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Alberta Gambling Research Institute

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Just Gambling? Ethical Challenges Pertaining to Gambling Provision, Policy and Research

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<http://hdl.handle.net/1880/51915>

Presentation

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EGMs – Hazards, Potency & Harm Reduction

Slot Machines & eBingo Games

AGRI, April 2017

Kevin Harrigan & Dan Brown

Gambling Research Lab

University of Waterloo

EGM Hazards (Ontario)

- 1) High stakes rooms
- 2) Multiple versions of the same game
- 3) Near misses
- 4) LDWs
- 5) Stop buttons
- 6) Credits vs currency
- 7) Denomination
- 8) Inducements for maximum wager
- 9) New games in new venues
 - POD
 - Taptix
 - PlayOLG

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- Mike Dixon, co-Director
- Candice Graydon, PhD candidate
- Madison Stange, PhD candidate
- Chanel Larche, PhD candidate

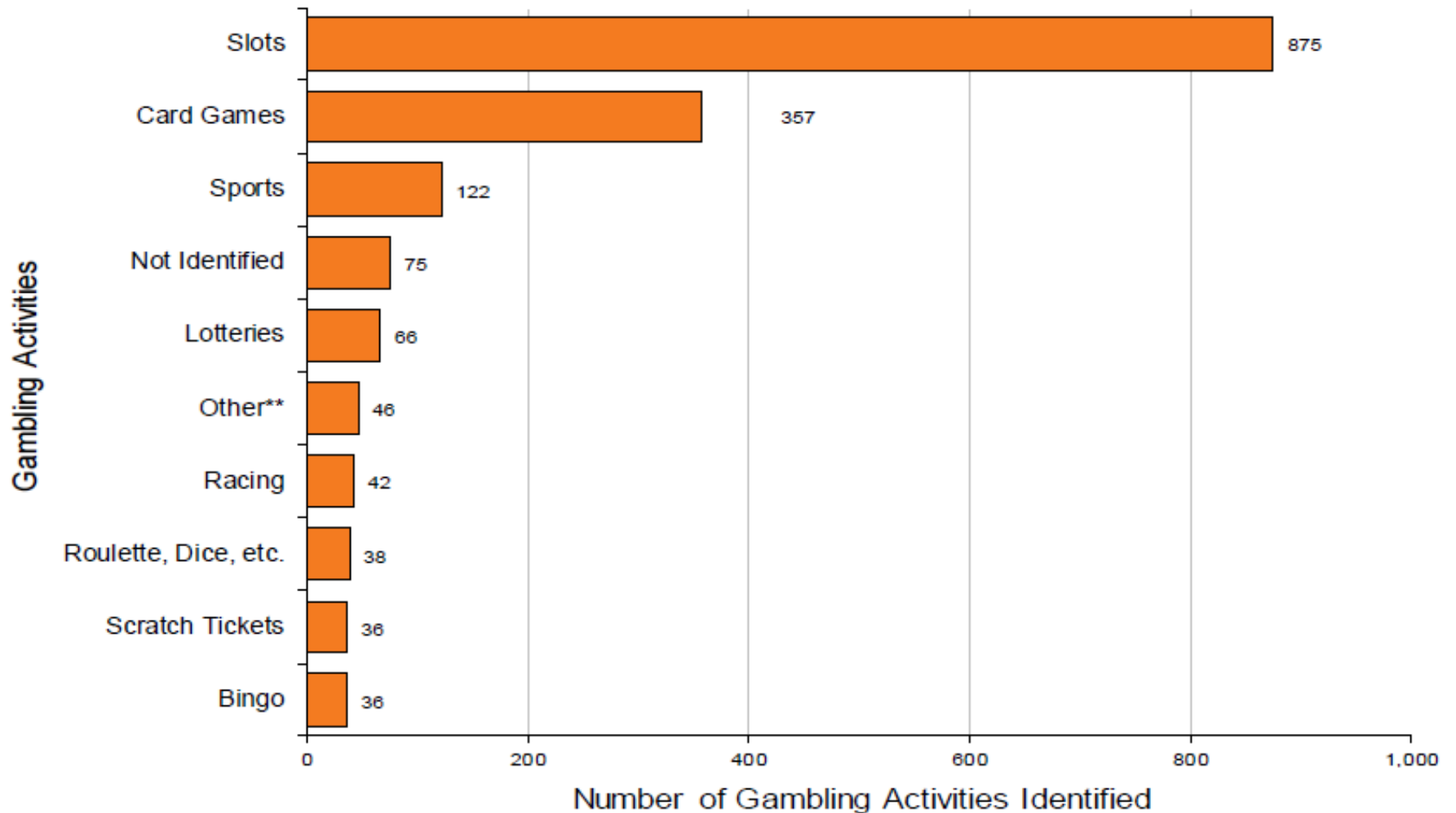
Slot Machines in Ontario

- 23,000 slot machines in Ontario
- Slot machine revenue:
 - Approximately \$2 billion annually
 - That is player losses !
- 1.5% of Ontario government revenue from OLG
- Slot machine revenue about half of OLG revenue

Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline (OPGH)

Gambling Activities* Identified by Individuals

(January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016)



Bankrupt
husband and
wife:

Monthly losses
on slot
machines

| |
|--------------|
| \$40,400.00 |
| \$72,711.00 |
| \$46,013.00 |
| \$36,680.00 |
| \$45,675.00 |
| \$262,386.00 |
| \$183,230.00 |
| \$51,007.00 |
| \$32,881.00 |
| \$21,115.00 |

High Stakes Areas

- Maximum at Woodbine is \$ 500/spin
- Average loss per spin ~ \$ 20
- A spin every 5 seconds
- Average \$240 loss per minute
- Average \$14,400 loss per hour
- Average ~ \$50,000 for an evening (3.5 hours)
- 12 times year: ~\$600,000
- 50 times year: ~\$2,500,000

High Stakes Areas

Additional Concerns

- Players can play 24/7 by 365
- Players can play multiple slot machines at once
 - Often see players playing 2-4 machines
 - Perhaps \$15/spin each
- Special attention by staff
- Multiple versions of the same game

Multiple Versions of the Same Game

- Payback percentage is not disclosed to the player
- In Ontario, same game can payout between 85% to 98%
- All versions look identical to the player
- High stakes games have higher P%

| Paytable ID | Percent |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 680A107 + | 97.99 |
| 680A107 | 97.40 |
| 680A107 | 96.20 |
| 680A107 | 94.99 |
| 680A107 | 94.00 |
| 680A107 | 92.51 |
| 680A107 | 90.00 |
| 680A107 | 87.50 |
| 680A107 | 85.01 |

“Classic” Near Miss



of Virtual Stops Mapped to the Reel Stop

| Reel Stop | R1 | | R2 | | R3 | |
|-----------|----|---|----|---|----|---|
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| 5 | - | 8 | - | 6 | | |
| 6 | J | 2 | J | 1 | | |
| 7 | - | 8 | - | 6 | | |
| 8 | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | - | 6 |
| 10 | | | | | J | 1 |
| 11 | | | | | - | 6 |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |
| 15 | - | 8 | - | 6 | | |
| 16 | J | 2 | J | 1 | | |
| 17 | - | 8 | - | 6 | | |
| 18 | | | | | | |
| 19 | | | | | | |
| 20 | | | | | | |
| 21 | | | | | | |
| 22 | | | | | | |

Near Misses - Unbalanced Reels

- One reel is starved of the jackpot symbol
- A type of near miss
- See the Jackpot symbols in non-winning positions

Regular Symbols

| Symbol | Number Per Reel | | | | |
|--------|-----------------|----|----|----|----|
| | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 |
| WS | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 |

Near Misses

Additional Concerns

- Sounds accompany near misses
 - Clunk, clunk, ...
- Multiple near miss possibilities in one spin
 - Jackpot prize
 - Special prizes
 - Bonus round combos

Losses Disguised as Wins

- Depending on the wager, approximately 60% of “wins” are really losses
- Wager \$3.75 and “win” \$2.25
 - Really a loss of \$1.50
 - But the slot machine produces winning sounds and winning graphics



Losses Disguised as Wins

- ““The perception is that you’re winning all the time, when you’re really not— you’re putting 25 in and winning 15 back, 45 in and 30 back, over and over.” Randy Adams of Anchor Gaming (Dow Schull, 2005)
- “Positive reinforcement hides loss.” Nathan Leland of Silicon Gaming (Dow Schull, 2005).
- One elderly slots player told me “If I keep winning I’m going to go broke.”

LDWs

- Natasha Dow Schull
 - Addiction By Design
- Interestingly, LDWs give the player more playing time (time on device)

Stop Button – Illusion of Control

- Stop Buttons
 - Player can stop the reels before 3-5 seconds
 - Doesn't affect the outcome
 - Provides an “illusion of control”
 - Giving the player an “illusion of control” gives a player a sense of control even when the player fully understands that the outcome is random (Langer, 1975).

Credits vs Currency

- Usually your money is shown as credits
- Ex: A five cent machines pays 150,000 credits
 - Not easy to convert to currency
 - It is \$7,500



Denomination of the machine

On a “one cent” machine, players can wager \$1.80.

On a “one cent” machine, players must wager a minimum of 60 cents.



Configuration

5-Reel, 9-Line, 180-Credit

Max Bet

180

Inducements for Maximum Wager

- Various messages on the machine
 - “Play all 15 lines for maximum excitement”
 - “Play three credits”
- Progressive jackpot can only be won with maximum wager



Charitable Gaming Centres Bingo Halls



Caller's Area for Live Bingo @ St Claire



POD Terminals @ St Claire



POD Terminals @ St Claire





| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Five | \$1.00 |
| Small Picture #100 | \$1.00 |
| Large Picture | \$1.00 |
| Cray Letter T | \$1.00 |
| Letter B | \$1.00 |
| Block of 9 | \$1.00 |
| Letter T | \$1.00 |
| Six Pack in Corner | \$1.00 |
| Four Corners | \$1.00 |
| Small Diamond | \$1.00 |
| Stamp in Corner | \$1.00 |
| 1 Line Anyway | \$1.00 |
| Any 3 Corners | \$1.00 |

Change # Cards

798 \$1.00

Cash

Select Cards

Exit 4 Cards Selected Total: \$1.00 Buy Options Change # Cards



eBingo Video



TapTix

It Looks Like a Slot Machine but it's Not



It simply displays the results of Break Open Tickets (BOTs)

**Check Out Our New TapTix Machines.
30 Units Available for Play.**



knowyourlimit.ca



Video - TapTix

- Video of [Bayou Bucks](#)
– (from the internet)

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