

FACT SHEET – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY EXAMINING PRE-COMMITMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

What is the study about?

The New Zealand Ministry of Health commissioned an exploratory research study examining gambler attitudes and behaviours relating to pre-commitment within New Zealand. This study was undertaken by Schottler Consulting Pty Ltd by researchers with extensive prior experience in studying and evaluating the effects of pre-commitment.

The study included a quantitative online panel study (N=401) (with sampling across Auckland and other New Zealand locations - during December 2013) and qualitative focus groups (N=8) (Conducted in Auckland during August 2013).

The online panel study sample included 138 non-problem gamblers, 90 low risk gamblers, 102 moderate risk gamblers and 71 problem gamblers (including 100 New Zealand European gamblers, 101 Māori gamblers, 100 Pacific gamblers, 100 Asian gamblers). As samples are small, all findings should be interpreted with caution.

What is pre-commitment?

Pre-commitment is defined as the provision of a tool to enable setting of money and/or time limits prior to gambling. Examples of such tools may include card-based systems to set limits for EGM play and deposit limits on TAB betting sites.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

What does the literature say about pre-commitment?

A review of literature identified that most gamblers have a monetary amount to which they attempt to self-regulate and that problem gamblers may have more difficulty adhering to limits than non-problem gamblers. While many benefits of pre-commitment were identified in literature (including benefits for gamblers at-risk for problem gambling), results of EGM pre-commitment trials may suggest that voluntary uptake of pre-commitment tools can often be low. EGMs also emerged as the gambling activity most frequently associated with gamblers exceeding limits.

What did the research find in relation to pre-commitment?

Qualitative and quantitative research highlighted that many gamblers in New Zealand already set informal pre-commitments for their gambling (on a psychological level). Attempts to informally pre-commit were also higher in problem, compared to non-problem gamblers. However, problem gamblers reported exceeding limits at a much higher rate.

Do gamblers support the idea of pre-commitment for gambling?

When the concept of a voluntary pre-commitment tool was tested, 82% of EGM gamblers supported limits for EGM play, 84% of TAB gamblers felt that limits should be offered for TAB betting and 72% of table game gamblers felt that limits should be offered for table games.

Do gamblers support voluntary or mandatory gambling?

There was a stronger preference for voluntary pre-commitment (67% of all gamblers), compared to mandatory pre-commitment (33% of all gamblers). However, problem gamblers were somewhat more likely to endorse mandatory pre-commitment, with 56% supporting the concept, compared to only 41% of non-problem gamblers. If gamblers were required to set a mandatory limit, up to 30% of problem gamblers and 27% of moderate risk gamblers reported that they would set a very high unaffordable limit to avoid being blocked from gambling.

What are gambler intentions to use pre-commitment (if it were more widely available)?

In spite of positive attitudes towards pre-commitment, reported intentions to use pre-commitment were lower (if made available). Only 15% of EGM gamblers, 15% of TAB gamblers and 10% of table game gamblers indicated that they would 'definitely' use pre-commitment. However, an additional 33% of EGM gamblers, 29% of TAB gamblers and 24% of table game gamblers indicated that they would 'maybe' use such a tool.

What trends by ethnicity were observed in relation to pre-commitment?

When the current study used multivariate statistical methods to examine the unique influence of ethnicity on findings, results frequently showed that risk for problem gambling – rather than ethnicity - explained many results.

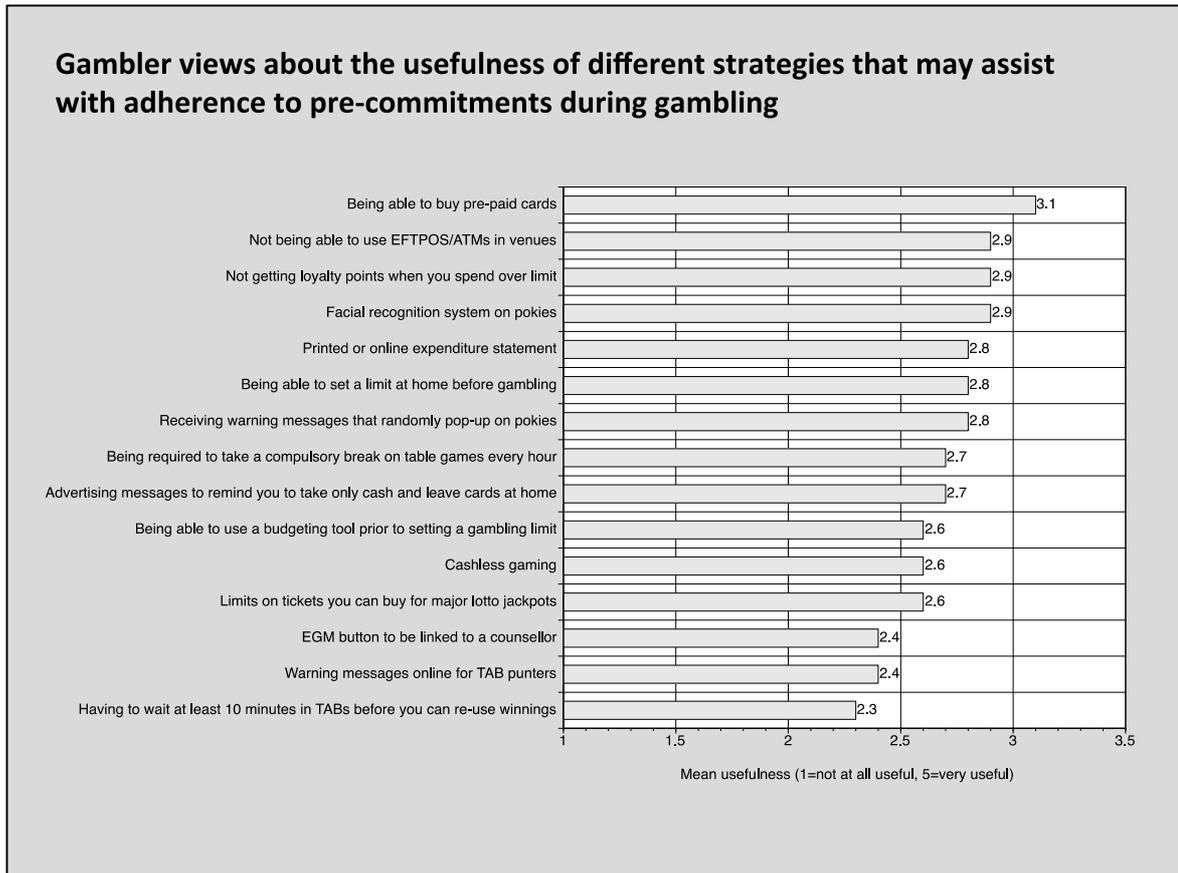
However, observed trends based on ethnicity included the following:

- Being of Asian background reduced the potential gamblers would exceed their limits when gambling
- Being of New Zealand European ethnicity was associated with lower interest in being blocked from further play in a pre-commitment system, while being of Pacific and Asian ethnicity was associated with a higher interest in blocking
- Being of New Zealand European ethnicity was associated with a lower likelihood to believe that the New Zealand European community would use voluntary limits, while the reverse was true for people of Pacific ethnicity
- Being New Zealand European was associated with the view that voluntary limits wouldn't help recreational or problem gamblers – People of Pacific ethnicity, however, were more likely to believe that voluntary limits would help recreational gamblers

Most desired features of a pre-commitment system for both the Māori and Pacific communities were pre-paid cards, being able to set limits at home before gambling and a budgeting tool to work out if gambling limits are affordable.

Top priorities for the Asian and New Zealand European community were pre-paid cards and not being able to use EFTPOS/ATMs in venues. Māori and Pacific gamblers also emphasised that it would be important that pre-commitment is not targeted at only Māori and Pacific communities (as this was seen to potentially stigmatise communities).

The usefulness of different strategies and responsible gambling features to help gamblers keep to limits for all gamblers is presented below for reference. Pre-paid care, restrictions on access to EFTPOS/ATMs and restrictions on loyalty points once limits are reached were all seen as quite useful in assisting gamblers to adhere to limits when gambling.



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