

The WAGER, Vol. 3(25) - Prevalence of gambling in Toronto's Chinese community

June 23, 1998

Chinese Family Life Services of Metro Toronto conducted a telephone survey among Toronto's Chinese population [1]. The research question was "What is the extent of involvement in gambling among Chinese adults 18 or older in Greater Toronto?" The Chinese population in Greater Toronto is estimated to be 335,185 [2]. A two-stage random sampling technique was used to select a pool of 2,234 people with "Chinese-sounding names" from the telephone book of which 1,244 were Chinese. Of these 1,244 eligible respondents, 727 completed the interview. The group that completed the interview was compared to the 1994 Canadian census for demographic variables within the Chinese community. The study sample was representative across all demographic variables except for gender; women were over represented in the study. Respondents were asked if they had ever gambled; 79.6% reported having gambled in their lifetime. Males, full-time workers, and Chinese who had been in Canada for 11-15 years evidenced gambling prevalence rates significantly higher than their counterparts (females, part-time workers, and Chinese who had been in Canada less than 11 years or more than 15 years). The prevalence of gambling within Toronto's Chinese community appears to be lower than the general adult population across Canada. For example, in British Columbia the prevalence of gambling is 97% [3], in Alberta the rate is 93% [4], and in Ontario the rate is 84% [5]. However, caution should be exercised when comparing Chinese Family Life data to provincial data. A separate study of the Greater Toronto general population found that 76.7% of the respondents gambled (5); this rate is similar to the Chinese community study. These results indicate that the prevalence of gambling within the Chinese population is less than expected given prevailing stereotypes of the high prevalence of gambling among Chinese. For a more precise comparison of these groups, however, culturally relevant constructs of what the term "gambling" means to each respondent group must be parallel.



Sources:

1. Kwan, K. (1997). Gambling, alcohol and other drug uses among Chinese adults in Greater Toronto: A summary report of a telephone survey. Toronto: Chinese Family Life Services of Metro Toronto
2. StatsCan. (1996). Census report (Internet search of Statistics Canada Web Page)
3. Gemini Research & Angus Reid Group. (1994). Social gaming and problem gambling in British Columbia (Report to the British Columbia Lottery Corporation). Roaring Spring, PA: Gemini Research
4. Wynne Resources, Ltd. (1994). Gambling and problem gambling in Alberta (Report prepared for Alberta Lotteries and Gaming). Edmonton, Alberta: Author
5. Turner, N. (1998). Provincial survey of gambling and gambling problems. Unpublished data. Addictions and Mental Health Services Corporation.