

***9th European Conference on Gambling Studies and Policy***

# **Overviews of prevalence rate in online problem gambling**

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# Italian and European scenario

## ***EUROPE***

- ❑ **Action plan on remote gambling, respecting the principle of subsidiarity**
- ❑ **Player protection is one of the pillar of EC policy on remote gambling**

## ***ITALY***

- ❑ **Increased attention on excessive gambling and problem gambling:**
  - ❑ **Heated debates**
  - ❑ **Multiplication of research and analysis from different sources**
  - ❑ **Strong pressure of opposite groups of interest on policy decision makers**
  - ❑ **Many legislative initiatives and provisions**

***Risk of an ideological approach to analysis and decision making, in Italy and abroad?***

# State of art on problem gambling research

## OVERALL GAMBLING

- ❑ **State of research much diverse among different western Countries:**
  - ❑ **Few Countries have a relevant capital, in terms of methods and applications**
  - ❑ **Several countries does not have yet satisfactory research**

## ONLINE GAMBLING

- ❑ **It is still in a backward phase, also at international level**
- ❑ **Existing research seems to show a significantly higher level of problem in online gambling**

***IS ONLINE GAMBLING TRULY MORE DANGEROUS?***

## Consequences of a possible prejudice

- ❑ Italian new restrictive measure on online gambling, because of alleged danger, despite it represents 4% of total customer expenditure
- ❑ New law provision on advertising, crucial marketing tool for online gambling only:

***"It is forbidden to provide advertising messages highlighting incitement to gamble or praise to its practice"***

- ❑ Italian online gambling regulation has been the first and it is still considered one the best

***IS ITALY RISKING TO DAMAGE ITS ARTWORK?***

***Is there a risk of bad policy making on customer protection and of unjustified damage to the industry?***

# Misleading reading of research: the sample

***Do following studies pretend samples adopted represent the whole population?***

- ❑ **McBride, Derevensky – 2008 – Canada – DSM-IV – 23% problem gambling**
- ❑ **Participants recruited by newsletter sent by CasinoCity website**
- ❑ **42% of people polled say they gamble for money on the internet**

- ❑ **Williams, Wood - 2007 North America - CPGI – 21.1% problem gambling**
- ❑ **Participants recruited by banners on portals to access to casino sites**
- ❑ **Curators says: “adopting random digit dialing you would identify very low number of online gamblers ...”**

- ❑ **Prevalence rate always measures share of problem gamble in the sample ... Those research cannot be used as a reference for online problem gambling in the whole population**

***WOULD YOU MEASURE PREVALENCE OF OFFLINE PROBLEM GAMBLING INTERVIEWING PEOPLE COMING OUT OF A CASINO?***

# Deep the reading: the gamblers' perimeter

- ❑ **BGPS - 2010 – UK – DSM-IV and PGSI**
- ❑ **7,756 participants, 73% overall gamblers in last year**
- ❑ **Sample represents the whole population**

- ❑ **BUT RESEARCH ARE OFTEN TRICKING ...**



- ❑ **5% online problem gambling vs total online gambling past year – National Lottery excluded**
- ❑ **3% online problem gambling vs total online gambling past year – National Lottery included**

- ❑ **1.3% overall problem gambling vs total overall gambling past year**

- ❑ **Most people gamble National Lottery only. They are hardly problem gambler. Including them, prevalence rate falls down**

# Cautious reading: what is an online gambler?

## *Resuming Mark Griffiths remarks on BGPS - 2010 results*

- **Confrontation of problem gambling prevalence between who had gambled online at any game (3%) and who had gambled not online (1.3%) could bring to the conclusion that online is more dangerous ...**

***... BUT who had gambled online could have gambled "ALSO ONLINE" or even "RARELY ONLINE AND REGULARLY OFFLINE"***

<b><i>Mode of gambling</i></b>	<b><i>% of total gamblers</i></b>	<b><i>% problem gambling</i></b>
<b>Offline only</b>	<b>80.5%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>Online only</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Mixed same activities</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
<b>Mixed different activities</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>

- **90% of online gamblers play "also online"**
- **10% play online play online only: their problem gambling rate is zero**
- **Who plays many games in many modes is more often problem gambler**

**THEN, THAT IS NOT ONLINE GAMBLING IS DANGEROUS!**

## Previous question, in another sense

- ❑ **Research considers online gambling as gambling alone, individually, at home ... not at all in public premises or in gambling communities**

**BUT**

- ❑ **More than 1/3 of total remote gambling on Italian legal licenses is done in public premises. IT is more than € 100 million NGR per year. Poker is the main game**
- ❑ **Bars and Internet points – around 20.000 locations - where people can regularly gamble on PCs and terminals at their disposal. Each location holds 2 to 20 PCs**
- ❑ **Plus a relevant number – almost 10.000 - of similar premises offer gambling on illegal sites**

***DO YOU THINK GAMBLING IN THOSE LOCATIONS IS SAFER  
THAN ON YOUR OWN PC?***

***HAD BEEN INTERNET GAMBLERS IN PUBLIC PREMISES CAREFULLY  
EXCLUDED FROM ONLINE GAMBLING RESEARCH?***



# Italian research confronting online and overall gambling – CIRMPA 2010

- ❑ Italian CIRIPA dual research on online an overall seems to ascribe much more danger to online gambling

<i>Research</i>	<i>sample adult gamblers</i>	<i>% prb gbl vs total gbl.s</i>	<i>total adult gamblers</i>	<i>total adult can access gambling</i>	<i>% prb gbl vs total pop.</i>
<b>Overall</b>	<b>gamble last 12 months 2,000</b>	<b>1.71%</b>	<b>26,000,000</b>	<b>46,506,000</b>	<b>1.01%</b>
<b>Online</b>	<b>gamble last 3 months 1,000</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>18,700,000</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

- ❑ Online gamblers in the last 12 months double gamblers in the last 3 months consequently → % problem gamblers could be halved to 4.9%
- ❑ Prevalence of problem gambling vs gambler population is higher for online gambling → 1.71% vs 4.9%
- ❑ Prevalence of problem gambling vs total population that can access to gamble is lower for online gambling → 1.01% vs 0.7%

***BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?***

# Access to online vs access to offline

<i>Mode of gamble</i>	<i>total adult can access gambling</i>	<i>total adult gamblers</i>	<i>% of gamblers vs total adult can access gambling</i>
Overall	46,506,000	26,000,000	56.0%
Online	18,700,000	1,350,000	7.2%

- ❑ **Gambling overall has easy access: at the counter of every bar at the corner of every street can be bought a ticket**

**The rate of problem gamblers on total gamblers is low because gamblers are over 50% of total population and the majority is represented millions of occasional Lottery gamblers**

- ❑ **The Internet users have not easy condition to access to gambling. Enter online gambling is subdued to a complex, even threatening identification procedure ... registration, ID transmission, deposit ...**
- ❑ **THE ONLINE GAMBLING IS PROVIDED WITH A FILTER TO THE ACCESS, which leads only 1 out of 14 Internet users to record, despite the daily netsurfing and encouragement of repeated advertising campaigns**

# The Italian remote gambling model

- ❑ **Gambling is potentially "dangerous" but the online mode offers protection: gambling is nominative, the gambler is registered and all its gambling history is tracked.**
- ❑ **Compared to other Countries ITALY HAS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY:**
  - ❑ **Registration, deposit, withdrawal, any gambling transaction is subject to real-time transmission to the AAMS and validation**
  - ❑ **AAMS knows, in full detail, in real time, the gambling history of each gambler**
  - ❑ **AAMS tracks behavioural data of the whole gambling activity of each single player among different sites and licensees**
  - ❑ **AAMS is the entity that can guarantee total social responsibility commitment and lead licensees on it**

***AAMS DATABASE IS A UNIQUE TOOL FOR IDENTIFICATION AND PREVENTION OF HIGH-RISK BEHAVIOR***

# An example from the AAMS database: player distribution by monthly loss/winning

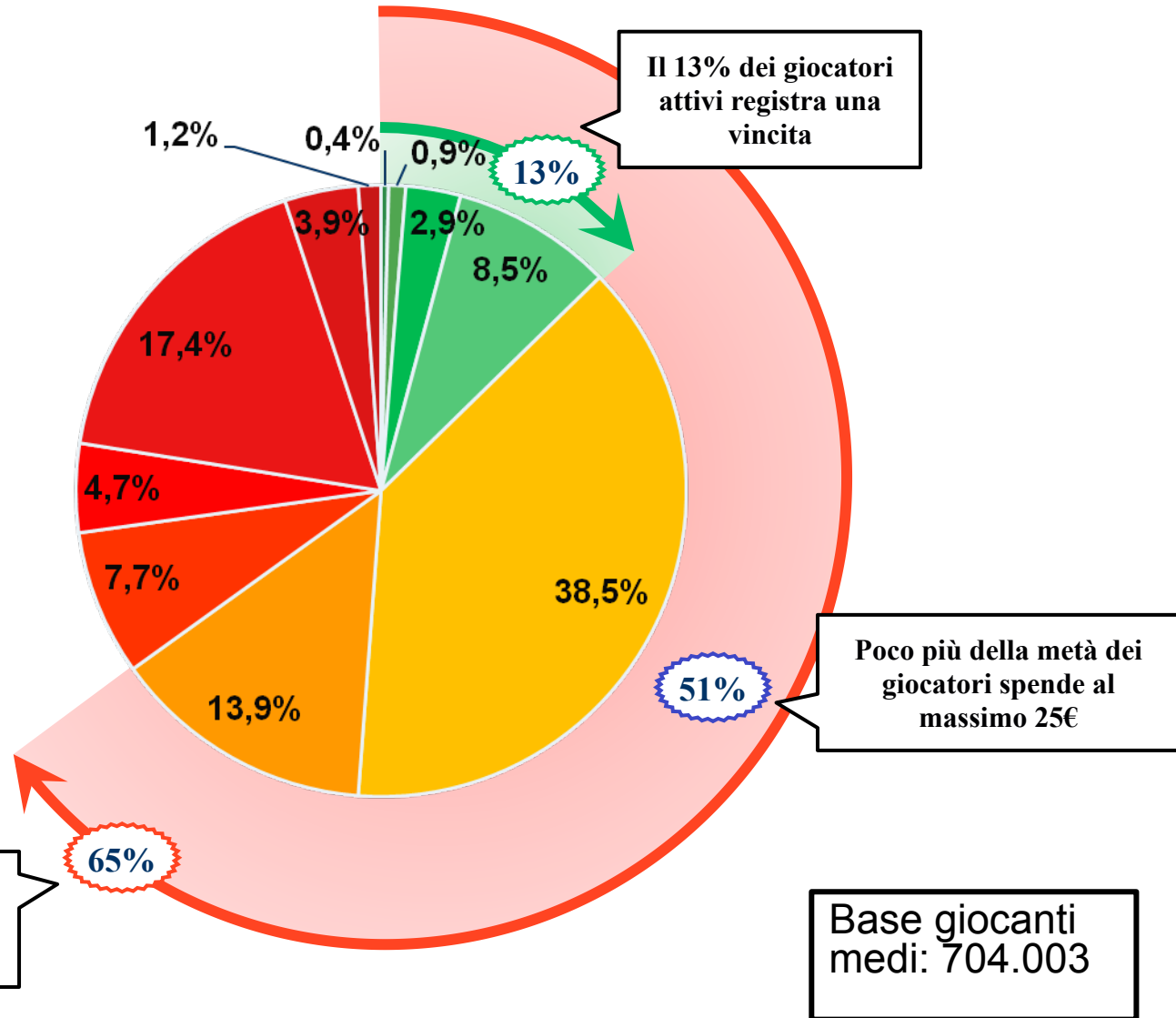


## VINCITA

- $x > 1.500€$
- $500€ < x < 1500€$
- $100€ < x < 500€$
- $0€ < x < 100€$

## SPESA

- $0€ < x < 25€$
- $25€ < x < 50€$
- $50€ < x < 75€$
- $75€ < x < 100€$
- $100€ < x < 500€$
- $500€ < x < 1500€$
- $x > 1.500€$



# Behaviour tracking tools and research methodology

## ***BEHAVIOUR TRACKING TOOLS***

- ❑ Existing experiences show predictability of problem gambling by tracking behaviour
- ❑ Major limit has been restriction of tracking to a particular online site
- ❑ AAMS database potentially overcomes that limit
- ❑ **IT DESERVES INVESTMENT TO DEVELOP BEHAVIOURAL TRACKING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING PREDICTION TOOLS**

## ***SCREENING METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH***

- ❑ Research on gambling and problem gambling prevalence are insufficient in Italy, like in most European Countries
- ❑ **ONE RESEARCH, CARRIED OUT AT THE HIGHEST SCIENTIFIC AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL**
- ❑ Customer protection is highly consistent with a coordinated approach among European Countries. Action plan for remote gambling presented in June by Michel Barnier is in line with such a need

## To conclude

- ❑ **Problem gambling research is an extremely sensitive issue. It is used:**
  - ❑ **to address gambling regulatory provisions,**
  - ❑ **to define gambling protection programs**
  - ❑ **to ensure gambler protection,**
- ❑ **Most users of problem gambling research, like policy makers, are not skilled in analysis and like to “simplify”. Effective communication is crucial**
- ❑ **State of the art is disomogeneous**
- ❑ **Further improvements are needed also in Countries that own a relevant experience, mostly for online gambling**
- ❑ **It should be committed at the highest institutional level**
- ❑ **This is a vocational topic for European Commission contribution and coordination**

***Thank you for your attention***

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