



5 February 2015

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **GAMBLING PARTICIPATION RATES REMAIN STABLE, BUT INCREASED FREQUENCY AND POOR SELF-CONTROL AMONG PROBABLE PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLERS CONTINUES TO BE A CONCERN**

The 2014 Gambling Participation Survey, conducted by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), has found that while Singapore's gambling participation rates remain stable, the gambling behaviour of a small subset of the population, i.e. probable pathological gamblers, continues to be a cause for concern.

#### Gambling Participation Rates Remain Stable, Betting Amounts Fall

2. The Survey found that the gambling participation rate remained stable, with 44% of Singapore Residents participating in at least one form of gambling activity over a 12-month period, as compared to 47% in the 2011 Survey.

3. Most were gambling with smaller amounts in 2014 as compared to 2011, with 90% betting less than \$200 a month. A small proportion of 0.3% gambled with large average monthly betting amount of more than \$1,000, and the proportion has decreased in 2014 across all income groups.

#### Overall Decrease in Problem Gambling Rates

4. Based on the Survey, the probable pathological and problem gambling rates<sup>1</sup> among Singapore Residents saw a decrease from 2.6% in 2011 to 0.7% in 2014. The probable pathological gambling rate was 0.2% and the probable problem gambling rate was 0.5%, as compared to 1.4% and 1.2% in 2011 respectively.

#### Probable Pathological Gamblers Remain Cause for Concern

5. The Survey found that probable pathological gamblers were gambling more frequently (83% gambled at least once a week compared to 68% in 2011). They are also

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<sup>1</sup> The probable pathological and problem gambling rates in the Survey were derived from a screening tool from DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders). The same screening tool was used in the previous surveys of 2008 and 2011. It is also a common screen used in many other jurisdictions. Probable pathological gambling indicates more severe addiction compared to probable problem gambling.

starting to gamble regularly from a young age, with 17% of them picking up a regular gambling habit before the age of 18, as compared to 5% in 2011.

6. The Survey also found that this group exhibited poor self-control in terms of gambling for a longer period of time, with more money and more frequently than they had planned to, especially among those who participated in online gambling, table games and jackpot machines. The majority of probable pathological gamblers experienced strained family relations and less satisfaction with family life as a result of their gambling habits. 75% of these gamblers regretted the way they had spent their money.

NCPG's Response - Improving Help Services and Upstream Public Education Initiatives

7. Although the number of people seeking help for problem gambling has been increasing, many remain hesitant to come forward. NCPG will work to expand its network of partners and community counselling centres to improve the accessibility of help and treatment services. NCPG will also expand its youth outreach programmes to equip youth with the necessary skills and knowledge to prevent, identify and deal with problem gambling.

8. Said NCPG Chairman, Mr Lim Hock San, "While those with severe gambling problems form only a small percentage of the Singapore Resident population, their gambling behaviour has adverse consequences, especially for their immediate family members. NCPG will make available help and treatment services for both pathological and problem gamblers and their families. I strongly encourage those affected by problem gambling to avail themselves of these services."

9. Mr Lim added, "Our youth are also increasingly vulnerable to developing a gambling addiction, in particular online gambling, through early exposure via free social gambling simulation games. We urge parents to remain vigilant in this age of technology but it is also important that we, as a community, put in place strong public education and outreach programmes to educate and protect our future generations."

10. The report on the 2014 Survey on participation in gambling activities among Singapore Residents will be available on the NCPG website: [www.ncpg.org.sg](http://www.ncpg.org.sg) from 5 February 2015, 6pm.

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**About the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG)**

The 15-member NCPG was appointed in August 2005 as part of Singapore's national framework to address problem gambling. The Council is committed to addressing problem gambling in Singapore, across all forms of gambling, through public education and outreach programmes and the provision of help services. NCPG offers a 24/7 Problem Gambling Helpline service, administered by the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS). NCPG also administers Casino Exclusions and Casino Visit Limits for those affected by or vulnerable to problem gambling.

Protect Your Family. Stop Problem Gambling. Call 1800-6-668-668 or visit [www.ncpg.org.sg](http://www.ncpg.org.sg) for more information.