most often reported playing cards for money (41.3%), playing scratch tickets (35.0%), betting on sporting events (28.4%), and playing bingo (19.8%). Students were less likely to report playing video lottery terminals (VLTs) (5.9%), playing Sport Select (5.2%) and betting online (4.7%).

TABLE 1: Percentage of Alberta youth participating in gambling activities during the past year, by grade, 2005

GAMBLING ACTIVITY	OVERALL	GRADES 7-9	GRADES 10-12
Played cards for money	41.3	29.5	47.7
Played scratch tickets	35.0	33.1	35.9
Bet on sporting events	28.4	24.6	30.5
Played bingo	19.8	23.1	18.0
Played any other lottery	13.5	10.6	15.0
Played VLTs	5.9	5.7	6.0
Played Sport Select	5.2	3.8	5.9
Bet online	4.7	3.5	5.4
All gambling activities combined*	62.6	55.6	66.4

*Note: Students may have reported participating in more than one gambling activity.

Participation in gambling differed demographically: males (68.6%) were more likely to report gambling than females (57.5%) and high school students (66.4%) were more likely to report gambling than junior high students (55.6%). On a

regional level, the percentage of youth who reported participating in one or more gambling activities was highest in Northern Alberta (64.6%), followed by Central Alberta (64.4%), and Edmonton (62.1%). The lowest rate of gambling participation among youth was reported in Southern Alberta (53.0%). Participation was higher among high school students than among junior high school students in all gambling activities except playing bingo.

TABLE 2: Percentage of Alberta youth participating in gambling activities during the past year, 2002 and 2005

GAMBLING ACTIVITY	2002	2005
Played cards for money	23.0	41.3
Played scratch tickets	30.8	35.0
Bet on sporting events	21.1	28.4
Played bingo	9.5	19.8
Played any other lottery	6.7	13.5
Played VLTs	3.3	5.9
Played Sport Select	3.7	5.2
Bet online	3.2	4.7
All gambling activities combined	41.2	62.6

*Note: Students may have reported participating in more than one gambling activity.

Overall prevalence of gambling increased among Alberta's youth between 2002 (41.2%) and 2005 (62.6%). Participation in each of the selected gambling activities also increased since 2002. As detailed in Table 2, the greatest increases were in playing cards for money, playing bingo, and betting on sporting events.

Problem Gambling

TAYES 2005 included the South Oaks Gambling Screen—Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA), which is a 12-item questionnaire that measures gambling frequency and associated behaviour. Of the Alberta students who reported gambling in the 12 months prior to the survey, the majority (87.6%) were classified as non-problem gamblers according to SOGS-RA criteria. As shown in Table 3, few

Alberta students were classified as at-risk gamblers (8.8%) and even fewer as problem gamblers (3.6%).

TABLE 3: Percentage of current gamblers classified at different levels of hazardous or problem gambling, 2005

	OVERALL
<i>Non-problem gamblers</i> : gamble with a score of 0 or 1 out of 12 possible problems	87.6
<i>At-risk gamblers</i> : gamble frequently with one problem OR gamble less frequently with two or more problems	8.8
<i>Problem gamblers</i> : gamble daily OR gamble weekly with 2 or more problems	3.6

For further information, contact AADAC Research Services at 780-427-0116.

¹ The TAYES 2005 results must be interpreted with caution, because of limitations in sampling across Alberta. AADAC was unable to survey Calgary students and surveyed only a limited number of Edmonton high school students. As a result, the findings may not sufficiently represent all Alberta students and comparisons to the 2002 TAYES findings must be made with caution.