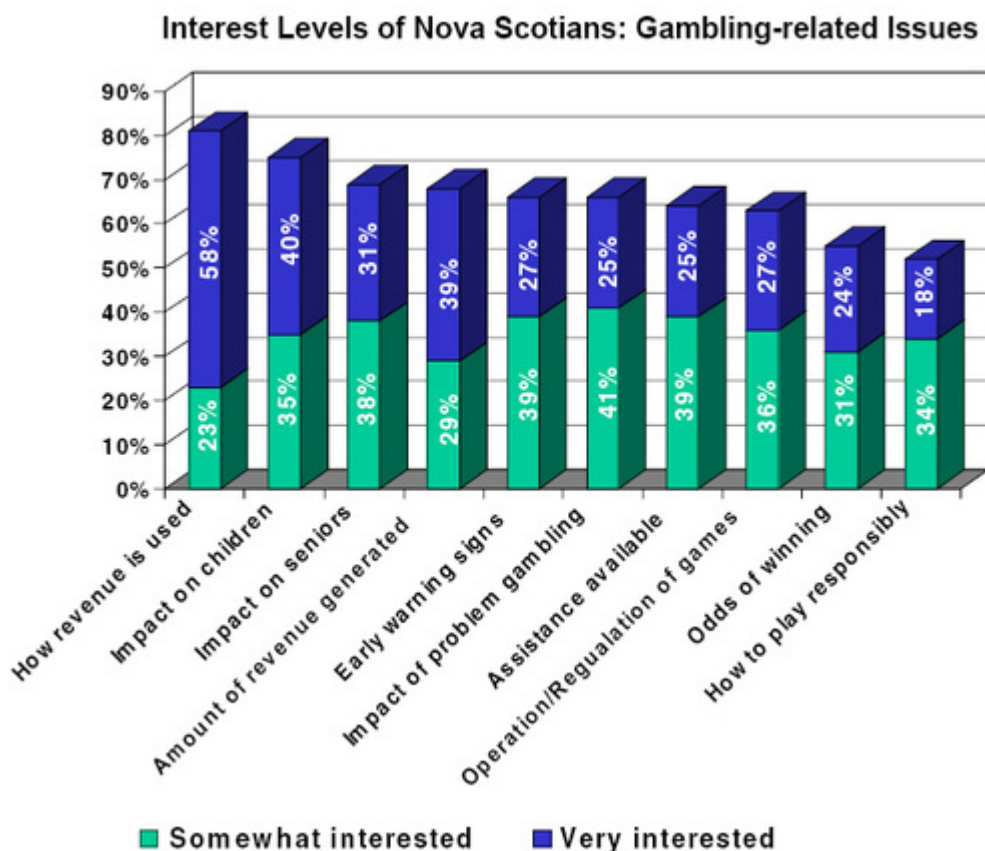


The WAGER Vol. 5(15) - Who Cares: Concerns about Gambling in Nova Scotia

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The government of Nova Scotia, like many other states and provinces, has devoted considerable financial resources to the study of problem gambling. But just how important are gambling-related issues to constituents? As part of its Annual Gaming Report [see WAGER 5(14)], the Nova Scotia Alcohol and Gaming Authority commissioned Focal Research Associates to study public perceptions of gambling.

Researchers sampled from three separate geographical areas: Halifax County (31% of respondents), Cape Breton County (13%), and the rest of the province (56%). Respondents were asked to report their personal interest in 10 gambling-related issues. The results of this part of the survey are presented in the chart below:



Of the 10 issues presented, 81% of respondents were somewhat interested or very interested in how revenue from gambling is spent. Interest in the impact of problem gambling ranked 6th among the issues, with 65% of the sample somewhat or very interested. Do these findings mean that Nova Scotians care more about fiscal planning than compulsive gambling?

Interest does not necessarily reflect the relative importance of an issue. While many may believe the price of gasoline to be an important issue, they might not find the mechanisms of the international oil market to be interesting. It is possible to care deeply about a topic, yet not be interested in its details. Thus, from the present study, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the relative importance of pathological gambling to Nova Scotians.

References

Focal Research Consultants. (1999). A survey of the prevalence and perceptions of gaming in Nova Scotia. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Alcohol and Gaming Authority.