Alberta Gambling Research Institute	Alberta Gambling Research Institute

2020-08

Research reveals ... : an update on gambling research in Alberta, 2020-2021

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technical report

GAMBLING RESEARCH REVEALS

ALBERTA GAMBLING RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Institute's First 'Virtual' Conference Attracts Worldwide Audience

This year's conference **"Gambling in Canada: Current Research & Future Directions"** was the first in the Institute's twenty-year history to be held entirely online. It was also by far the Institute's most highly attended conference event with 300+ delegates from throughout Canada and across the world. Attendees used the event's online platform to attend 33 different presentation sessions led by a who's who list of leading Canadian gambling scholars. All sessions included time to ask questions of speakers and attendees could also engage in discussion with colleagues inside virtual networking rooms. A conference poster session was held during the event which showcased 33 high-quality submissions.

The primary aim of the Alberta Gambling Research Institute, a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge, is to support academic research related to gambling.

MISSION

To facilitate evidence-based broad research that informs gambling public policy and educates Albertans and the wider audience about the effects of gambling.

Conference Sessions:
The AGRI National Project

Day 1 sessions were devoted to reporting results from the AGRI National Project (ANP). The ANP has been ongoing for the past three years and research results are now appearing in peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Members of the research team presented sessions discussing published findings as well as previews of analyses still in progress.

In the conference's opening keynote, ANP principal investigator **Dr. Robert Williams** (U of Lethbridge) [**video**/ **PDF**] reported findings from Canada's first national gambling prevalence study since 2002. Williams and colleagues found that problem gambling rates have declined significantly amongst adults and adolescents between 2002 and 2018.

Institute Librarian **Rhys Stevens** (U of Lethbridge) [**video** / **PDF**] then illustrated the state of commercial in Canada gambling through a series of current and historical statistics he collected and compiled for the ANP. Statistics and related visualization are freely accessible in an **online database** he created to display them.

Next, **Dr. Darren Christensen** (U of Lethbridge) [**video** / **PDF**] discussed his analysis of "Responsible Gambling-Check" casino patron data collected from 18,000+ Canadians. He found that a large percentage of gamblers were unaware of the harm minimization tools available to them at venues.

A related presentation followed which described an investigation undertaken by **Dr. Fiona Nicoll** (U of Alberta) [**video** / **PDF**]. She undertook a qualitative analysis of responses by casino venue employees to questions posed on the "Responsible Gambling-Check" surveys.
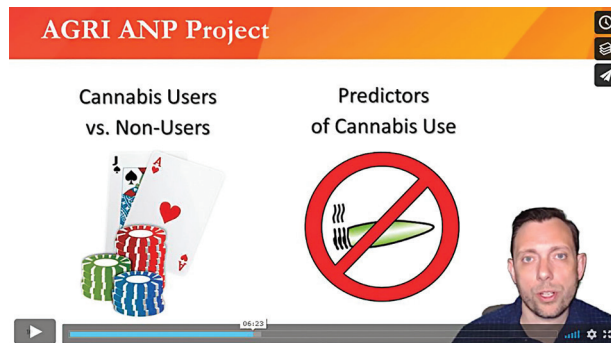
GAMBLING IN CANADA 2021
Current Research & Future Directions

Dr. David Hodgins (U of Calgary) [**video** / **PDF**] then profiled problem gamblers using data collected from the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS-2018) conducted by Statistics Canada. His findings indicated that the treatment community must continue working to reduce stigma and improve gamblers' awareness of available help.

An analysis of qualitative interviews from indigenous leaders collected for the ANP was discussed in a talk by **Dr. Yale Belanger** (U of Lethbridge) [**video**]. His findings indicated that they desire enhanced opportunities in order to support indigenous self-determination.

The final session on Day 1 heard **Dr. Dan McGrath** (U of Calgary) [**video** / **PDF**] introduce findings from one of Canada's first studies to report cannabis use both pre- and post-legalization (October, 2018). Findings appear to have important implications for online gamblers in particular who report higher cannabis involvement.

On the morning of Day 2, **Dr. Robert Williams** (U of Lethbridge) [**video** / **PDF**] spoke about the etiology of problem gambling in Canada and predictors of current and future problem gambling behaviour. Results from his analysis of the ANP online panel - the largest sample ever collected of at-risk and problem gamblers - indicate that intensive gambling involvement, EGM participation and gambling fallacies are all significant contributors.

CARRIE LEONARD
PROJECT MANAGER, AGRI NATIONAL STUDY

The final ANP-related session of the conference was presented by **Dr. Carrie Leonard** (U of Lethbridge) [**video** / **PDF**] who described her longitudinal study of gambling behaviour and data collection from gamblers before, during and six-months after the COVID lockdown. She found that gambling engagement initially declined during first phase lockdowns but subsequently recovered as more gamblers migrated to online formats.

Videos & Presentation Materials

Those unable to attend this year's "live" conference event can view all presentation session videos and related materials (e.g., final program, presentation/ poster PDFs, etc.) from the Institute's **Conference webpage**.

Maegan Trottier

Dr. Sasha Stark

Best Research Poster Awards

Two individuals were recognized for their outstanding conference research posters at this year's event. **Maegan Trottier** of the University of Lethbridge received the graduate student award for her poster entitled, "Adverse childhood experiences are associated with increased gambling frequency among Alberta adults during the COVID-19 pandemic" [**poster** / **video**]. **Dr. Sasha Stark** from Responsible Gambling Council (RGC) received the experienced scholar award for the poster "Co-use of substances in a longitudinal survey of Ontario gamblers during the COVID-19 pandemic" [**poster** / **video**].

Conference Panel Sessions: The Future of Gambling in Canada

A highlight of this year's event was the inclusion of three panel sessions featuring speakers representing provincial regulators, First Nation casino operators and social responsibility directors. Panelists provided their insights and predictions about the likely future directions of gambling in Canada.

April 2021

Future of commercial gambling provision in Canada

The Alberta perspective

AGLC
Choices Albertans can trust.

Special thanks to **Steve Lautischer** (AGLC) [**video** / **PDF**], **Chief Darcy Dixon** (Bearspaw First Nation) [**video**], **Murray Marshall** (Kahnawà:ke Gaming Commission) [**video** / **PDF**], **Eric Baich** (AGLC) [**video** / **PDF**] and **Dr. Jamie Wiebe** (BCLC) [**video** / **PDF**].

Conference Sessions: Canadian Gambling Research from Coast-to-Coast

The afternoon of Day two and the entirety of Day three were devoted to presentations from Canadian scholars on topics that revealed the incredible diversity within Canada's gambling research landscape. A wide array of disciplines were represented and included Psychology, Neuroscience, Health Science, Law, and Economics.

Thanks to all conference presenters, attendees, event organizers, support technicians, sponsors and especially Conference Chair, Dr. Rob Williams, and Executive Director, Glenda Wong, for making the Institute's 20th annual conference a resounding success! Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend next year's conference which is to be held April 7-9, 2022 at The Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada.

Database of Canadian Gambling Statistics Released

An online database containing a comprehensive compilation of Canadian gambling statistics (1970-2019) is now available [**Link**]. The database was created by Institute Librarian & Information Specialist Rhys Stevens for the Institute's national study of gambling in Canada. It provides background information about gambling revenue and formats for each of Canada's provinces and territories.

Statistics were collected from annual reports produced by provincial and territorial organization and are visualized in a series of charts and graphs showing net revenue and net income for ticket lotteries, casinos, video lottery terminals (VLTs), and online gambling. Visualizations can be sorted by province or year and statistics themselves are downloadable into spreadsheet files (CSV). The streaming video **How to Find Canadian Gambling Statistics** [02:10] provides instructions for using this resource.

Major Research Grant Applications Due July 23

The Institute invites qualified applicants to submit proposals for the 2021/22 Major Research Grant funding competition. The purpose of the Major Research Grants program is to provide up to $160,000 in total funding to address stakeholder and investigator-identified high-priority gambling research topics. Visit the Major Grants webpage to access the Guidelines and Application Form.

https://research.ucalgary.ca/alberta-gambling-research-institute/apply-grants/major-grants

This year's deadline for submissions to respective University Research Offices (RSOs) is Friday, July 23, 2021.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Glenda Wong
Email:
gfwong@ucalgary.ca

INSTITUTE LIBRARIAN

Rhys Stevens
Email: rhys.stevens@uleth.ca

**Media Inquiries
Ph. 403-220-3062**

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RESEARCH COORDINATORS

University of Alberta
Dr. Fiona Nicoll
Email: fnicoll@ualberta.ca

University of Calgary
Dr. David Hodgins
Email: dhodgins@ucalgary.ca

University of Lethbridge
Dr. Robert Williams
Email: robert.williams@uleth.ca

RESEARCH CHAIR

University of Alberta
Dr. Fiona Nicoll
Email: fnicoll@ualberta.ca

AGRI SENIOR FELLOWS

University of Lethbridge
Dr. Darren Christensen
Email:
darren.christensen@ucalgary.ca

University of Calgary
Dr. Daniel McGrath
Email:
daniel.mcgrath@ucalgary.ca

**Please forward any comments
or inquiries to:**

**Email: agri@ucalgary.ca
Ph. 403-220-3062**

Rhys Stevens
Writer

Glenda Wong & Rhys Stevens
Editors

North Design Group
Design/Layout

Photo Credit/Images:

**North Design Group, Stock &
Submitted.**