



## PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN GAMBLING PARTICIPATION IN QUEBEC BETWEEN 2009 AND 2012

This factsheet was prepared by the Research Chair on Gambling Studies in collaboration with the Centre de réadaptation en dépendance de Montréal and the CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

### Context

In Canada, a significant portion of public funds is allocated to the prevention of harm associated with certain gambling practices as well as the treatment of problem gambling. The allocation of resources must be based on valid prevalence data that reports gambling patterns and trends in the general population.<sup>1,2</sup>

This fact sheet presents an overview of the situation in Quebec by presenting trends in gambling participation as well changes in the proportion of at-risk gamblers in the adult population between 2009 and 2012.

The most recent prevalence studies have revealed a global trend of decreased gambling participation in many countries, despite a small number of countries where the prevalence has increased, notably France<sup>4</sup> and the United Kingdom<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1). Problem gambling prevalence rates have remained stable.<sup>3-8</sup>

Figure 1



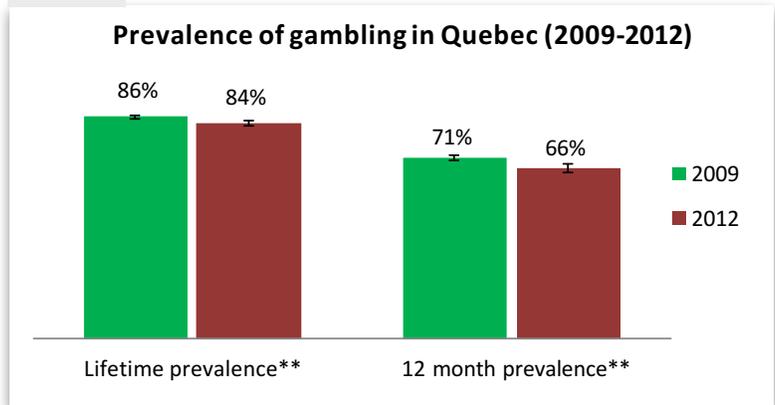
\*Due to methodological differences in data collection between countries, comparisons between countries should not be made.

## Quebec

The proportion of Quebecers who have never gambled in their lifetime increased between 2009 and 2012, which might suggest a decrease in the popularity of gambling among the province’s adult population.<sup>1,2</sup> Furthermore, the proportion of individuals who have bet or wagered money on at least one gambling activity over the course of the last year decreased significantly over the same time period (Figure 2).<sup>1,2</sup>

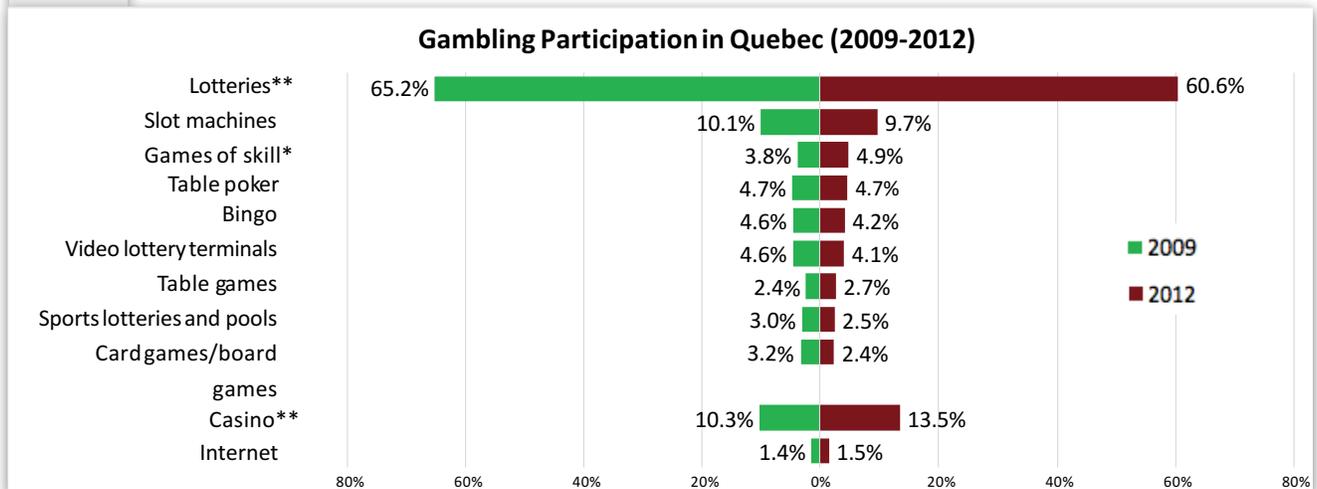
Participation rates vary according to gambling activity. For example, lottery participation decreased significantly between 2009 and 2012 while games of skill became more popular. The rate of participation in online gambling in Quebec remained stable while gambling in casinos increased (Figure 3).<sup>1,2</sup>

Figure 2



\*\* The difference between the two values is significant at  $p < 0.001$

Figure 3

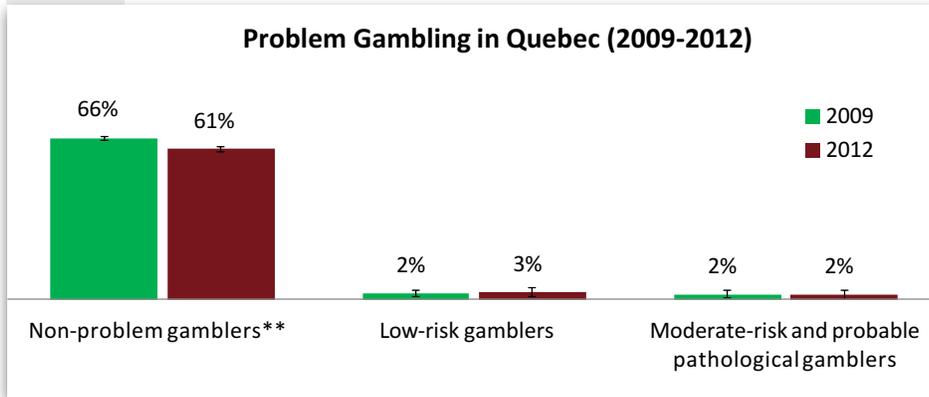


\* The difference between the two values is significant at  $p < 0.01$ , \*\* The difference between the two values is significant at  $p < 0.001$

Gambling participation is higher among men, individuals aged 45 to 65, those active in the labor market and among individuals holding secondary or collegial diplomas. Moreover, gambling participation is significantly lower among single people as well as among individuals who reported a family revenue of less than \$20,000 (not shown).<sup>1,2</sup>

The differences in participation rates between subgroups of the population persist between 2009 and 2012. In short, this means that the decrease in participation for the general population cannot be attributed to any specific subgroup.<sup>1,2</sup>

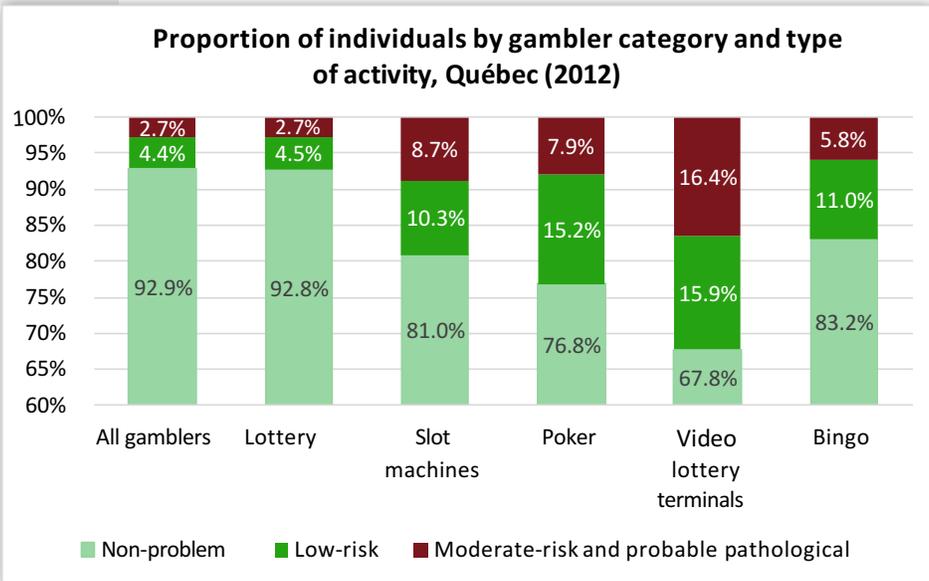
Figure 4



\*\* The difference between the two values is significant at  $p < 0.001$

Between 2009 and 2012, the prevalence of problem gambling remained unchanged, while the prevalence of non-problem gambling decreased significantly (Figure 4 ).<sup>2</sup>

Figure 5



The proportion of problem gamblers varies according to type of gambling activity (Figure 5). When compared to the distribution of problem gambling for all activities combined, the proportion of problem gamblers is significantly higher among those playing slot machines, poker, video lottery terminals and bingo  $p < 0.05$ ).<sup>2</sup>

## Methodology

Results are drawn from the ENHJEU-Québec Survey, Portrait of gambling in Quebec: Prevalence, incidence, and trajectories over four years (2009-2012),<sup>2</sup> conducted with non-institutionalized individuals aged 18 years or older living in private residences throughout the province of Quebec. The survey data was collected by means of telephone interviews with 11,888 participants in 2009 and 12,008 in 2012. Gambling participation was measured as having wagered money on at least one of the following eleven activities: lottery, bingo, horse races, slot machines, video lottery terminals, poker, table games, keno, sports betting, card games, or games of skill.

To reflect the gravity of their gambling problems, gamblers were classified according to the four categories of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI).<sup>9</sup>

CATEGORY OF GAMBLER*	SCORE
Non-problem gamblers	0
Low-risk gamblers	1 to 2
Moderate-risk gamblers	3 to 7
Probable pathological gamblers	8 +

\* Because of the small number of probable pathological gamblers, the moderate risk and probably pathological categories were merged in order to constitute a single category of problem gamblers.

## Conclusion

This study reveals a significant decrease in the proportion of gamblers in Quebec. This decrease has occurred despite an increase in gambling opportunities in the province, in particular, the opening of a new casino in Mont Tremblant (2009) and the launch of the province's new online gambling website *Espacejeux* (2010). With the evolution of online gaming/gambling platforms, for example new online sports betting opportunities, growth in gambling supply is projected to continue.<sup>1,2</sup> Sustained vigilance is needed.

While the overall proportion of gamblers is decreasing in Quebec, the prevalence of problem gamblers has remained stable. Therefore, it is important that public resources allocated to problem gambling initiatives are maintained, as well as those for secondary prevention measures targeting vulnerable populations.<sup>1,2</sup>

Interprovincial comparisons are called for in order to shed light on the effects that the ongoing legalization of online gambling opportunities may have on gambling practices and associated problems.

## References

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