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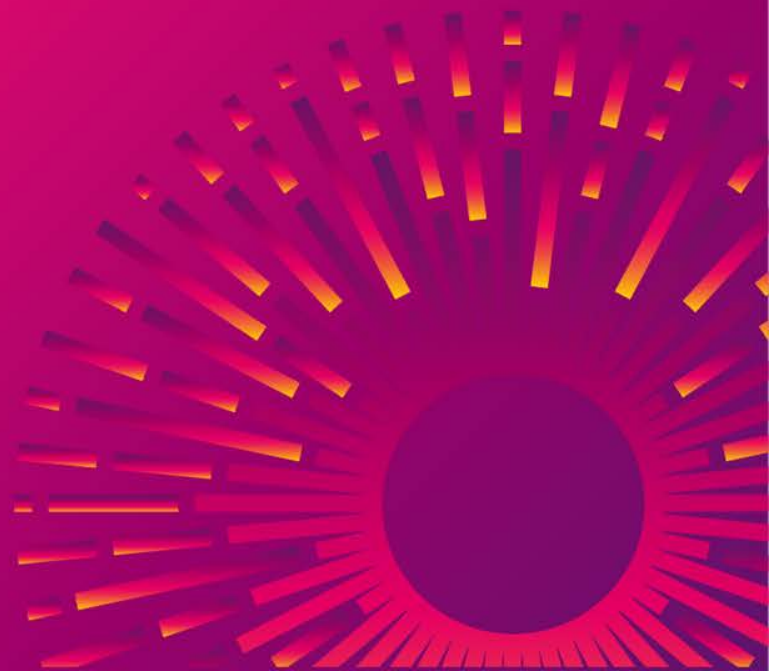
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# Weighing up the Odds: Young men, sports and betting

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# Background: young men and sports betting



- Research suggests that the gambling environment in Australia is changing
- Sports betting has grown substantially and is emerging as a significant contributor to problem gambling, especially among younger adult males
- Despite increasing community concern regarding the normalisation of sports betting in Australia, we have limited knowledge or understanding of:
  - young men's sports betting behaviours and the contexts in which they bet
  - the role that marketing, social media and new technologies play in influencing betting awareness and participation in this group



# ‘Weighing up the Odds’ Study

- Participants:
  - qualitative interviews (n = 25) and online survey (n = 335 bettors)
  - young men aged 18-35 living in Victoria
  - average age 25, most were employed either full-time or part-time, and many were university educated
  - majority lived in metropolitan Melbourne and surrounds, and all were securely accommodated – living with parents, partner or in a share house



# Sports betting behaviours, motivations and attitudes



# Sports betting initiation



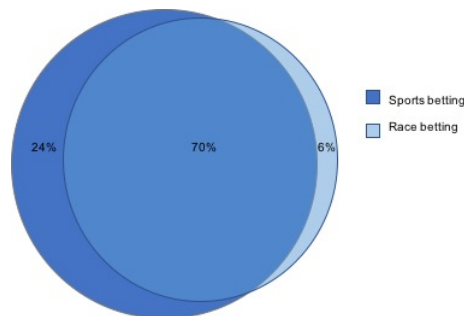
- Average age of sports betting initiation: 18 years – but 23% were under 18
- Time from initiation to regular betting: average 2.8 years
  - 26% transitioned to regular betting at the same age they initiated

*'I remember staying up on my 18th Birthday so I could sign into – 'cause I was a massive sports fan so I stayed up til midnight on my 18th Birthday. Signed in and created a sports betting account 'cause some of my older friends had been doing it and I put a bet on some third division soccer game in the Czech Republic just to say that I had' (age 25)*



# Sports betting involvement (past 12 months)

- On average, participants bet on 6 different sports
- Overlap between sports and race betting



- Bet frequency
  - 69% bet on one or more sports  $\geq$  fortnightly
  - 51% bet on one or more sports  $\geq$  weekly



# Betting motivations



*'It does give you – like I mean there is – like you get a buzz from it' (age 29)*

*'Betting on games and then watching when you've got money on it – is a good part about it. A game is ten times better to watch when you've got money on it, you know what I mean?' (age 25)*

*'I don't know, you've checked your Facebook, you've checked Instagram, it's all boring – you just flick to your next app which is Sportsbet and there happened to be a game starting in half an hour... And oh yeah, I'll have a bet on this' (age 31)*



# Betting modes and use of promotions



- Betting modes:
  - 61% online via a smartphone, 18% online via a computer/tablet/TV
  - 20% land-based venue (e.g., TAB, pub, club, racetrack, casino)
    - only 8% of bettors place all their bets at a land-based venue
- Betting promotions- most (81%) used at least one form:
  - sign-up bonuses (58%)
  - multibets (49%)
  - stake-back offers (44%)





# Betting modes and use of promotions



*‘When I was sort of looking for everything with everyone offering free bets and everything, there would be - at any one time you could have accounts with six, seven, eight different companies’ (Age 25)*

*‘I’ve got an account with just about all of the bookkeepers. All the ones you see on TV. The reason is they all have different promotions where they offer free bets. I always take advantage of those promotions’ (age 33)*

*‘Ah I’m a sucker for bonus bets and promotions so most of the money that I lose is from promotions where I believe I’m genuinely going to win’ (age 27)*



# Decisions about betting



- Bet planning:
  - 60% planned in advance, 30% placed on impulse prior to event, 10% on impulse during event

*'I probably would do a little bit of research, maybe the day before or leading up ... I usually sit down with the paper or the form guide or online somewhere and do some of my own research.'*  
(Age 33)

*'We've got, like a punting WhatsApp group where you kind of post what you're betting on, what we won, what we lost' (age 21)*

*'You could be sitting at work at 11am and you get a text or message saying there's a meeting at Flemington at ten past one and this is who you need to bet on' (age 29)*



# Drinking and betting



- 64% reported having bet on sports while affected by alcohol during past 12 months
  - for 51% of those, this led to spending more money or placing more bets than intended

*'If you've had a few drinks, like you sort of, don't care as much about it, so you always um bet a bit more I guess' (age 33)*

*'Once you have a few drinks I think, yeah, I think a few of the boys might lose a bit more money than they wanted to' (age 27)*

*'I'd prefer to do \$10, \$20 bets. But if I'm having a good day and I've had a few beers I'm not opposed to dropping a 50 and then you wake up the next day and you're like, "Damn it. I shouldn't have dropped that 50, that was a stupid bet"' (Age 21)*



# Effects of betting on health and wellbeing



*‘So I wouldn’t say it effects my health too much. But it definitely effects my mood... When you lose, it sort of does put a real downer on the weekend’ (age 27)*

*‘It also impacts on your confidence just in day-to-day life, you know. If you put a bet on but might have been – you bet a bit more than you usually would, and you know, you lost or, you put a few bets on and they all lost, it can impact your confidence’ (age 19)*

*‘So um it’s definitely my intention to curb it back somewhat. Yeah because I just sort of sometimes – not saying I’m punting outside my means, but you know just sort of money’s better spent elsewhere’ (age 31)*



Were some participants more at risk of harm?



# Key differences by frequency of betting



Past 12 months:	Weekly bettors	Occasional bettors
# sports bet on (mean)	9 sports	4 sports
# online betting accounts	5.5 accounts	1.8 accounts
Average bet placed across all sports (\$)	\$75	\$25
% of betting done online via smartphone	67%	54%
% of betting done at land-based venue	12%	28%
% used a wagering promotion	93%	68%
% who bet on fantasy sports	29%	16%
% who bet on casino games	61%	42%
% who bet when affected by alcohol	73%	55%
% classified as problem gambler (PGSI 8+)	25%	5%



# Summary of findings



- Findings suggest that sports betting has become normalised among this sample of young men
  - facilitated by widespread wagering marketing & promotions, 24-hour online access, and informal & formal betting networks
- Participants commonly reported having multiple online betting accounts, betting on a range of different national/international sports, and betting regularly
- Many participants planned their betting in advance, but unplanned betting was also reported to be common, especially when alcohol had been consumed



# Summary of findings



- While most identified strategies for trying to control the amount of money or time they spent betting, negative impacts were also reported
- Young men who bet weekly or more often were significantly more likely to:
  - spend more on bets across a wider range of sports, use multiple online betting accounts, gamble on other products, bet when affected by alcohol, and be classified as experiencing gambling problems
- Further research should explore the correlates of gambling-related harm among sports bettors, and policy and regulatory responses should address the widespread marketing and availability of these products





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# Disclosures



- The authors are employed at the Australian Gambling Research Centre at AIFS
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