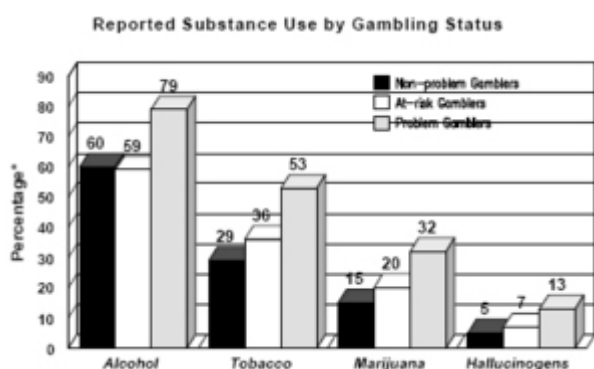


The WAGER, Vol. 1(43) - Alberta adolescent substance use increases with gambling involvement

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During 1995, a study of adolescents' (aged 12-17 years) gambling and substance use behavior was conducted in the western Canadian province of Alberta*. Interviewers surveyed 972 randomly selected adolescents in a 15-minute telephone survey. The South Oaks Gambling Screen for adolescents (SOGS-RA) was used to identify gambling involvement; additional questions were asked about alcohol, drug and tobacco use. Of the sample of 972 adolescents, 33% had not gambled in the past 12 months and 67% had gambled on at least one activity in the past 12 months. In addition, 44% scored as non-problem gamblers (0-2, SOGS-RA), 15% were at-risk gamblers (3-4, SOGS-RA), and 8% scored as problem gamblers (5+, SOGS-RA). Compared to adult Albertans (aged 18+), adolescents are four times more likely to be at risk or to experience some problems with their gambling (23% vs. 5.4%)**. The prevalence of reported substance use among adolescents generally increased with reported degree of gambling involvement. Further research is necessary to understand the relationship between problem gambling and substance use among adolescents. More research can help to determine whether gambling increases substance use, substance use increases gambling, or other factors influence both of these patterns.



Sources adapted from:

*Wynne Resources, Ltd. (May, 1996). Adolescent gambling and problem gambling

in Alberta. Edmonton, Alberta: Alberta Alcohol & Drug Abuse Commission

**Wynne Resources, Ltd. (1994). Gambling and problem gambling in Alberta (Report for Alberta Lotteries and Gaming). Edmonton, Alberta: Author.