

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN SURVEY



YOUTH GAMBLING IN SASKATCHEWAN: PERCEPTIONS, BEHAVIOURS, AND YOUTH CULTURE

Key Findings for High School Students



Saskatchewan
Ministry of
Health

Overview

Saskatchewan Health contracted with the University of Saskatchewan, Faculty of Sociology, to undertake an examination of the issues related to youth gambling in the province, and to provide a framework to understand how youth perceive gambling, determine their involvement in a range of gambling activities, and provide a context of how youth gambling relates to youth culture.

The research was supervised by Dr. Harley Dickinson, and Dr. Bernard Schissel, both of whom had previous research experience in gambling and problem gambling in Saskatchewan. The project involved two separate studies, one of high school students and one of post-secondary students including those students attending technical studies at SIAST. The surveys were conducted in the spring of 2005. In total, there were 1,981 secondary respondents and 1,498 post-secondary respondents.

This summary provides key findings of the research from 1,884 secondary students aged 15 to 18 year old respondents.

Defining Gambling

For the purposes of this study students were provided the definition below and asked about their gambling behaviour as it relates to this definition.

Gambling maybe defined as betting money on activities with a chance of winning money or prizes.

Gambling vs. Betting

The majority of youth (75%) do not distinguish between gambling and betting. Fourteen percent of youth were not sure if there were any differences between gambling and betting. The remaining 11% felt there was a difference. For those youth, the differences lie in the frequency of the activity, what is being wagered, the seriousness and potential for consequences and the control over the outcome.

Gambling Participation

Given that this generation of youth are the first to grow up where gambling is not only legal, but socially sanctioned and promoted, it is apparent that a significant percentage of youth have adopted an acceptance of and involvement in gambling activities. Students were asked about their involvement in gambling activities in which they bet money. They were not asked about their involvement in activities in which they did not bet money (including online play-for-free gambling sites).

Overall, 81% of youth reported having bet money on at least one gambling activity.

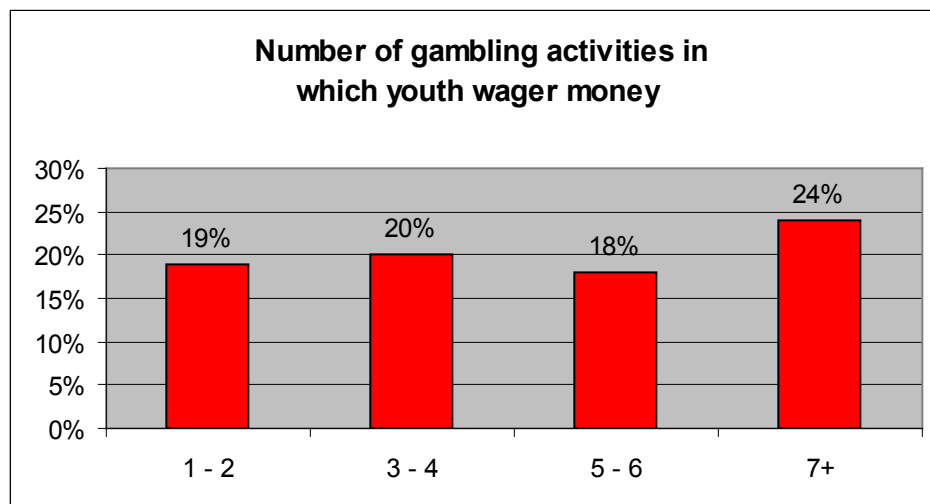
Ranking	Gambling Activity	Participation Rate
1	Scratch Tickets	49%
2	Games of skill	47%
3	50/50 Tickets	42%
4	Family Games	42%
5	Private Card Games (Texas Hold'em)	41%
6	Bingo	34%
7	Video Games	33%
8	Sports Wagers	31%
9	Private Dice Games	22%
10	Lottery Tickets	20%
11	Online Video Games	18%
12	Nevada Tickets	14%
13	Video Lottery Terminals	6.1%
14	Internet Gambling	5.9%
15	Slot Machines	5.7%
16	Horse Racing	3.9%
17	Casino Gambling	3.5%

Of interest is the issue of Internet gambling. Despite widespread concern that youth are actively involved in online gambling, only 5.9% of youth reported ever gambling online, which ranked it as the 15th of the 17 activities of which youth were asked about their participation. However, 18% of youth report betting money on online video games. Although it is unclear as to what type of online video games the youth bet on, there are a wide variety of online video game sites where youth can bet against other players. The issue of youth being able to gamble for money through the internet on skill based video games raises considerable concern about such activity and gaming sites geared to youth.

Overall, 19% of youth indicate they have gambled at online gambling sites or online video games. This makes online wagering rank as the 11th gambling activity in which youth participate.

Only a small percentage of students report gambling at casinos (4%), VLTs (7%), slot machines (6%) or racetracks (4%). For this age group gambling on these activities would be against gaming regulations, which are age restricted for individuals aged 19 and older.

Nineteen percent of high school students reported that they do not bet money on gambling. This percentage is considerably higher than the adult rate of non-gambling of 13.4% reported in the 2001 Saskatchewan problem gambling prevalence study.



Gambling Frequency

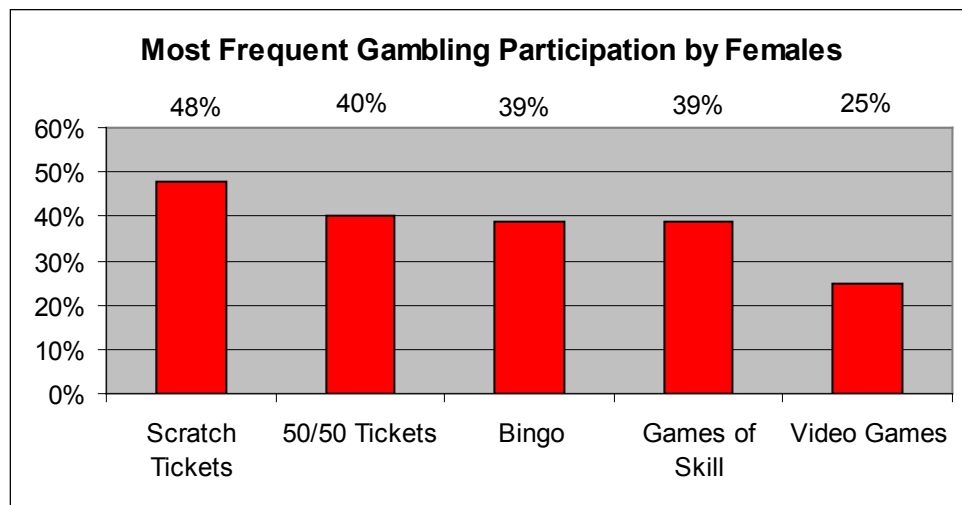
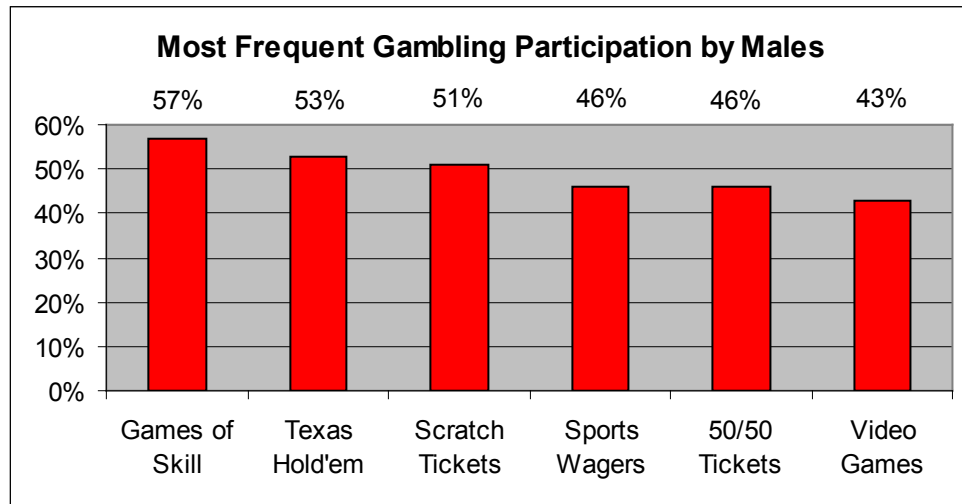
Youth were asked about the frequency of their involvement in betting on gambling activities: never, a few times per month, a few times per week, or daily.

Gambling Frequency

Gambling Activity	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Scratch Tickets	32%	15%	1%
Games of skill	24%	19%	4%
50/50 Tickets	32%	10%	0%
Family Games	27%	14%	1%
Private Card Games (Texas Hold'em)	24%	16%	1%
Bingo	29%	5%	1%
Video Games	12%	16%	4%
Sports Wagers	23%	7%	1%
Private Dice Games	14%	7%	1%
Lottery Tickets	14%	5%	1%
Online Video Games	7%	9%	1%
Nevada Tickets	11%	3%	0%
Video Lottery Terminals	5%	1%	0%
Internet Gambling	3%	2%	1%
Slot Machines	4%	1%	0%
Horse Racing	3%	1%	0%
Casino Gambling	2%	1%	0%

Youth do not appear to gamble regularly. Only 8% of youth indicated that they gamble daily, with 5% gambling daily on one activity, and 2% gambling daily on two activities. Another 18% of youth indicate that they gamble weekly with 10% gambling on one activity in a week, 4% on two activities and 2% on three activities.

Overall, 21% of youth indicate that they gamble on at least one activity at least weekly. Males (31%) were much more likely than females (14%) to gamble on at least one activity weekly.



Gambling Expenditures

When youth gamble they tend to spend less than \$20 at any one time, with many activities where they spend less than \$5. Of the 10 gambling activities in which youth have the highest participation rate, playing video games (14%), bingo (13%) and Texas Hold'em (11%) are the highest activities that youth report spending more than \$20 each time they gamble.

Instead of spending money on any one gambling activity, it appears common that youth are spending small amounts of money on a number of different gambling activities.

While the vast majority of youth spend less than \$50 per month on gambling, 8% indicate spending more than \$50 per month. This is an indication of the importance this activity has in some youth’s monthly expenditures.

Monthly Gambling Expenditure

About how much money do you spend each month overall?	Overall Monthly Spending Gambling
None	40%
Less than \$5	9%
\$5 to \$10	18%
\$11 to \$25	14%
\$26 to \$50	11%
\$51 to \$100	5%
\$101 to \$150	1.8%
\$151 to \$200	0.5%
\$201 to \$250	0.2%
Over \$250	0.8%

Males (13%) were much higher than females (6%) in spending \$50 or more per month on gambling activities. This is characteristic of youth gambling that males tend to be more involved in gambling at younger ages than females, and tend to spend more money gambling.

**Youth Spending Habits:
Gambling in relation to other activities**

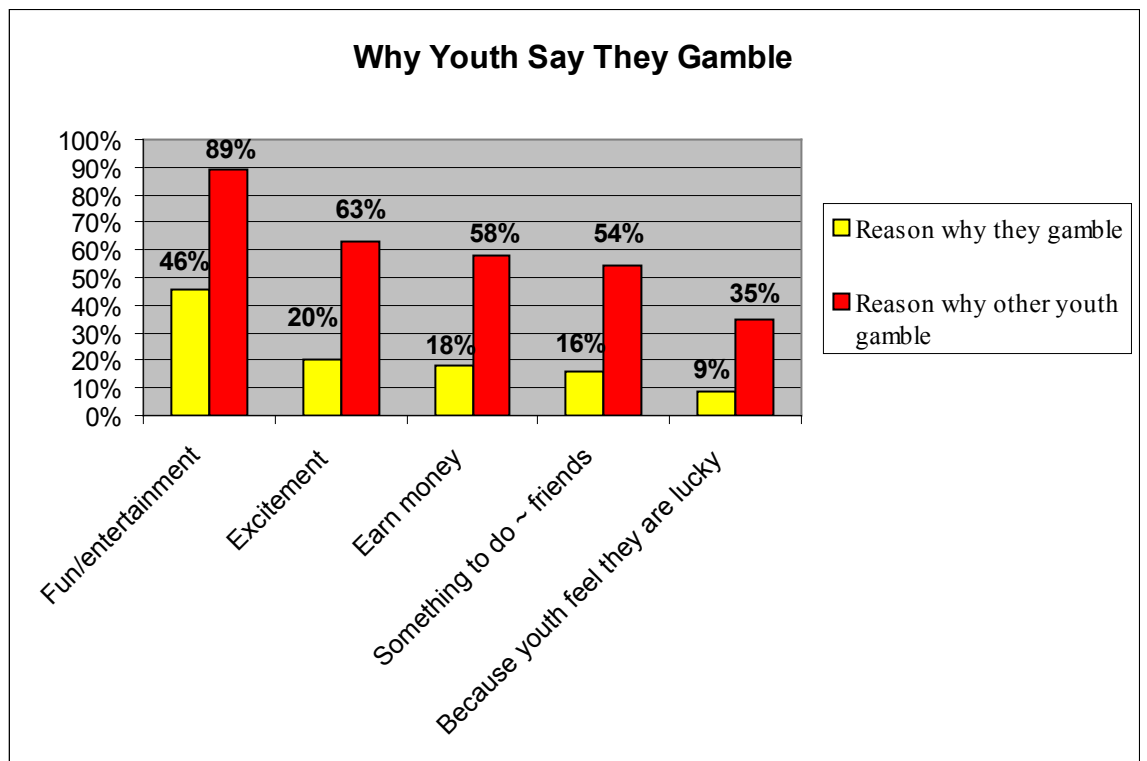
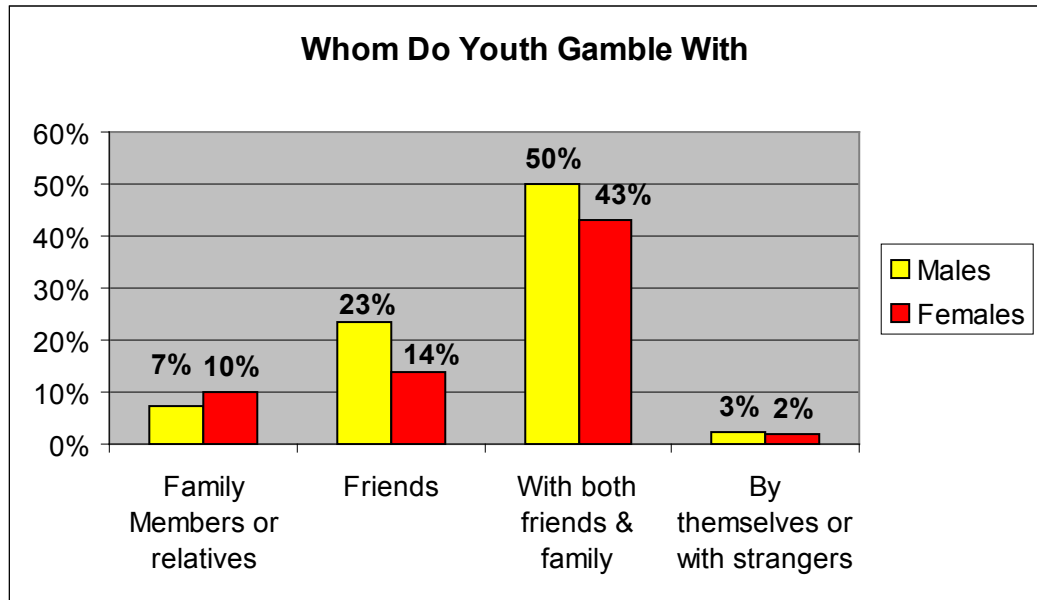
Youth spending habits are one indication of understanding youths’ priorities. In high school youth are generally experiencing their first freedom to spend their own money on things that are important to them. Understanding these expenditures assists in understanding youth’s overall priorities.

Expenditures on gambling are the 6th highest reported expenditures of \$50 or more by high school students, and are higher than reported expenditures of \$50 or more on fast food, buying/playing video games, junk food, or CD's\DVD's. This is a significant finding and clearly indicates the priority that some youth are placing on involvement in gambling activities.

For reported expenditures of \$50 or less, gambling is the 7th highest activity, but youth at this level of expenditure spend more money on junk food, fast food, going to movies, buying/renting movies//DVD's, and purchasing clothes than on gambling.

Spending patterns of High School Youth

Category	Up to \$50 per month	Over \$50 month
Operating a Vehicle	35%	39%
Purchasing Clothes	55%	31%
Alcohol	46%	20%
Playing Sports	38%	17%
Other Recreational Activities	58%	13%
Gambling	51%	9%
Drugs	12%	7%
Fast Food	87%	7%
Buying/Playing Video Games	32%	4%
Junk Food	92%	3%
Buying/Renting Movies/DVD's	76%	3%
Purchasing CD's	49%	3%
Going to Movies	77%	2%



Perception of Skill as it Relates to Gambling

Youth perceive that skill is an important component to be successful in many types of gambling. Of significant concern is the belief that skill is an important factor in poker (92%), online video games (85%), private dice games (75%), sports wagers (72%), casino gambling (64%), and Internet gambling (53%).

Perception of the Importance of Skill

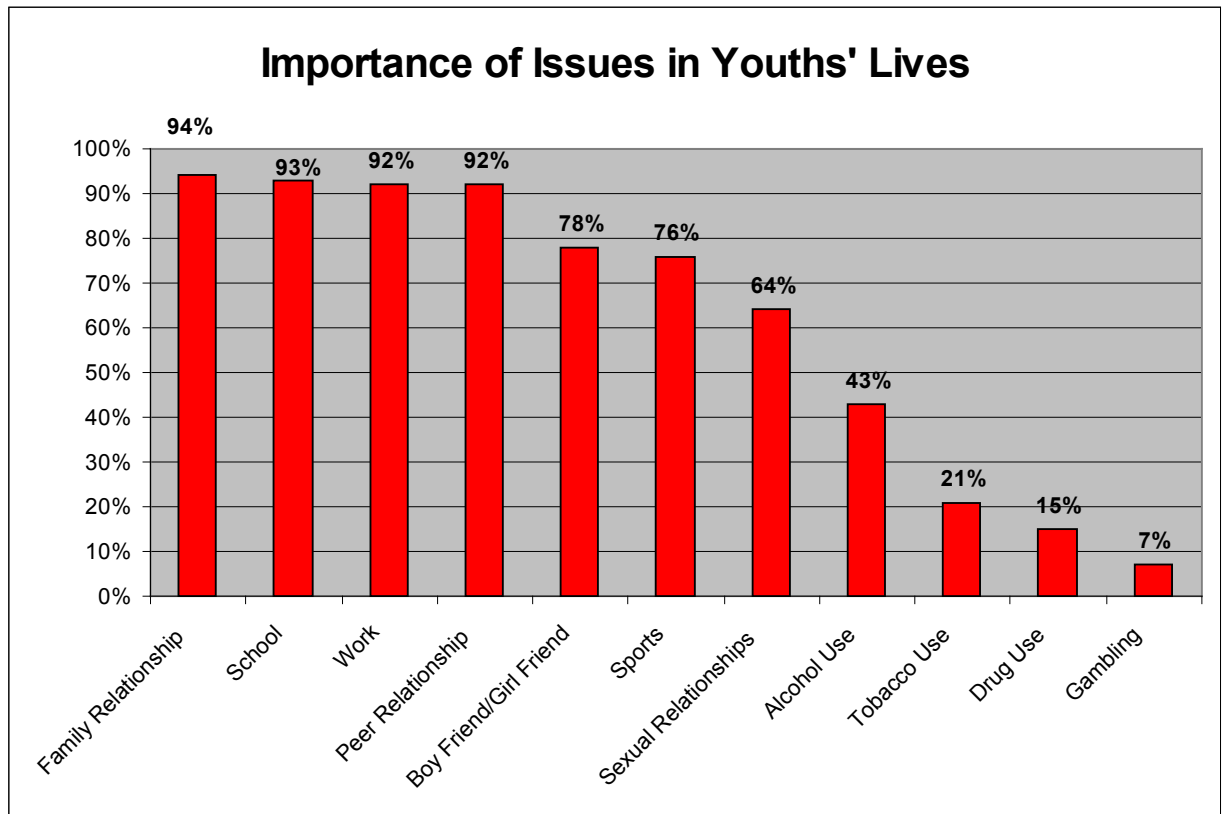
Gambling Activity	A lot of skill	A little skill	No skill
Private Card Games (Texas Hold'em)	62%	30%	8%
Online video games	45%	40%	15%
Private dice games	35%	40%	25%
Sports wagers	21%	51%	28%
Casino gambling	28%	36%	36%
Internet gambling	14%	39%	48%
(VLTs)	3%	20%	77%
Bingo	3%	19%	78%
Slot machines	3%	15%	82%
Lottery tickets	2%	9%	90%
Scratch tickets	2%	7%	91%
Nevada tickets	1%	8%	91%
50/50 tickets	1%	5%	93%

Youth's Perceptions and Attitudes about Gambling

Overall, youth report that gambling is not an important issue in youth's everyday lives. When asked how important gambling is in relation to a series of other activities, gambling was rated as the least important issue, with over 93% of secondary youth reporting gambling to be "not important at all" or "not very important".

Youths' perceptions of the importance of gambling are in contrast to the importance that they place on it in regards to their overall expenditures. This is an issue that highlights the importance of being able to present more information on gambling, the risks of gambling, and the role of gambling in youths' lives in order to have them examine their beliefs further. However, it also clearly points out that youth do not see gambling as a significant issue for them in contrast to many of the other issues that they are currently facing.

Importance of Issues



Male youth (23%) are significantly more likely than female youth (5%) to report that gambling is a very or somewhat important social activity with friends.

Males (15%) are also more likely to indicate that gambling is okay to do even if responsibilities are affected than are females (6%). However, 21% of males and 23% of females indicate that gambling is never a good thing.

Youth's perceptions of friends' gambling

Youth appear to misjudge other youths' reasons for gambling (see page 8: Why Youth Say they Gamble) as well as overestimate their involvement in gambling.

Youth also perceive that other youth gamble at higher rates in almost all forms of gambling than is actually the case. It is especially significant to note the much higher rates of perceived involvement of their friends in private card games, casino gambling, slot machines, VLTs and Internet gambling. Given these findings one is left to wonder whether youth are as influenced by their perception of their friends' gambling as has been considered in other explanations of youth gambling.

Youth's Perceptions of Friends' Involvement in Gambling Activities

Ranking	Gambling Activity	Actual Participation Rate	Percentage of friends engaged in gambling activity
1	Scratch Tickets	49%	61.4%
2	Private Card Games	41%	54.6%
3	Games of Skill	47%	51.0%
4	Sports Wagers	31%	48.9%
5	50/50 Tickets	42%	45.6%
6	Bingo	34%	43.4%
7	Lottery Tickets	20%	42.2%
8	Video Games	33%	38.4%
9	Private Dice Games	22%	36.3%
10	Family Games	42%	32.2%
11	Online Video Games	18%	26.0%
12	Nevada Tickets	14%	25.6%
13	Casino	3.5%	23.9%
14	Slot Machines	5.7%	23.8%
15	VLTs	6.1%	23.2%
16	Internet Gambling	5.9%	20.3%
17	Race Track Betting	3.9%	15.5%

Perceptions of Gambling Problems among Others

Youth were asked to indicate if they knew anyone in their age group with a gambling problem. Only nine percent of youth report knowing anyone with a gambling problem. Youth were very clear that they did not consider gambling to be a problem among high school students.

Recognition of Signs of Gambling Problem

Signs of Gambling Problem	Percent that identify a characteristic of someone with a gambling problem
Got into an argument or fight with a family member over gambling	79%
Got into an argument or fight with a friend over gambling	73%
Been criticized about gambling by someone you know	66%
Lied to your friends about how much you gamble	79%
Lied to your family about how much you gamble	81%
Had difficulty sleeping because you were worried about how much money you lost gambling	75%
Borrowed money from family for gambling	79%
Borrowed money from a friend(s) for gambling	77%
Stolen money for gambling	79%
Missed/skipped classes because you were gambling	71%

Television Entertainment and Gambling in Youth Culture

The survey asked youth if they watch television programmes such as the “World Series of Poker” or prime time shows such as “Casino” or “Las Vegas”? Males were more likely to indicate that they often watched poker programmes (14%), and prime time gambling shows (10%). The majority of males indicate that they watch poker programmes.

In order to understand how entertainment and gambling may relate, television viewing was analyzed according to gambling frequency. Although the results are based on the relatively small numbers of youth that report both gambling and watching gambling related programmes, the results did show higher percentages of gambling activity for those who watch programmes based on gambling.

It is unclear to what degree television entertainment affects youth’s participation in gambling, but it is clear that youth are watching gambling related shows on television and this exposure at least is contributing to males engaging in playing Texas Hold’em.

Conclusion

This research provides an excellent understanding to youth gambling behaviour, their perception of gambling as an issue and next steps in education programming.

The findings revealed that Saskatchewan youth are actively involved in gambling and are choosing to make gambling a significant priority in their monthly expenditures. Despite this and the fact that youth overestimate their friends’ involvement in gambling, youth do not see gambling as an issue for them.

This may in part be due to the lack of information in high schools about the risks of gambling. Providing youth with information that will help them make responsible decisions related to their gambling will be critical, particularly as they come of age to legally gamble in all forms (ie: casinos and VLT sites).

