



## RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING COUNCIL

### For Immediate Release

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## **Ontario Study Shows Internet Gambling is on the Rise Responsible Gambling Council Releases 2005 Prevalence Study**

The Responsible Gambling Council's 2005 gambling prevalence study, led by Dr. Jamie Wiebe, shows that the number of Ontarians gambling on the internet has risen, with a significant increase among young adults.

Among 18-24-year-olds, the number of people gambling online has increased from 1.4 per cent in 2001 to 5.5 per cent in 2005. Although the overall numbers for internet gambling remain low relative to other forms of gambling, the percentage of people gambling online has almost tripled from 0.7 per cent in 2001 to 1.7 per cent in 2005.

"This study provides us with valuable information integral to the development of Ontario's prevention and treatment programs," explains Jon Kelly, CEO, Responsible Gambling Council. "This snapshot of gambling and problem gambling in Ontario would not have been possible without the contribution of the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre."

### **Problem Gambling in Ontario**

Overall problem gambling rates in Ontario are relatively unchanged from 2001 with one exception: The prevalence of problem gambling among adults 50-59 years old has decreased from 4.5 per cent to 2 per cent. Young adults 18-24-years-old still have the highest prevalence of problem gambling, with 6.9 per cent of this age group experiencing moderate to severe problems. The rate of problem gambling among the general adult population (including those who do not gamble) is 3.4 per cent, and among those who gamble, it is 5.5 per cent.

Gambling habits were assessed using the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). Items used to characterize a gambling problem include behaviours such as chasing losses, escalating to maintain excitement, borrowing or selling to get gambling money and betting more than one can afford.

Fewer people are gambling, but those who do are gambling more frequently. The 2005 study has shown significant increases in weekly participation in casino slots, card/board games, casino table games, Sports Select and speculative investments.

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Internet gamblers are also spending more time online: 25 per cent gamble at least weekly, with 12.7 per cent gambling daily. The average internet gambler spends about 3.5 hours a month gambling online. The frequency of play increases among gamblers who have problems. People who have moderate problems according to the CPGI spend 11 hours gambling online; those with severe problems spend 17 hours. Non-problem gamblers spend approximately two hours a month gambling on the net.

The study also suggested a disconnect between having a gambling problem and perceiving that you have a problem. Of those who scored at the moderate to severe levels on the CPGI, less than half – only 47 per cent – reported ever having difficulties related to their gambling.

There is also a strong relationship between money spent on gambling activities (regardless of the type) and gambling problems. On average, non-problem gamblers spend 1.5 per cent of their personal income on gambling. When looking at people with severe problems, that number jumps to 21 per cent.

The study also asked about the effects of gambling on friends and family. There has been an increase in people who report being negatively affected by someone else's gambling, almost doubling from 5.2 per cent in 2001, to 9.6 per cent in 2005. Just over one-third of those with severe problems themselves had also experienced difficulties as a result of someone else's gambling.

A total of 3,604 Ontario adults, 18-years-old and over, participated in the telephone survey. The study, which was funded under a grant from the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, was designed to: determine the prevalence of gambling and problem gambling in Ontario, describe the characteristics of people experiencing gambling-related problems and compare trends with the 2001 gambling prevalence study. The entire study is available online at [www.responsiblegambling.org](http://www.responsiblegambling.org) or at [www.gamblingresearch.org](http://www.gamblingresearch.org).

The Responsible Gambling Council is an independent, non-profit organization committed to problem gambling prevention. The RGC designs and delivers highly effective awareness programs. We promote the identification and adoption of best practices in problem gambling prevention through research and information dissemination.

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