

Problem Gambling in Estonia and Related Personal Risk Factors

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The Baltic Sea Area



ESTONIA

Population
1 340 602

GDP \$24,6
billion

Average
monthly salary
\$1200

Unemployment
rate 4,6 %

(31.12.2007)

Background

- Availability of gambling activities in Estonia as of June 08:
 - ❑ 167 (land-based) gaming sites including 5056 slot machines *and* 63 gaming tables;
 - ❑ National Lottery
 - ❑ Sports betting
 - ❑ Remote Gambling
- Gaming sites are open 24/7
- 90% from gambling market belongs to casino games
- Gambling activities in Estonia are not available to persons under 21 years of age, excl.lottery.
- Slot machines are banned outside the gaming site

Estonian flagship – Olympic Casino



Research Conducted in Estonia

Prevalence study in 2004 (*Laansoo, S., Niit, T., Faktum*)

- ❑ looked at the extent of contact the Estonian population has had with gambling *and*
- ❑ examined the risk factors for problem gamblers

Prevalence study in 2006 (*Laansoo, S., Turu-uuringute AS*)

- ❑ aimed at finding out in what direction the trend of problem gamblers is developing *and*
- ❑ additionally to risk factors examined gamblers' abilities to manage the running of their day-to-day lives.

Methodology

- Both surveys were carried out on the sample of an omnibus survey conducted by a marketing research company.
- The sample of 2004 was purely an omnibus survey
- In 2006 part of the survey was as the omnibus ($n=1,000$), and part as a specific survey ($n=1,005$), in the form of a questionnaire

Samples

- The target population of the survey was made up of permanent residents of Estonia in the age 15-74 with an average age of 46.3 years in 2004 and 42.3 years in 2006
- In recruiting the samples the proportional model of recruiting the target population was applied, considering rural versus urban as well as regional aspects. A multi-stage sampling method was used.
- In 2004 $n = 986$ and in 2006 $n = 2005$ (47 % men)
- Maximum error margin did not exceed $\pm 2.19\%$.

Instruments

- In **2004**, SOGS-R and Eysenck's Impulsivness Scale (Eysenck et al, 1985) *and* in **2006**, COPE Inventory (Scheier & Weintraub, 1989) & AUDIT (WHO, 2001) were added.
- In both studies respondents recieved the questionnaire from the interviewer to be filled in on their own. Upon completion, the questionnaire was placed in an envelope to ensure anonymity before being returned to the interviewer.

Prevalence of Problem Gambling in Estonia

	2004 <i>n</i> = 986	2006 <i>n</i> = 2005
Potential pathological gambler (SOGS 3-4) (%)	2,6 (± 0.99)	3,1 (± 0.75)
Probable pathological gambler (SOGS 5+) (%)	2,4 (± 0.96)	3,4 (± 0.79)
Admitted to have played games of chance (%)	61	75

Gambling Participation in 2006 (%)

	Total	Engaged in gambling*	Lotteries	Slot machines	Playing cards	Casino games
Males	<i>n</i> = 937	48	72	26	25	11
Females	<i>n</i> = 1068	52	70	12	6	2

**Percentage by gender of those having engaged in gambling.*

Gambling preferences by age

- ❑ the most popular forms of gambling among young people (15-19 years) included:
 - playing the lottery (80%),
 - playing card games for money (40%),
 - and slot machines (28%).

- ❑ Casino games were preferred mostly 20 to 39 year-olds.
- ❑ 40% of the respondents playing slot machines being between 20 to 29 years of age.
- ❑ Lottery is popular in every age group.

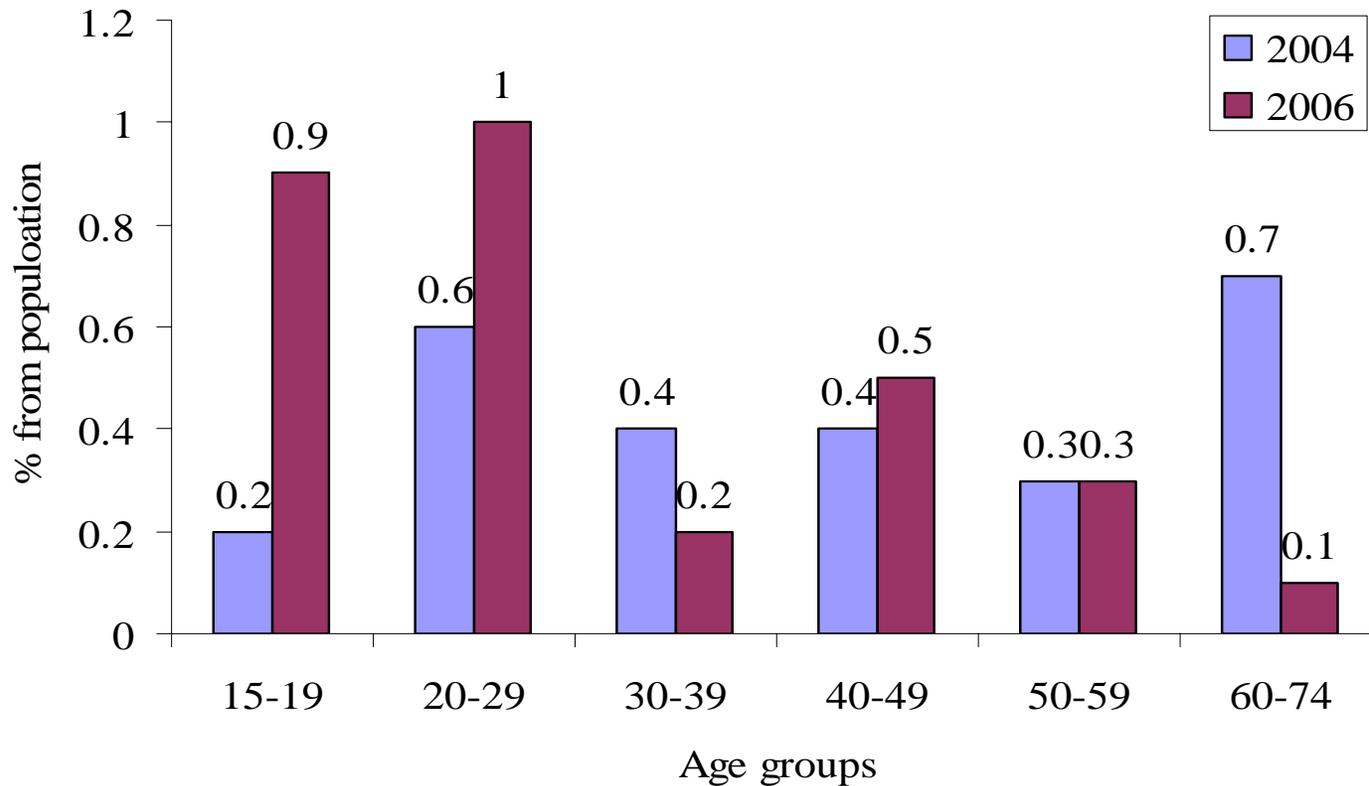
Gambling preferences by social status

- Playing card games for money were mostly preferred among students and skilled workers.
- Casino games were played equally among the entrepreneurs/top specialists as well as skilled workers
- No other significant difference among the groups

Identification of high Risk Groups

- Below are the profiles that differed statistically ($p < 0.01$) from the national average in terms of statistical socio-demographical average within problem gambler groups by age, gender, education and social status, income ,and other variables.

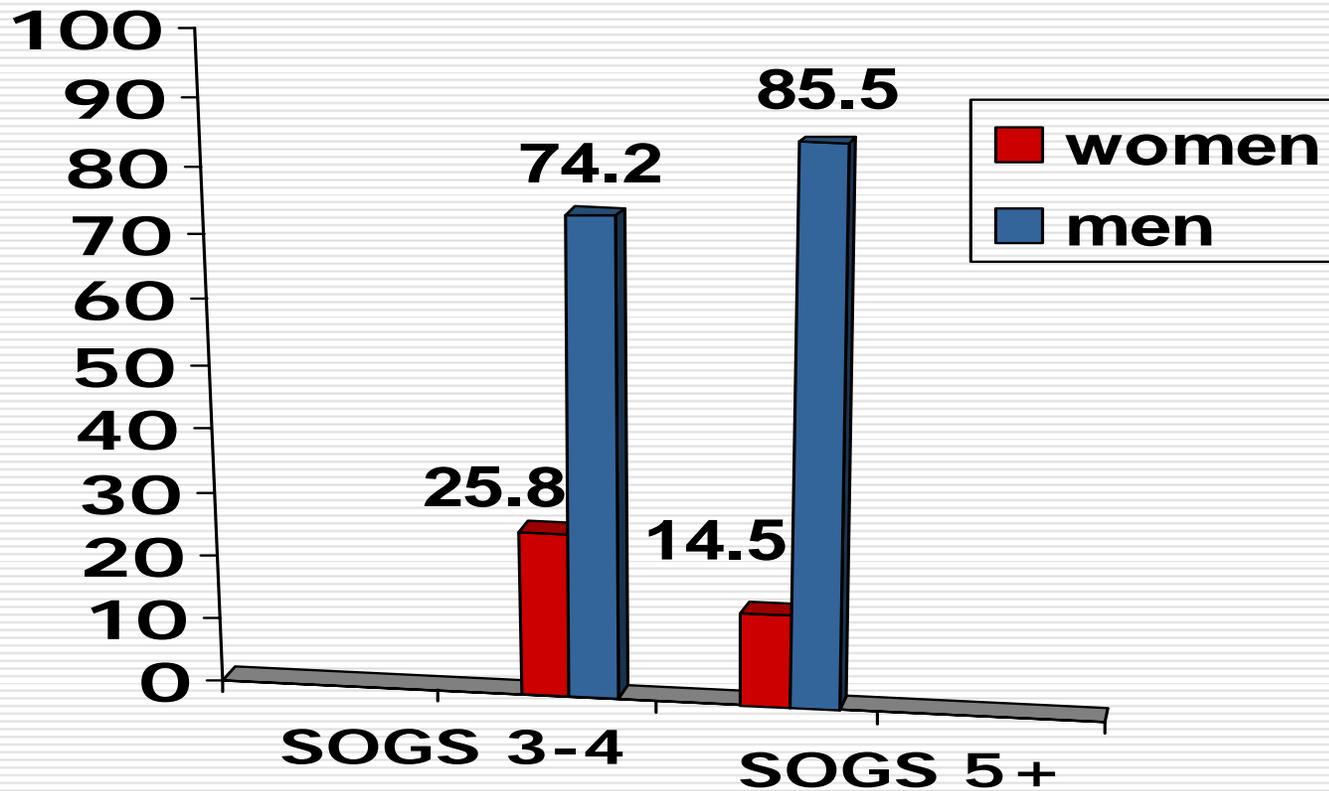
Problem gambling by age group



Gambling prevalence by gender (%)

	SOGS 3-4		SOGS 5+	
	2004	2006	2004	2006
Males	2.1	2.3	1.9	2.9
Females	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.5

Gambling by gender in 2006 (%)



Other social variables

- ❑ 1/3 of the problem gamblers group were city dwellers.
- ❑ In relation to pathological gambling, it bore no significance whether the person was married or single, with or without children.
- ❑ Nationality played no role when it came to gambling habits.
- ❑ Among both the Estonian and Russian speaking population, the number of potential pathological and probable pathological gamblers was nearly the same: 3.2% among the Estonian and 3.8% among the Russian speaking respondents.

Gambling engagement among probable pathological gamblers by gender in 2006 (%)

	Lotteries*	Slot machines*	Playing cards*	Casino games*
Male SOGS 5+ (n=59)	7.6	17.1	14.8	26.2
Female SOGS 5+ (n=10)	1.1	4.2	7.9	9.5
All respondents (n=1,936)	7.2	19	16	6.4

**Percentage within the game of chance among the gender group*

Impulsiveness and venturesomeness among SOGS groups in 2006

	Impulsiveness (M)	SD	Venture- someness (M)	SD
Level 1 (n=1,874)	4.1	1.99	3.46	3.01
Level 2 (n=62)	6.06	2.16	6.08	2.98
Level 3 (n=69)	5.98	2.19	6.62	2.46

AUDIT and COPE scores among SOGS groups in 2006

- It can be concluded that alcohol use among problem gamblers was higher than average ($p < .001$) and
- confirmed the concept that views pathological gambling as seeking to escape from one's problems. The coping dimension oriented toward avoidance differed statistically ($p < .001$) between all three groups but there were no difference on the task and social-emotional dimension.

	AUDIT* (M)	SD	AVOID** (M)	SD
Level 1 (n=1,874)	4.35	4.70	39.93	7.56
Level 2 (n=62)	7.12	6.34	42.18	8.58
Level 3 (n=69)	11.42	7.62	46.57	8.21

*Indicates the extent of alcohol use.

**Indicates behaviour directed towards avoidance

Risk factors

- Based on these results, it can be concluded that the risk profile of a problem gambler is the following:
 - a young impulsive male
 - who prefers casino games and slot machines,
 - consumes more alcohol than the average,
 - avoids his problems instead of solving them.
 - he has got a close friend or a family member who is also addicted to gambling.
 - he is an urban resident – most likely due to more opportunities of gambling available in the cities.

Key findings

- It can be concluded with a 95% reliability that in two years (from 2004 to 2006) the number of additional male gamblers had grown by 1,900 to –8,000 people.
- The ratio of women among potential pathological gamblers had increased from 0.5% to 0.8%.
- The biggest increase in probable pathological gamblers and potential pathological gamblers took place among young male between 15 to 19 years of age.

Conclusions

- The 2006 study very clearly revealed a link between problem gambling and alcohol disorders. In any case, alcohol impairs impulse control, therefore intoxicated gamblers lose any control over their gambling. Therefore, it should be considered whether or not to offer free alcohol in gambling establishments and whether it should be forbidden on the ethical grounds.
- Probably the adolescents do not see the dangers associated with gambling, as is the case with drugs.
- Allowing for the large growth in gambling possibilities offered and sales of forms of gambling in 2006 and 2007, it can be speculated that the number of problem gamblers has increased further

Steps to take

- ❑ Conduct further studies among adolescents in order to pinpoint problem gambling risk factors and prevalence of gambling problems among young people for a tailor-made prevention programme best suited for this age group.
- ❑ Considering that the adolescents do not see the dangers associated with gambling, as is the case with drugs, it is vital to inform first and foremost the parents on the dangers of different forms of gambling and their addictive quality, and conduct preventative work in educational institutions such as schools.
- ❑ Some relief could be brought to adolescent gambler problems by organizing awareness campaigns to students in schools as well as parents in the day care centers introducing the risks of gambling and early signs of problem detection.

Other studies conducted in Estonia

Kaare, 2008

- looked at the correlates of pathological gambling in Estonia: personality, emotional states, self-esteem, cognitive ability and decision-making strategies (instruments used: SOGS, DSM-IV interview, Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices, Iowa Gambling Task, Personality (IPIP-NEO), Emotional states (EST-Q), Self-esteem (RSES).

Results (Kaare, 2008)

- The overall personality profile of the pathological gamblers is a combination of impulse-control problems (high Immoderation and low Dutifulness and Cautiousness) acting-out tendencies (high Activity level and Adventurousness) and emotional vulnerability (high Anger, Depression, Self-consciousness and Vulnerability and low Cheerfulness).
- In pathological gamblers group appeared high prevalence of mood disorders and low self-esteem compared to non-gambling controls.
- Pathological gamblers show tendencies to learn reward and punishment contingencies less effective and they scored significantly lower on Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices than non-gambling controls.
- The results indicate that personal predispositions may have a considerable role in creating vulnerability for the development of gambling problems.

THANK YOU!

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