



PACIFIC ISLANDS FAMILIES STUDY 2009: MOTHER AND CHILD GAMBLING

Summary of key findings

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Background

The Pacific Islands Families (PIF) study is a longitudinal study following a cohort of Pacific children born in the year 2000. The study aims to determine the pathways which lead to optimal health, development and social outcomes for Pacific children and their families. Mothers, fathers and children are assessed at various data collection waves as the study progresses.

Aim

The aim of the gambling element of the PIF study 2009 data collection and analysis was to:

- Assess for possible predictors and protective factors for gambling
- Investigate associations between child gambling behaviours and other variables

Method

A range of gambling-related questions was incorporated into the interview questionnaire protocols for mothers and children at the Year 9 data collection phase. The majority of participants were visited in their homes by the interviewers to complete the structured assessments. Where applicable, Year 9 data for mothers were compared with Year 6 data.

Summary of key findings

Gambling data were collected from 957 mothers and 874 children.

Participation - mothers

Frequency of gambling for mothers who reported gambling in the past 12 months was likely to be *weekly for lottery products* (Lotto, Instant Kiwi), keno and Housie, and *monthly or less for electronic gaming machines*. A small minority (3.7%) of the mothers who had gambled reported playing Keno *daily*.

Participation - children

Almost all the children reported participating in either card games or Housie, though the majority did not play for money (73%). Boys were more likely to play for money than girls who were more likely to prefer Housie than boys. When playing Housie for money, a greater percentage of boys and girls played more with family than when playing Housie not for money. Conversely, a substantially lower percentage played with friends when playing for money than when not playing for money.

Almost one-fifth (17%) of children had received scratch cards as a gift and seven percent reported buying Lotto/Big Wednesday/keno tickets.

Trends - mothers

There was an *increase in gambling prevalence and incidence* amongst mothers from Year 6 to Year 9. In Year 6, 36% had gambled in the previous 12 months; in Year 9, 50% reported past-year gambling. This included 199 mothers gambling in Year 9 who had not done so in Year 6 and 90 mothers who stopped gambling from Year 6 to Year 9.

The majority of mothers in Year 6 and Year 9 who had gambled in the past year were classified (using PGSI) as current non-problem gamblers (84% and 90% respectively), with 12%/5% classified as low risk gamblers, three percent in both years classified as moderate risk gamblers, and one percent in both years classified as problem gamblers. Changes in non-gambling and gambling status, and PGSI risk levels, of individual mothers from Year 6 to Year 9 occurred in both directions indicating that *problematic gambling exists on a continuum* with some people moving into and out of problem gambling over time. All movement along the continuum for mothers who had been classified as low risk/moderate risk/problem gambler in Year 6 was *towards reduced risk or problems* in Year 9. Note that sample sizes were small so this finding must be treated with caution.

Forms of gambling participation have remained similar across both time points with Lotto being the most popular, and other forms at a substantially lower level.

Expenditure patterns in Year 9 indicated *support for a bimodal distribution of gambling*, as had been shown previously in Year 6. The bimodal distribution was indicated by a positive skew to data where there was a relatively high median expenditure correlated with low participation forms of gambling, and vice versa.

Fewer mothers reported having *problems with someone else's gambling* in Year 9 (n=25) compared with Year 6 (n=41). The majority of relationships were with close, immediate family members (e.g. spouse/partner, sibling or parent). Key negative impacts included worrying about the other person's gambling, financial concerns and safety concerns.

Trends - children

No trends for children were identifiable as the current study was the first time gambling-related data have been collected.

Potential risk factors - mothers

Gambling in Year 6 was associated with higher odds (4.4 times) for gambling in Year 9 and could indicate that participation in gambling is a risk factor for continued gambling participation. It appeared likely that any gambling is a risk factor (up to 4.5 times greater odds) for subsequent gambling on continuous forms (any form of gambling other than Lotto/keno), which are known to have a higher risk for problem gambling development.

Worsening of financial situation (total household income decreased) from Year 6 to Year 9 was associated with gambling in Year 9 (twice as great odds).

A mild level of socio-economic deprivation was associated with gambling on continuous forms (1.7 times greater odds) in Year 9.

Being a *smoker* was associated with gambling (2.75 greater odds) in Year 9.

Experiencing at least one significant life event in the previous 12 months was strongly associated (up to 5 times greater odds) with gambling expenditure in the upper quartile ($\geq \$40/\text{month}$); however, this finding needs to be treated with caution due to small sample size of mothers experiencing no life events and in the upper quartile of gambling expenditure.

Potential risk factors - children

Being involved in a gang was associated with higher odds (2.55 times) of gambling participation.

Lower parental monitoring was associated with higher odds (1.5 times) of gambling participation.

Potential protective factors - mothers

Change in marital status from partnered to separated from Year 6 to Year 9 was associated with lower odds (0.43 times) for gambling.

Potential protective factors - children

There was an indication that *increased cognitive ability* (similarities test) was associated with slightly lower odds (0.95 times) of participating in gambling.

There was no indication of any relationship between gambling and other health issues for mothers or children.

Limitations

All findings refer to the study population and not the New Zealand Pacific population as a whole as the data have not been weighted. The data refer only to associations and not causal relationships.