Survey of Internet user’s intentions about gambling on a legal online site

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Abstract

While many governments are considering the option of legalizing online gambling, mental health professionals and public health advocates worry that it will increase the number of problem gamblers. Results of the survey show that 3% of the sample, composed of 1009 Internet users, intended to gamble real money on the new online legal site, 6% would gamble without money, and 5% would visit the new site without gambling. Nearly 45% of those who intended to visit the legal gambling site were Internet non-gamblers in the last year. Half of online gamblers intended to gamble on the new legal site. Also, 5% of the non-gamblers intended to visit the legal site. Further, the survey revealed that 22% of the sample were in agreement with the decision to legalize online gambling in the province while 60% were against it.

Objectives

- Start a longitudinal study of internet users’ attitudes, intentions and behaviors toward gambling on a new government-owned Web site.
- Examine public health concerns

Methodology

In November 2010, just a few days before the launch of a new and legal Internet site, 1009 adult Internet users completed an online six-item survey (answer rate 51%). The data was collected with the help of a survey company. Sample was stratified according to region (not proportionally) but was representative within region according to sex, age, education, mother tongue, and living alone or not. The data were weighted according to the precedent variables. Error rates were also computed for the sample, and by region.

Results

- 45% of those intending to visit the new site were Internet non-gamblers (did not gamble on the Internet in the last year).
- 50% of online gamblers intended to gamble on the new site.
- 5% of the 201 non-gamblers intended to visit the new site, without gambling real money.
- 22% of the sample were in agreement with the decision to legalize online gambling.

Discussion

The study must have a follow-up (Survey 2) in order to examine if:
- legal online gambling will enhance the proportion of gamblers, and problem gamblers.
- Internet users intentions become reality
- Internet gamblers will gamble less on illegal sites

Limitation: the random sample came from a bank of internet users who agreed to participate in surveys

Conclusion

- Small proportion of sample plan to gamble online;
- The legalization might attract gamblers who did not gamble on the Internet before;
- The legalization might attract non gamblers to visit the legal site;
- Many internet users who already gambled online are interested to play on the legal site.
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