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# **Responsible Gambling Awareness Survey 2017**

**Prepared for:**

**Social Welfare Bureau**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 63.7% of the respondents expressed that they were aware of responsible gambling. Compared to 60.5% in 2013, the awareness rate was up by 3.2 percentage points.
- Among those who were aware of responsible gambling, most of them were able to mention what should be done to prepare for gambling (62.5% were able to mention at least one appropriate gambling behavior before gambling) and how should a gambler behave during gambling (72.5% were able to mention at least one appropriate gambling behavior during gambling). In case of having problems after gambling, most of them chose to seek professional services from treatment centers (38.8%) or chose to have self-help (38.3%).
- With regard to the role of skill in winning casino games, respondents' understanding was getting worse when compared to the previous studies. As for the other properties of casino gambling, their level of understanding was comparable to those of the previous studies. Overall speaking, respondents had a certain knowledge of casino gambling. However, there was still room for improvement. With regard to the correct understanding of the nature of gambling, namely randomness and independence of events, the percentage dropped after two consecutive increases in the previous two studies.
- 71.9% of the respondents were able to mention at least one difference between the ways in which gamblers with gambling disorder and regular gamblers spend on gambling. 80.8% of the respondents were able to mention at least one negative impacts of gambling disorder. Compared to the previous study, both percentages experienced significant decrease.
- 98.0% of the respondents were aware of one or more gaming operators' responsible gambling measures taken to reduce the potential harms of gambling. This percentage remained stable after the significant increase to 97.9% in 2013. The level of awareness of most of the measures hit the record high in the current study. Among them, "Provide self-exclusion and Third-party Exclusion" and "Removal from gambling promotion list at patron's request" had larger increase. Furthermore, for all the six measures, the level of confidence in their effectiveness not only increased significantly, but also hit the record high.
- For the first time, the study investigated the level of awareness of "Self-exclusion" and "Third-party exclusion" introduced by the government, and the minimum age required by law to enter into casino. The results showed that 46.1% of the respondents were aware of the exclusion programs while 78.9% were able to answer the age correctly.
- As for the awareness of the nine (only four centers in the previous study) major gambling disorder counseling centers, 88.2% of the respondents were aware of at least one of these centers. Among them, the 24-hour gambling counseling hotline had the highest level of awareness. As high as 69.4% of the respondents were aware of it.

- The study investigated for the first time how well respondents recognized the work done by the five stakeholders in the promotion of responsible gambling in the past few years. Respondents rated the work of the stakeholders from 0 to 10, with 0 means totally disagree and 10 means totally agree. In terms of the average, the stakeholder with the highest level of recognition was Education and Other Community Organizations (5.5) which was then followed by the Government (5.0), Gambling Disorder Prevention and Treatment Centers (4.8), Gaming Operators (4.4) and Gamblers (4.1).
- Compared to those who were not aware of responsible gambling, those who were aware of responsible gambling were significantly better in their understanding of gambling, able to aware more responsible gambling measures taken by gaming operators, able to aware more gambling disorder counseling centers, able to mention more negative impacts of gambling disorder, more generally aware of the government policies and regulations related to responsible gambling, and aware of the relevant activities organized by community organizations.
- The percentage of gamblers who were aware of responsible gambling (74.1%) continued to be significantly higher than that of their counterparts (58.5%). Even so, in line with the previous study, gamblers were not found to have better understanding of responsible gambling and gambling disorder. With regard to the understanding of casino gambling, gamblers continued to have higher level of agreement to two wrong statements of casino gambling, “Analyzing the outcomes of previous games can improve my next bets” and “Gambling is a good way to become rich quickly”. Also gamblers tended to misperceive that they could control the outcomes of gambling. Furthermore, when compared to the non-gamblers, gamblers continued to be able to aware significantly more responsible gambling measures taken by gaming operators and were more generally aware of the government policies and regulations related to responsible gambling. However, their level of recognition to the role of the government in leading and implementing responsible gambling policies was significantly lower than that of the non-gamblers.
- According to the frequency of gambling, gamblers were divided into two groups. Those who gambled less than once a month were occasional gamblers and those who gambled at least once per month were regular gamblers. Results indicated that the average number of pre-gambling responsible behaviors mentioned by occasional gamblers was significantly more than that of the regular gamblers. Furthermore, in case of having problems after gambling, the percentage of occasional gamblers seeking help from professional agencies was significantly higher than that of the regular gamblers. In addition, compared to the occasional gamblers, regular gamblers had significantly higher level of agreement to the wrong statement of casino gambling, “Gambling is a good way to become rich quickly”. Also regular gamblers tended to disagree that gaming operators had met the requirement of being responsible in gambling to their staff and customers.
- Gaming employees (90.8%) continued to have significantly higher level of awareness of responsible gambling than non-gaming employees (57.8%). In this study, gaming employees were found to have better understanding of casino gambling. Besides, gaming employees were able to aware significantly more responsible gambling measures taken by gaming operators, more gambling disorder counseling centers, and were more generally aware of the government’s responsible gambling policies and regulations. But, in terms of the knowledge of gambling disorder, there was no significant difference between the two groups.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of the responsible gambling campaign is to educate the public on responsible gambling so that the incidence of gambling disorder can be reduced to a minimum. The contents of the campaign include some of the responsible ways in which gamblers can follow when they participate in gambling, the properties of gambling and commercial gambling, the harm of gambling disorder, gambling disorder prevention and treatment centers in Macao, the responsible gambling measures taken by gaming operators, and the government's responsible gambling policies and regulations.

Before the launch of responsible gambling promotional activities in 2009, only 16.2% of Macao residents were aware of responsible gambling. This awareness rate then gradually increased to 63.7% in 2017. Compared to 2013, this percentage was up by 3.2 points. Overall speaking, the awareness rate experienced significant increase between 2009 and 2012. However since 2013, the increasing rate began to slow down.

Results showed that many of those who were aware of responsible gambling were able to mention the pre-gambling responsible behaviors as well as responsible behaviors they should have during gambling. Meanwhile, the behavior "Don't borrow to finance gambling" was more frequently mentioned than "Gamble with small bets for leisure and fun", and had become the most frequently mentioned responsible behavior. Since the theme of "Responsible Gambling Promotions 2016" was "Gambling with Borrowed Money is Harmful", hence the responsible gambling promotion in 2016 is regarded as having achieved a certain degree of success. In addition, in case of having problems after gambling, most of those who were aware of responsible gambling chose to seek help from professional counseling agencies or chose to have self-help. A small percentage of them chose to seek help from family members and friends. Since family members and friends may not provide effective solutions, it is suggested that organizers of "Responsible Gambling Promotions" should continue to educate residents on the importance of seeking help from professional treatment centers. Furthermore, organizers can develop leaflets and videos teaching those who choose self-help the appropriate self-help solutions.

Statistics of the previous studies showed that respondents had misconception in the nature of gambling, namely randomness and independence of events. Also they believed they had control over the gambling outcomes. So far these misconceptions have never been eradicated. However, for those who were aware of responsible gambling, and for those who were gaming employees, their understanding of the nature of gambling was significantly better than their counterparts. On the other hand, gamblers, in particular those who had more frequent participation in gambling, their understanding of the nature of gambling was worse than their counterparts. Understanding the nature of gambling before participation in gambling helps to reduce the risk of gambling disorder. Hence it is suggested that future campaigns should strengthen the public, in particular those who have more frequent participation in gambling, education on the nature of gambling and the basic principles of gambling and casino gambling.

Gaming operators adopt different measures to reduce the potential harms of gambling. Most of the respondents were able to aware these measures. In the current study, respondents' confidence in the effectiveness of each of these measures was not only significantly improved, but the level of agreement to the effectiveness of these measures also hit the record high. This might be due to the gaming operators implementing "Measures for the Implementation of Responsible Gambling", and the organizers of the Responsible Gambling Promotions using different forms of activities to promote responsible gambling throughout the years.

Respondents were generally aware of at least one major gambling disorder counseling center in Macao, and the 24-hour gambling counseling hotline.

Respondents had certain knowledge on what had been done by the government, education and other community organizations in the promotion of responsible gambling. Nearly 50% of the respondents were aware of the government's self-exclusion and the third-party exclusion programs. Nearly 80% of the respondents were able to correctly answer the minimum age required by law to enter into casinos. About 30% and 40% of the respondents were able to aware the gambling prevention or responsible gambling activities organized by the educational bodies and other community organizations, respectively.

The higher the level of recognition stakeholders received with respect to their efforts made in promoting responsible gambling, the higher the level of public expectation they have meet. The stakeholder with the highest level of recognition was Education and Other Community Organizations, which was then followed by the Government, Gambling Disorder Prevention and Treatment Centers, Gaming Operators, and Gamblers.

Respondents who were aware of responsible gambling demonstrated better understanding of the properties of gambling, were more aware of the responsible gambling measures carried out by gaming operators, gambling disorder counseling centers, government and community organizations. As such, it is indispensable to raise the public awareness of responsible gambling.

Gaming employees and gamblers have always been the target of responsible gambling campaigns. After years of promotion, their awareness levels of responsible gambling were significantly higher than their counterparts. Not only that, their levels of awareness showed signs of increase every time the study was carried out.

Compared to the previous studies, gaming employees showed a better understanding of casino gambling. In addition, gaming employees had significantly better knowledge on gaming operators' responsible gambling measures, government's responsible gambling policies and regulations, and gambling disorder counseling centers than their non-gaming counterparts. Their better knowledge might be due to the promotion and training provided by the government and gaming operators. Nevertheless, their knowledge on gambling disorder has still to be improved.

Furthermore, as compared to non-gamblers, gamblers were able to aware more responsible gambling measures taken by gaming operators and were generally more aware of the government's responsible gambling policies and regulations. However, their knowledge on the negative impacts of gambling disorder, and gambling disorder counseling centers were not significantly better than that of the non-gamblers. Not only that, they had always shown to have misconception in the properties of casino gambling. All these results showed that campaigns in all these years are only able to make them aware of responsible gambling, but not able to instill in them in-depth knowledge of gambling and gambling disorder. Definitely, their knowledge on these areas have to be improved. Hence, it is suggested that future campaigns should expend effort on explaining the nature of gambling and gambling disorder to gamblers in a more-focused manner.