

Balancing the odds:

Examining sports bettors' use of self-regulation strategies

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Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

- ❖ I have no potential conflicts of interest to disclose for this presentation.
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Co-Investigators

- ❖ Sophie G. Coelho, BSc – York University
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Overview of Sports Betting in Canada



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Sports Betting

Overview & Key Terms

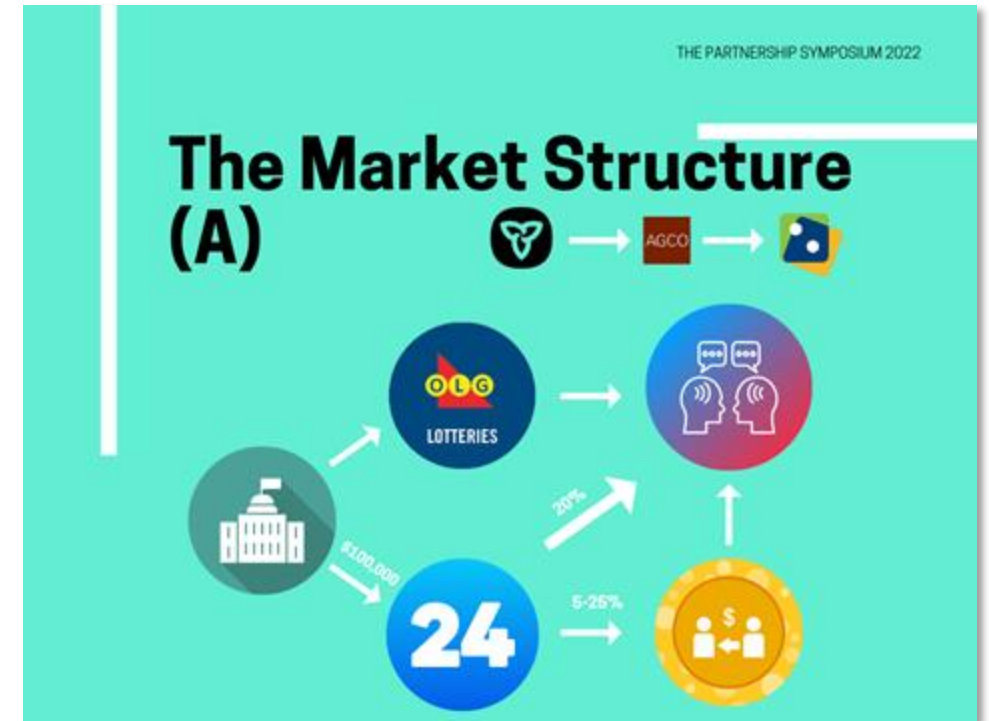
- ❖ Placing a monetary wager on the outcome of a sporting event or a moment within a sporting event (Etuk et al., 2022)
- ❖ Various types (e.g., parlay, in-play)
- ❖ Associated with increased problem gambling severity, gambling-related harms, mental health symptoms, and problematic substance use (Snaychuk et al., 2023)



Sports Betting

Recent Legislative Changes in Ontario

- ❖ June 2021 → Bill C-218 (Parliament of Canada, 2021)
 - Legalized single-event betting
- ❖ iGaming Ontario launched in April 2022
 - Registered gambling operators permitted to offer sports betting



Sports Betting

Recent Legislative Changes in Ontario

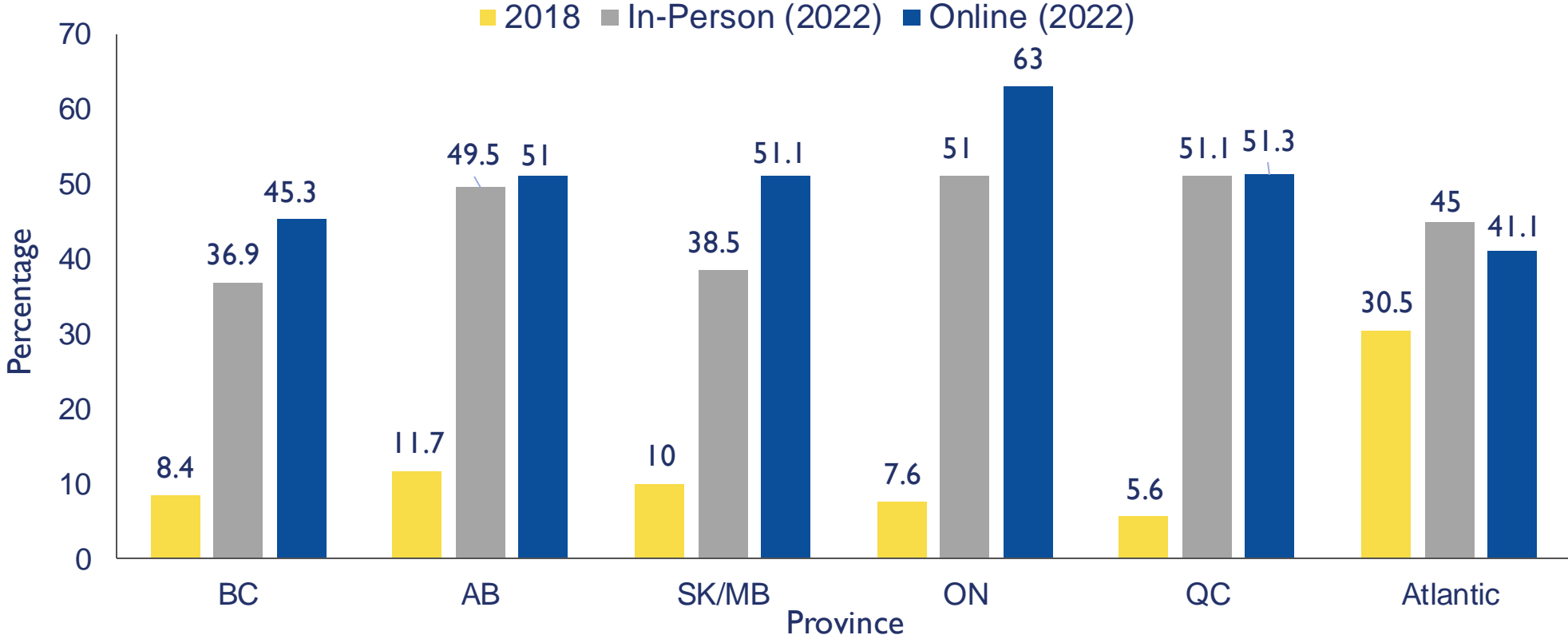
- ❖ Legalization of single-event betting included in-play betting → placing a monetary wager on a moment in a sporting event *while the event is ongoing* (Etuk et al., 2022)
- ❖ Shared structural characteristics with electronic gambling machines (EGMs) (Newall et al., 2021)
- ❖ Associated with greater problem gambling severity, gambling-related harms, mental health symptoms, and substance use severity relative to other types of sports betting (Vieira et al., 2023)



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Rates of Sports Betting by Province

2018 & 2022



(Ipsos Reid, 2022; Williams et al., 2020)



Self-Regulation Strategies in Gambling



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Self-Regulation Strategies in Gambling

Existing Literature

- ❖ Problem gambling → deficits in *self-regulation* (Baumeister et al., 2007; Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002)
- ❖ Self-regulation allows individuals to limit their gambling and track gambling behaviour according to these limits (Yi et al., 2023)
 - Strategies include time limits, financial limits, cognitive strategies, and voluntary self-exclusion (Currie et al., 2019)
- ❖ Individuals who adhere to predetermined gambling limits are less likely to experience gambling-related harms, engage in risky gambling, and have greater trait self-control (Currie et al., 2019; Yi et al., 2023)



Knowledge Gaps

What Questions Remain?

- ❖ Growing literature regarding harms and consequences associated with sports betting and in-play betting in Canada (Kim et al., 2023; Snaychuk et al., 2023; Vieira et al., 2023)
- ❖ Less is known about:
 - ❖ Self-regulation strategies used to maintain safe levels of sports betting
 - ❖ Traits/characteristics associated with adherence to these strategies
- ❖ Importance → Identify strategies that can be implemented to reduce the potential risks associated with sports betting and specific types (i.e., in-play betting)



Research Aims

1. Understand the frequency and gambling-related correlates of various self-regulation strategies for **in-play betting**
2. Understand the frequency and gambling-related correlates of various self-regulation strategies for **sports betting more broadly**
3. Clarify whether there are individual traits/characteristics associated with greater or lower likelihood of setting and adhering to limit-setting strategies for sports betting



Research Study I

Self-Regulation Strategies for In-Play Betting



Study I

Overview

- ❖ $N = 77$ Ontarian adults who placed an in-play bet during a two-week period
 - Part of a larger ecological momentary assessment study of in-play betting behaviour
- ❖ Data collected May-June 2022
- ❖ Brief surveys 2x per day via MetricWire
 - In-play betting behaviour
 - Use of self-regulation strategies for in-play betting:
 - Setting spending limits
 - Setting time limits
 - Stopping betting when no longer fun
 - Taking breaks



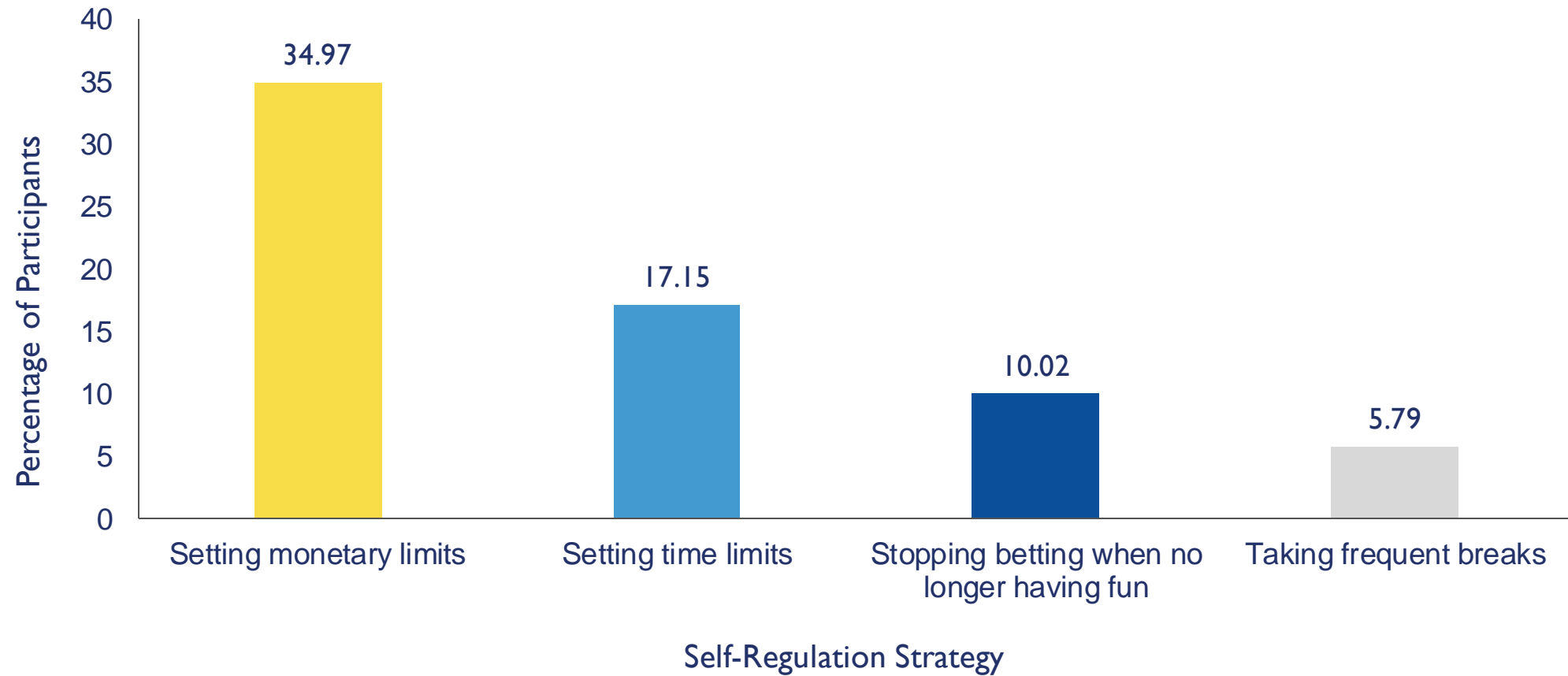
(Coelho et al., 2023)



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Study I

Results: Frequency of Self-Regulation Strategies



(Coelho et al., 2023)



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Study I

Results: Relationships Between Self-Regulation Strategies and Betting Behaviour

Spending limits



Time limits



- Less likely → Financial, interpersonal, and health harms related to betting
- Less likely → Emotional/psychological harms following instances of in-play betting during which spending limits were set

- More likely → Spend more money on bets
- More likely → Greater harms related to betting, particularly in finances and work/study

(Coelho et al., 2023)



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Research Study 2

Self-Regulation Strategies for Sports Betting



Study 2

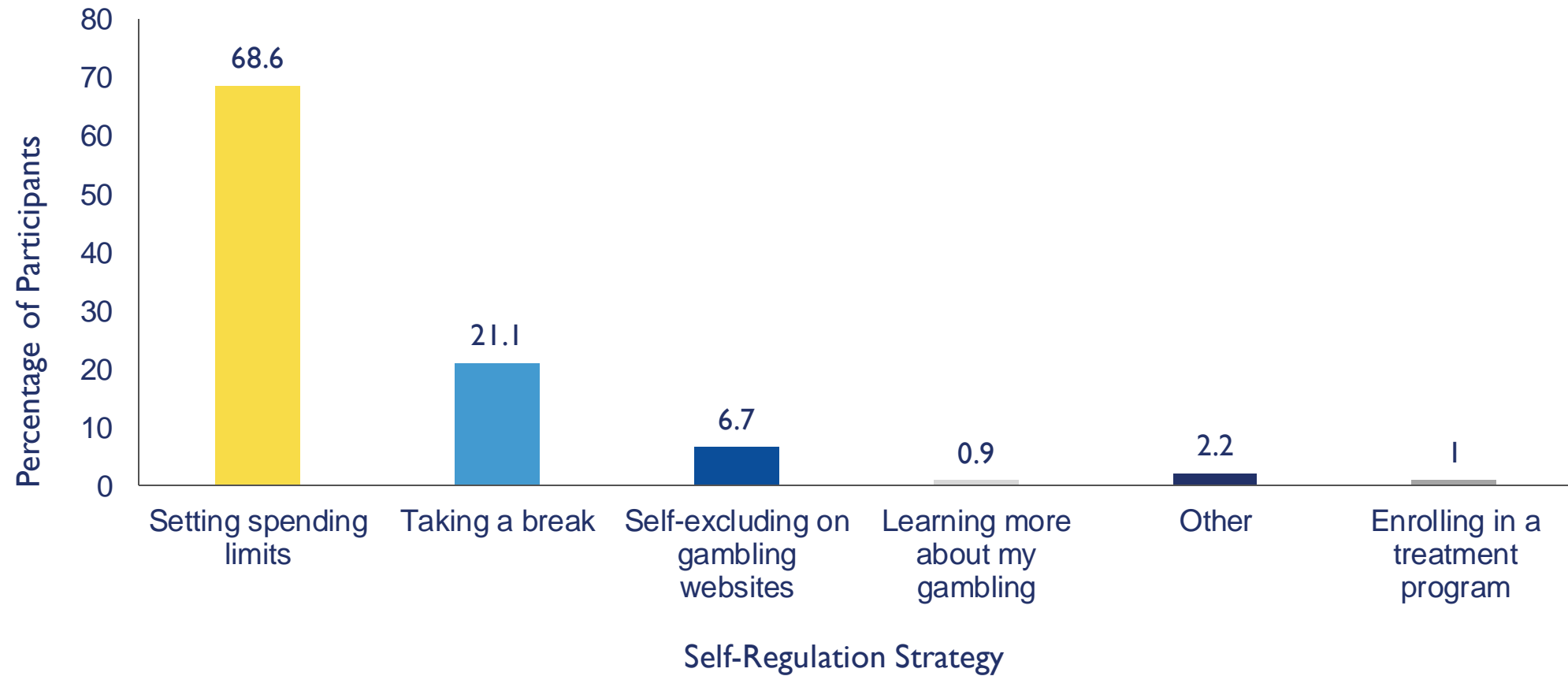
Overview

- ❖ $N = 427$ Ontarian & Albertan postsecondary students who placed a sports bet in the past four weeks
 - University of Calgary, University of Guelph, and Toronto Metropolitan University
- ❖ Data collected October 2023-February 2024
- ❖ Online survey assessing use of self-regulation strategies for sports betting
 - Types and frequency
 - Adherence to limits and reasons
 - Individual characteristics
 - *Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire* (SRQ; Carey et al., 2004)
 - *Problem Gambling Severity Index* (PGSI; Ferris & Wynne, 2001)
 - *Short Impulsive Behaviour Scale* (SUPPS-P; Whiteside & Lynam, 2001)



Study 2

Results: Most Frequently-Used Limit-Setting Strategy in Past Four Weeks



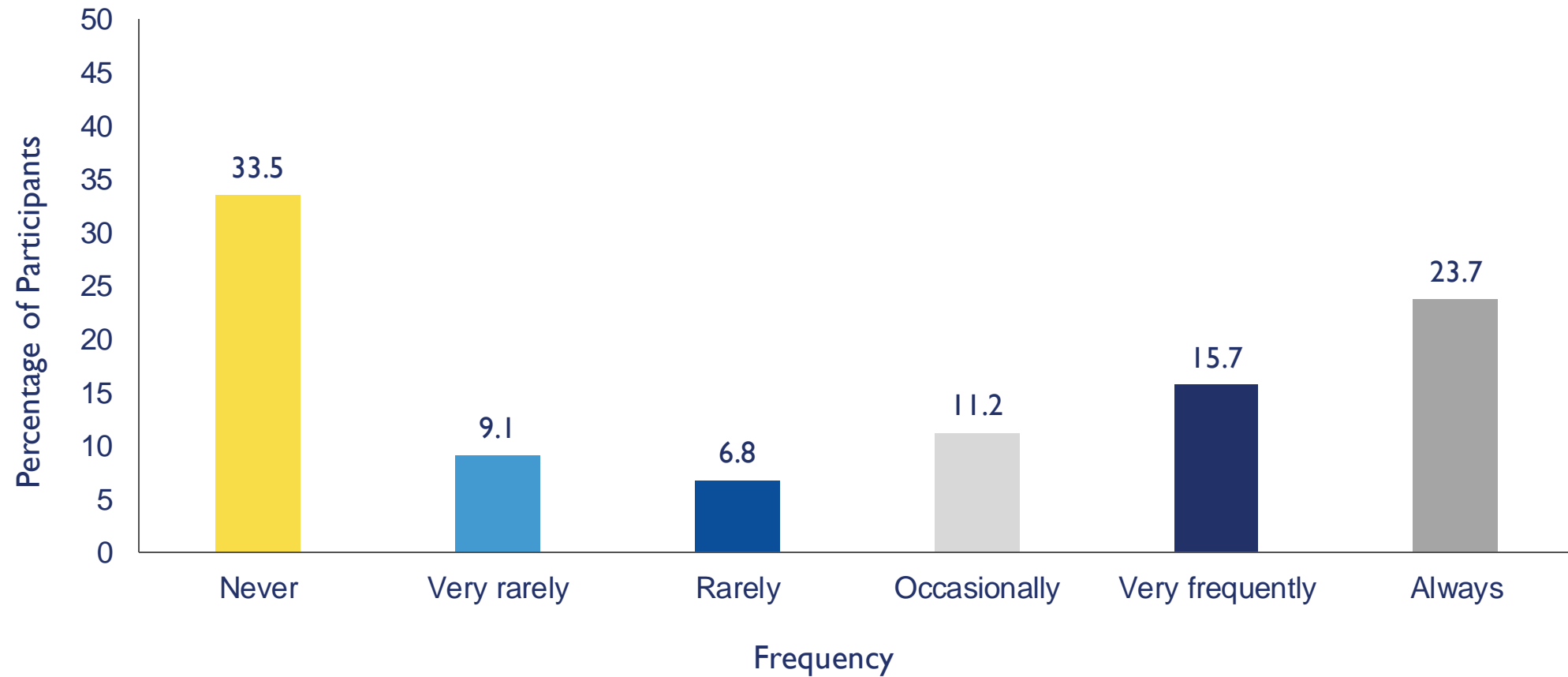
(Vieira et al., in preparation)



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Study 2

Results: Frequency of Setting a Predetermined Sports Betting Spending Limit in Past Four Weeks



(Vieira et al., in preparation)



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Study 2

Results: Top Three Reasons for Setting a Predetermined Sports Betting Spending Limit

To avoid financial difficulty



“So my spending doesn’t get out of hand”

“So I can make rent and buy groceries and not go broke”

“To not waste money”

To minimize losses



“So I do not lose money”

“To ensure I am only betting what I am willing to lose”

“So I acknowledge when to stop to avoid huge losses”

To maintain self-control



“To be responsible with it”

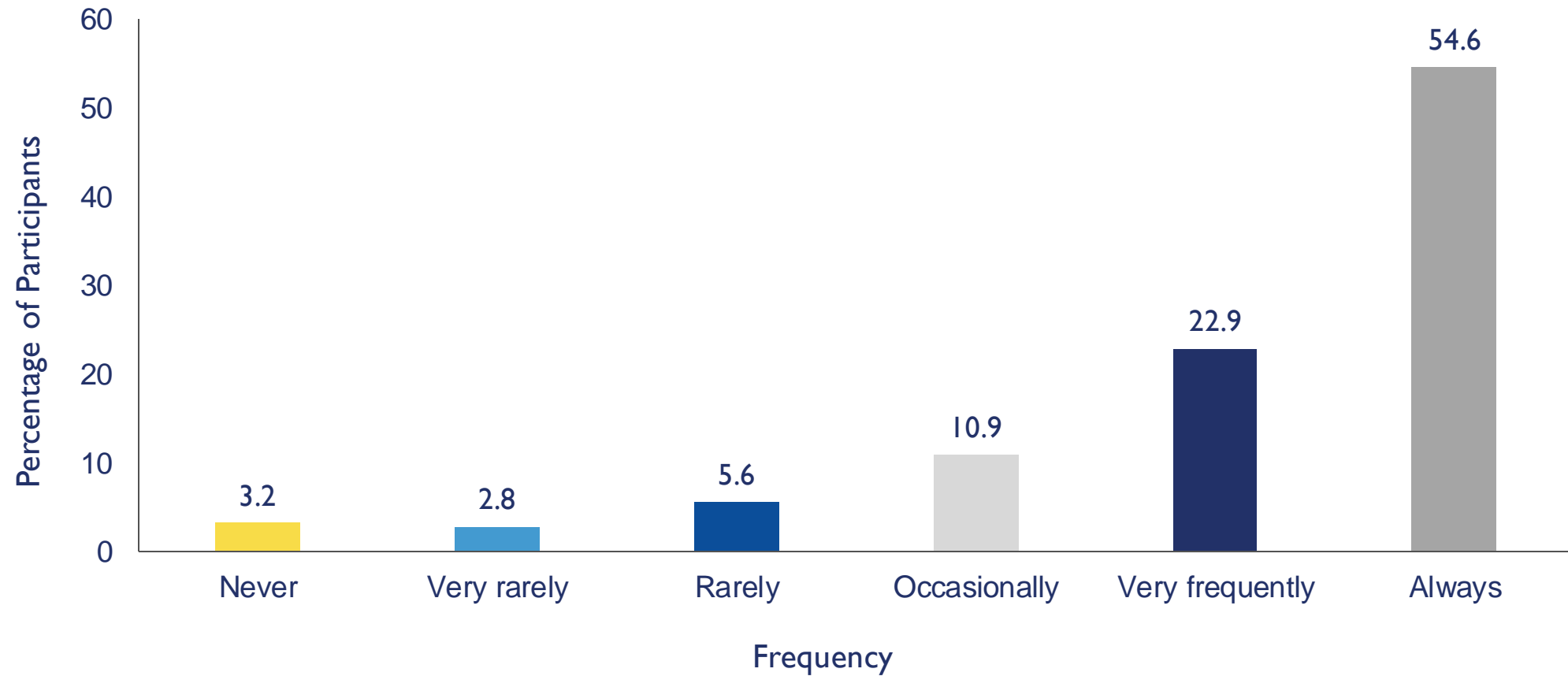
“I set a limit to not go overboard and to keep myself accountable”

“To not get carried away”



Study 2

Results: Frequency of Adhering to a Predetermined Sports Betting Spending Limit in Past Four Weeks



(Vieira et al., in preparation)



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Study 2

Results: Bivariate Correlations between Limit-Setting, Adherence, and Individual Characteristics

Variable	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1. Frequency of setting a limit	.03	-.14**	-.06	-.15**	-.14**	.16**	-.15*	.43**	1
2. Frequency of adhering to a limit	.04	-.24**	-.18**	-.30**	-.19**	.25**	-.37**	1	-
3. PGSI	.04	.29**	.23**	.45**	.35**	-.41**	1	-	-
4. SRQ	.15**	-.59**	-.49**	-.47**	-.54**	1	-	-	-
5. SUPPS-P negative urgency	.01	.34**	.19**	.62**	1	-	-	-	-
6. SUPPS-P positive urgency	.13**	.40**	.20**	1	-	-	-	-	-
7. SUPPS-P lack of perseverance	-.17**	.53**	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. SUPPS-P lack of premeditation	-.03	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9. SUPPS-P sensation seeking	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$. PGSI = Problem Gambling Severity Index; SRQ = Short Self-Regulation Questionnaire



Implications & Conclusions



Implications

What do these Findings Mean?

- ❖ Setting a predetermined spending limit was the most frequently-used self-regulation strategy for sports betting among Ontarian & Albertan participants
- ❖ Monetary limits appear to be more effective than time limits in reducing in-play betting-related harms
- ❖ Individuals who endorse greater problem gambling severity, negative urgency, positive urgency, and lack of premeditation, as well as lower self-regulation capacity, may be less likely to set and adhere to predetermined spending limits for their sports betting
- ❖ Individual differences in impulsivity and self-regulation capacity should be considered in designing interventions for problematic sports betting



Future Directions

What Should Subsequent Research Examine?

- ❖ Clarifying whether monetary limits are superior to time limits for additional types of sports betting beyond in-play betting
- ❖ Understanding the extent to which other betting-related variables (e.g., harms, motives) and individual characteristics (e.g., emotion dysregulation, loneliness) may be associated with frequency of setting and adhering to predetermined spending limits for sports betting
- ❖ Examining potential mediators of the relationships between limit-setting, adherence, and individual characteristics to elucidate mechanisms



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