Prevalence and Risk of Pathological Gambling in Switzerland after the Legalization of Games of Chance and Casinos in 2000

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Table of Contents

- Introduction
  - Gambling Situation in Switzerland

- Methods
  - Design of the Basel Epidemiological Study (BES)

- Results

- Conclusion
Gambling in Switzerland - History I

1874 - 1999

- Ban on casinos since 1874
- Lotteries act enacted in 1923 - revision in preparation
- In 1993 the Council of States and Popular vote pass the old law of casinos
- In 1998 Bondolfi et al.\(^1\) with the SOGS:
  - Probable pathological gamblers: 0.8%
  - Potential pathological gamblers: 2.2%

Gambling in Switzerland - History II

April, 2000

- Federal law about Games of Chance and Casinos
  - Legalisation of casinos
  - Unlimited stakes
  - Games of chance only in casinos and amusement arcades
  - Controlling federal agency
  - Social concept (dealing with people with gambling problems, staff training, evaluation research)
Casinos in Switzerland

- German-speaking part
- French-speaking part
- Italian-speaking part
- Rhaeto-Romanic-speaking part

Locations:
- Courrendlin
- Bad Ragaz
- Davos
- Luzern
- St. Moritz
- Interlaken
- Meyrin
- Pfäffikon
- Schaffhausen
- Basel
- Bern
- Granges-Paccot
- Montreux
- St. Gallen
- Baden
- Pfäffikon
- Luzern
- Interlaken
- Locarno
- Lugano
- Mendrisio
- Basier
- Genf
- Schaffhausen
Gambling in Switzerland - History III

Since 2000

- Foundation of the Swiss Federal Gaming Board (SFGB)
- Since 2001 the revision of the lotteries act is under examination --> since 2004 is it suspended
- From 2002 to 2004, 19 casinos have opened
- 2005 ban of slot machines outside of casinos
- 2007 ban of “tactilo” slot machines
Aims of the Study

- One-year prevalences of problem gambling and pathological gambling after the legalization of gambling in Switzerland
  --> role of availability of gambling opportunities

- Determine possible risk factors for pathological gambling in Switzerland
Basel Epidemiological Study I (Sept 2004)

Sample

- N=1000 interviewed by telephone (German and French speaking part of Switzerland)
- Random-quota method (region, number of habitants, sex, age, size of household)
- Aged 15 to 74 years

Instruments

- Revised South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS-R)\(^1\) (3 categories, maximal sum score = 20)

\(^1\) Lesieur & Blume (1993) in J Gambl Stud.
Basel Epidemiological Study II (Sept 2004)

Variables

- Demographic Variables
- Gambling activities and behaviour
- Average distance between a person’s domicile and his/her nearest casino
### Lifetime Gambling Activity in Switzerland (N=1000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall gambling</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotto or Totto</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lottery scratch tickets</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino playing</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card playing for money</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slot machine</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports betting</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock market or option market playing</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bingo for money</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability games for money</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dice for money</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One-Year Prevalence (N=932)

- Probable pathological gamblers: 1.6% (N=15)
- Potential pathological gamblers or problem gamblers: 1.8% (N=17)

3.4%
Average Distance to a Casino (N=877)

- Analysis using a Poisson regression model

- Mean distance = 26.4 km (SD = 16.0 km, 95% of all residences 52 km away or less)

- No relationship between travelling time by car between a person’s domicile and his/her nearest casino and risk of gambling ($p \geq 0.2.$)
Risk Factors (N=932)

- Analysis using a Poisson regression model

Risk factors for a higher score of the SOGS-R sum scale:
- Living in the German speaking part of Switzerland
- Male
- Younger age
- Tenant
Summary of Results

- Prevalences\(^1\) and risk factors\(^2\) are comparable with other countries

- The distance to the next casino in Switzerland is probably too short to detect a relationship with pathological gambling

- Specific risk factors for Switzerland

\(^1\)e.g. Ladouceur, Jacques, Ferland, Giroux (1999) in Can J Psychiatry.
Limitations

- Cross-sectional
- Comparing prevalences is problematic
- Sample size
- SOGS-R?¹

Conclusion

Aims of future research in Switzerland

- Further studies about risk factors and the role of availability of gambling opportunities

Aims of future research overall

- Standardized assessment and nomenclature \(^1\)
- Temporal precedence, correlation and concurrent dominance \(^2\) of risk factors

\(^1\) Blaszczynsky (2005) in J Gambl Stud.