Understanding self-exclusion – profile, processes and improvements: Evidence and implications from a research study of online betting exchange users

Heather Wardle,
NatCen Social Research, London
Aims and objectives

• To examine the profile of self-excluders by:
  – Demographic profile
  – Problem gambling
  – Gambling behaviour

• To understand use of and attitudes toward responsible gambling tools

• To provide a foundation upon which to build analysis of risk
Design

• Web survey of random samples of self-excluders and non self-excluders:
  – Demographic profile
  – Problem gambling
  – Gambling behaviour

• Player account analysis of random samples of excluders and non-excluders:
  – Length of account membership
  – Averages of gambling days, gambling transactions, stake, return, wins, losses
  – Some demographics
Typical profile of self-excluders:

• Male,
• Younger adults,
• Heavily engaged with online and offline gambling,
• Gamble with increased volume but experience poorer returns,
• 2 out of 3 were problem gamblers,
• Majority worried about amount of money/time spent gambling...

(14% of non self-excluders classified as problem gamblers)
BUT ALSO:

1. Repeat excluders
2. Did not use player protection tools
3. A minority did not report experiencing problems with gambling
1. Repeat excluders

Base: All respondents

- **Self-excluders**
  - Prior exclusion: 13.2
  - No prior exclusion: 9.4

- **Non-self excluders**
  - Prior exclusion: 6.9
  - No prior exclusion: 2.9
2. “Unlimited play”

38% did set some limits
48% did not set any limits
15% did not know it was an option
3. Other reasons for exclusion

8% wanted to take a short break from gambling

“going on holiday”

“to aide my money saving plan”

“I need to purchase some furniture so wished to stop gambling until I paid for furniture”.
Experiences of exclusion [1]

On the whole, positive feedback, but room for improvement:

“I lost a lot of money (10k) and feel extremely guilty about it. I wish I'd discovered this option of excluding myself from using betfair much earlier, I would have lost a lot less”.
Experiences of exclusion [2]

1 in 7 excluders could not find SE function on operator website:
- “It’s quite hidden away”,
- “I could not find anywhere on the website to do it. I had to email the customer services dept who then did it for me”,
- “wasn't easy locating the self exclusion option”

Suggested improvements included:
- Clearer signposting to responsible gambling section
- Automated summary information at the close of each session
- Tailored interventions based on behaviour
- Different exclusion levels
Conclusions

1. Prior exclusion a key risk factor for experience of problems
2. Not all excluders experience problems
3. Not all people with problems exclude
4. Main transition was from unlimited play to exclusion
Recommendations

1. Improve awareness of player protection tools
2. Improve player protection process and ease of access
3. Improve data collection from members to lay foundations of complex risk profiling