
Gambling Survey for Great Britain: Continuous Improvement Research

Background

- 2016 & 2018 Health Surveys estimate low prevalence of problem gambling (PGSI >1 = 0.7% & 0.4%) & gambling harm (PGSI>8 = 4.2% & 3.9%)
- 2019 YouGov Treatment and Harm survey produces much higher estimates (2.7% & 13.2%)
- The surveys use very different methodologies, HSE = probability sample, in person interviewing, YouGov = non-probability sample, online self-completion
- In 2020 I wrote a report* on which is likely to be the more accurate
- Conclusion: 🤷♂️

* Sturgis, P.(2020) 'An assessment of the accuracy of survey estimates of the prevalence of problem gambling in the United Kingdom'. GambleAware, London.

Sturgis and Kuha (2022)

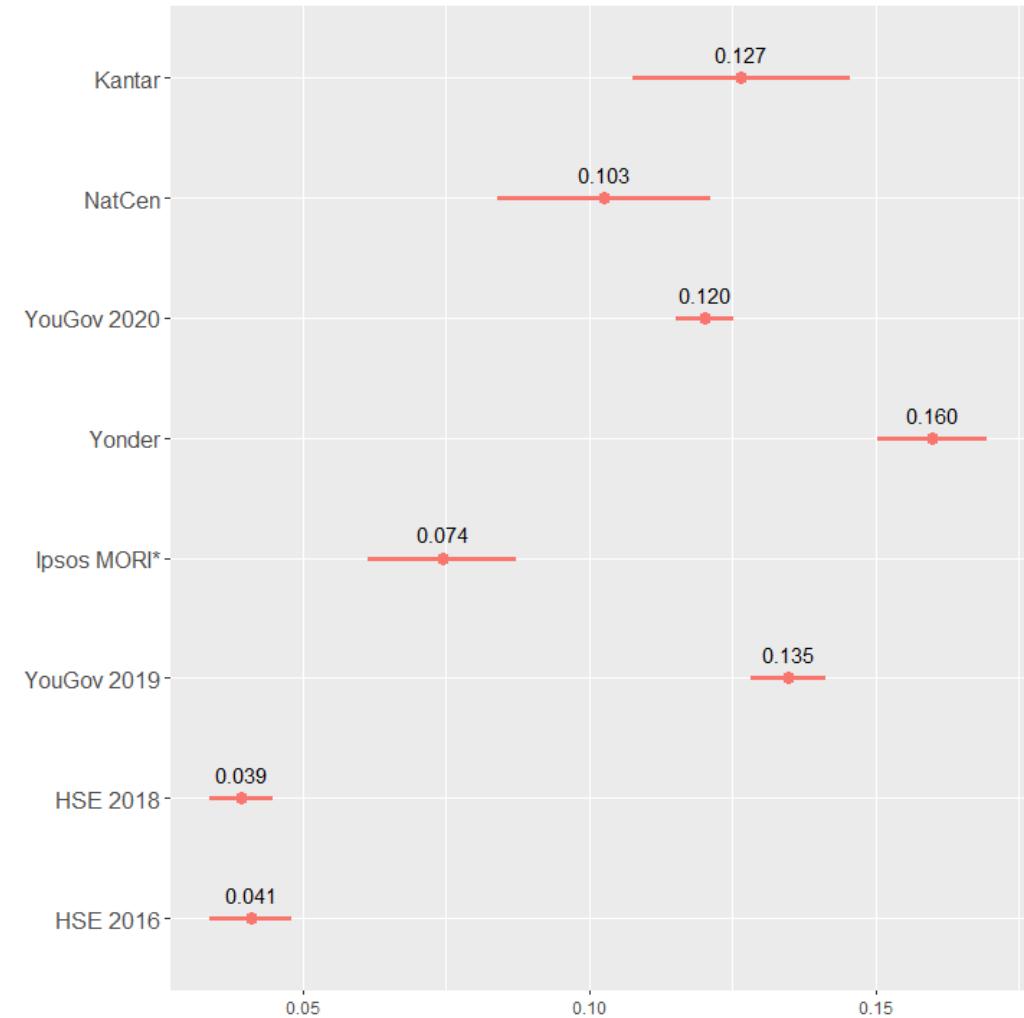
Online surveys produce substantially higher estimates than in-person interview (HSE)

No difference between probability and non-probability online surveys

Measurement error (social desirability)?

Nonresponse bias?

Recommendations for future work from independent report on GSGB (Sturgis, 2024)



Context and research questions

1. to better understand the relationship between survey topic and the propensity of gamblers to respond to survey invitations
2. to better understand the role of socially desirable responding as the driver of the difference in gambling estimates between in-person and self-completion surveys
3. to evaluate the effect of the updated list of gambling activities on estimates of gambling prevalence and harm

Project Team



Independent Advisory Committee

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

The new study: nonresponse bias and measurement error in gambling surveys

Research questions

| Experiment | Research objective | Hypothesis | Control | Treatment |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Experiment One: Varying the survey invitation description | To better understand the relationship between stated survey topic and the propensity of gamblers to respond to survey invitations | Higher estimates of gambling prevalence in surveys that explicitly mention gambling as the survey topic | 'Health and Lifestyle' | 'Gambling experiences' |
| Experiment Two: Social desirability | To better understand the role of socially desirable responding as the driver of the difference in gambling estimates between interviewer-administered and self-completion surveys | Participants are less likely to disclose their true gambling behaviours in the presence of an interviewer | Interviewer not present | Interviewer present |
| Experiment Three: Gambling activities list | Evaluate the effect of the updated list of gambling activities on estimates of gambling prevalence and harm | Estimates of problem gambling will be higher when questions measuring gambling activity over last 12 months includes a broader and more up-to-date set of behaviours | Health Surveys activities list | GSGB activities list |

A 2*2*2 experimental design

| Mention gambling in survey introduction | | Don't mention gambling in survey introduction | |
|---|----------|---|----------|
| Presence of interviewer | | Absence of interviewer | |
| Old list | New list | Old list | New list |
| | | | |

Overview of design

- NatCen panel
- n=3000 (of panelists who have given phone number)
- Survey length = ~15 minutes
- Additional questions on health, lifestyle, participation and including other socially (un)desirable behaviours (ever smoked cannabis, life satisfaction, charitable giving)
- Randomly assigned ~50/50 to each experimental treatment
- Respondents interviewed on phone by an interviewer or via online self-completion
- Control group in H2 (those interviewed online) asked to report how they would have responded in presence of interviewer

Project Outputs

- Substantive report (and journal article)
- Technical report
- Recommendations
 - for implementing the findings within the GSGB
 - for updating the guidance on use of statistics
- Data collection in 1 to 27 May
- Report in July

Thank you

T. 020 7250 1866
F. 020 7250 1524
E. info@natcen.ac.uk
W. <http://www.natcen.ac.uk>

Registered Office
35 Northampton Square
London EC1V 0AX