

**RESEARCH
REPORT**

Australian young women's gambling behaviours: A socio-cultural investigation of gambling attitudes, beliefs, and consumption intentions

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Australian young women's gambling behaviours: A socio-cultural investigation of gambling attitudes, beliefs and consumption intentions

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Executive summary

Overview

Research has shown that women's gambling participation rates are very similar to men's and that there has been an increase in the number of women experiencing gambling-related harm [Delfabbro 2012; Hare 2015; McMillen et al. 2004; Wardle 2015]. For example, data from Victoria shows an increase in the number of women classified as at risk of gambling-related harm from 6.73 per cent in 2008 to 12.05 per cent in 2014 [Hare 2015]. While there has traditionally been a focus on men's gambling in the literature, women's specific gambling behaviours and attitudes remain relatively unexplored. There is some evidence regarding possible reasons for women's gambling behaviours; however, this has mostly focused on individual factors and older women. This research has identified that women gamble for a range of reasons including boredom, loneliness, escape and a desire to be socially engaged [Bowden-Jones & George 2015; Davis & Avery 2004; Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012; McCormack, Shorter & Griffiths 2014; Nuske, Holdsworth & Breen 2016; Potenza, Maciejewski & Mazure 2006]. While early research suggested that women often gambled on electronic gaming machines (EGMs), more recent research has started to see a change in women's gambling product preferences. Women are now diversifying their product use by also gambling on skill-based activities such as wagering [McCarthy et al. 2018; Svensson & Romild 2014; Wardle 2015]. This is thought to be due to the range of gambling products available, their accessibility, the increasing normalisation of gambling within communities and the increase in gambling promotions [McCarthy et al. 2018; Thomas & Lewis 2012].

Importantly, research has also highlighted the role advertising may play in influencing the initiation and continuation of gambling [Corney & Davis 2010; McCormack, Shorter & Griffiths 2014]. Researchers have identified female-friendly marketing strategies; for example, online bingo sites have included female-friendly design and imagery, and EGMs have themes that attract females and have contributed to an increase in participation [Hallebone 1999; Stead et al. 2016]. Others have argued that the non-gambling activities and family-friendly features of gambling venues are also key factors that attract women into gambling environments [Delfabbro 2012]. However, there has been little research that examines (a) how the promotion and availability of other non-gambling activities that may be within gambling environments, such as at racing carnivals, may appeal to women; or (b) how products that traditionally have been assumed to appeal mainly to men, such as sports betting, may also appeal to, and influence, women's gambling behaviours.

Aim, research questions and study design

Aim

The aim of the present study was to explore the range of key determinants that may shape the gambling beliefs and behaviours of older adolescent (18–24 years old) and young adult (25–34 years old) women. We predominantly focused on young women who demonstrated low and moderate risk levels of gambling.

Research questions

To address this aim, this study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1 What are the range of industry promotional tactics that may contribute to shaping women's attitudes and consumption intentions in relation to gambling and other harmful products? (Phase 1)
- 2 What are the range of promotional appeal strategies that may indicate that racing is increasingly feminised for women? (Phase 2)
- 3 What are the range of key determinants that may contribute to shaping the gambling attitudes and consumption behaviours of adolescent (18–24 years old) and young women (25–34 years old)? (Phase 3)

Study design

This study comprised three distinct phases:

- Phase 1: Based on a narrative review of the literature, the development of a typology to illustrate the range of marketing strategies from the providers of alcohol, tobacco or gambling products that may be used to appeal to adolescent and young adult women.
- Phase 2: Understanding how the marketing of gambling and non-gambling activities aligned with horseracing may appeal to women. To do this, we explored the social media sites (website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) of racing venues and organisations that had hosted horseracing events as part of the Victorian Spring Racing Carnival. We applied examples to the typology constructed in Phase 1 – as a guide for further research, and also to consider how harm minimisation strategies and public education campaigns specifically targeting young women may be aligned with these events.
- Phase 3: An in-depth qualitative investigation with n=45 older adolescent (18–24 years old) and young adult women (25–34 years old) to understand how individual, socio-cultural and industry determinants may influence their gambling attitudes, product engagement and risk behaviours.

Key findings and discussion

Key findings

Phase 1

The findings from the narrative literature review search in Phase 1 developed a typology to illustrate some of the marketing strategies that may potentially appeal to, and/or influence, young women's consumption of tobacco, alcohol and gambling products. The review found that there were six different appeal strategies: (1) self-image, (2) empowerment, (3) social connection and acceptance, (4) feminisation of the product, (5) strategic associations and (6) strategic marketing.

Phase 2

Phase 2 aimed to use the typology developed in Phase 1 to understand the range of marketing strategies used in a case study – the Victorian Spring Racing Carnival. Using the typology, a range of marketing strategies for non-gambling and gambling activities that may appeal to women were identified. Examples identified included the depiction of women's beauty, fashion, success and confidence on websites and social media sites, the use of female celebrity endorsements, relationships with female-friendly products such as champagne and jewellery, an emphasis on peer group belonging and popularity, and the promotion of female-specific race days such as ladies days.

The results of Phase 2 suggested that this typology could be a useful tool for examining how marketing may be used to appeal to women in other gambling contexts and environments, but also provided important information about how public health practitioners could design harm minimisation strategies and public education campaigns that may minimise any potential harms associated with both gambling and alcohol consumption at these events.

Phase 3

The results from Phase 3 were separated into three key areas. The first was the gambling behaviours of participants.

- The majority of participants were in the low (n=22, 48.9 per cent) and moderate (n=12, 26.7 per cent) gambling risk categories.
- Lotteries and instant lotteries (scratches) was the gambling product that most women had participated in over the past 12 months (n=33, 73.3 per cent) and had the highest monthly participation (n= 12, 26.7 per cent).
- Almost two-thirds of women reported having bet on horses in the previous 12 months (n=29, 64.5 per cent).
- One-fifth of women (n=10, 22.3 per cent) reported that they bet on sports at least once a month.
- The majority of women engaged in three or more different gambling activities in the previous 12 months (n=29, 64.4 per cent).

The second area was the influence of individual, socio-cultural and commercial determinants on young women's gambling attitudes and consumption intentions and behaviours.

- Individual determinants of gambling behaviour included that it was a fun and enjoyable activity and that gambling created added interest in an activity. Young women also used gambling to relieve boredom, for thrill and excitement, to win money and to escape or mitigate life stressors.
- Social-cultural determinants included the cultural acceptance and normalisation of gambling in Australia, the social acceptability of gambling and the influence of social networks such as peers, partners and families on gambling behaviours.
- Commercial determinants included specific gambling product engagement (horse betting, casino gambling, EGMs, sports betting and lotteries and instant lotteries), the promotion of gambling and the ease, accessibility and availability of gambling.

The third key area was strategies to reduce and prevent gambling harm in young women.

- Some women argued for more effective regulatory structures to prevent gambling harm.
- Many women focused on individual mechanisms for reducing harm, such as education, and the need for public education campaigns to be targeted towards and specific for women (and in particular young women).
- Stigma was considered a potential barrier for some young women who may be looking to seek help.

Discussion

There were three key overall areas of discussion relating to the findings from this study.

- There are clear strategies that have been used by gambling and other harmful industries to appeal to women. Further research is needed to map and monitor whether similar strategies are being used to promote a range of different types of gambling products or gambling environments; and, ultimately, how these may impact on young women's gambling behaviours.
- A complex mix of individual, socio-cultural and commercial factors may be influencing young women's engagement in gambling.
- Clear and targeted harm prevention strategies, including public education campaigns, should be developed by public health practitioners, which specifically seek to appeal to young women. These campaigns could specifically target and seek to engage young women in a discussion about gambling products and the causes and consequences of gambling-related harm. Focus points could be:
 - messages specifically aligned with major events such as racing carnivals and sporting events
 - messages that explore the potential links between alcohol and gambling for women, and that may contribute to excessive or binge gambling during certain times of the year
 - public health prevention initiatives that focus on how young women may be influenced by partners or peers.

Literature review

Background

Gambling is rapidly emerging as an important global public health issue [Marshall 2009; *The Lancet* 2017; Thomas & Thomas 2015]. Gambling products have been identified as causing considerable health and social harms for individuals, their families and the broader community [Lorains, Cowlshaw & Thomas 2011; Suomi et al. 2018]. Research suggests that the burden of harm from low- and moderate-risk gambling may be more prevalent than the level of harm associated with major depressive disorders, and is approaching the level of harm associated with alcohol use and dependence in Victoria [Browne et al. 2016].

Numerous links between harmful gambling and a range of health and social issues have been documented [Korman et al. 2008; Markham, Doran & Young 2014; Rudd & Thomas 2016; Suomi et al. 2018; Suomi et al. 2013; Williams, West & Simpson 2012]. For example, comorbidities with other disorders are common among those experiencing gambling-related harm, and include substance-use disorder, depression, stress and anxiety [Cowlshaw et al. 2014; Dowling et al. 2015; Haydock et al. 2015; Manning et al. 2017]. Harmful gambling also contributes to a range of social problems, including housing instability [Gattis & Cunningham-Williams 2011], lower work productivity and job loss [Productivity Commission 2010], criminality [Folino & Abait 2009; Rudd & Thomas 2016], relationship difficulties [Kalischuk et al. 2006] and family violence [Dowling et al. 2014; Suomi et al. 2018].

Researchers and government organisations have identified that gambling-related harm is a significant health threat for the Victorian community [Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation 2015]. This includes commentary that researchers and policy makers should shift away from individual addiction models aimed at minimising harm behaviours [Black & Moyer 1998; Blaszczynski & Nower 2002; Ibáñez et al. 2003; Petry 2001] towards an understanding of the broad range of socio-cultural, environmental and industry factors that may stimulate risky patterns of gambling amongst population subgroups [Orford 2005; Reith 2007; Thomas et al. 2015; Young, Lamb & Doran 2011]. Public health researchers argue that, in order to significantly reduce gambling harm, this broad range of drivers must be taken into consideration in the design and development of research and in public health policy responses [Adams & Rossen 2012; Korn, Gibbins & Azmier 2003; Thomas et al. 2016; Thomas & Thomas 2015].

While gambling harm in Victoria is still predominantly attributable to electronic gaming machines (EGMs), there have been significant increases since 2008 in the uptake of newer online gambling products, such as event and sports betting, in Victoria [Hare 2015]. Research suggests that particular population subgroups, including older adults, young men, children, individuals from low socioeconomic background and Indigenous communities, may have increased risks, which may make them vulnerable to gambling harm [Billi et al. 2014; Derevensky et al. 2010; Hare 2015; Kerber, Black & Buckwalter 2008; Thomas et al. 2012]. However, there are significant gaps in knowledge, both in Australia and internationally, relating to women's gambling behaviours [McCarthy et al. 2019]. This includes the range of factors that may shape women's, and particularly adolescent and young women's, attitudes towards gambling and their potential risk of experiencing gambling harm. While Australian research indicates that women's participation in gambling is increasing and that women participate in gambling activities at approximately the same rate as men [Hare 2015], there has been limited research examining the range of factors that may influence how adolescent and young women conceptualise gambling and the range of factors that may shape their gambling attitudes and behaviours [McCarthy et al. 2019].

Women's gambling

Overview

While research has focused on the impacts of gambling on older women [McMillen et al. 2004] and there has been significant research which has explored the impact of new forms of gambling on adolescent and young men [Deans et al. 2016], research into the gambling beliefs and behaviours of adolescent and young women is limited. Some researchers have suggested that the lack of focus on women has contributed to a clear male bias in gambling research and may also lead to assumptions about women's engagement with gambling products and their risk of gambling harm [Li 2007; Mark & Lesieur 1992; Wardle 2015]. For example, several studies have suggested that differences in male and female gambling behaviour can be explained through traditional gender expectations and the differences between masculine and feminine identities [Delfabbro 2000; Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012]. Some researchers have argued that, given that gambling is a less socially accepted activity for women, women who gamble may be vulnerable to stigma or social judgement for engaging in an activity that does not meet society's expectations of women's behaviour [Delfabbro 2000].

More recent research has started to tell a different story about women's gambling. Recent studies have challenged the idea that women are less at risk of developing problems with gambling as compared to men. Some research has suggested that, although men more commonly gamble on high-risk gambling products and spend more money on gambling than women, women who gamble regularly may have a higher susceptibility to gambling problems than men [Svensson & Romild 2014]. Evidence from Victoria also suggests that gambling risk profiles of women are changing, with prevalence data showing an increase in women experiencing gambling harm at low levels [Hare 2015]. This survey showed an increase in women classified as low-risk gamblers from 4.44 per cent in 2008 to 9.99 per cent in 2014, with a hypothesis that female low-risk gamblers may have replaced female non-problem gamblers [Hare 2015]. However, there are gaps in our understanding of the factors that may contribute to these higher rates of harm in women. Research has also started to demonstrate that there are differences in gambling-related harm according to different age profiles. While there is a perception that older women may be at increased risk of gambling-related harm, younger women are also at significant risk of harm. An Australian mixed methods online survey of 509 women living in New South Wales and Victoria explored the gambling behaviours and attitudes, and perceived product harms, associated with four gambling products: casino gambling, EGMs, horse betting and sports betting. The study found that younger women (aged 16–34 years) were more likely to be classified as problem gamblers than were older women. Just under a quarter of women aged 16–34 years in this study were classified as problem gamblers [McCarthy et al. 2018].

Gambling product choices

Previous research has suggested that gambling activities are highly gendered [Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012; Svensson & Romild 2014]. Some research states that women prefer gambling on 'luck' and chance-based forms of gambling, such as lotteries, bingo and EGMs, as compared to men, who prefer skill-based forms of gambling such as wagering and poker [Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012]. However, more recent research indicates that women's product preferences may be changing. For example, a recent study suggests that young Australian women gamble on multiple products, including both chance-based and skill-based, thus diversifying their product preferences [McCarthy et al. 2018]. Further, this research found that women 16–34 years old were more likely than their older peers to use newer gambling products, such as online sports betting [McCarthy et al. 2018]. This research provides a starting point for understanding adolescent and young women's gambling behaviours.

Factors that influence gambling behaviours

Researchers have documented the importance of understanding the extent to which contextual factors influence women's gambling behaviours, with several studies attempting to explain *why* women gamble [Bowden-Jones & George 2015; Davis & Avery 2004; Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012; Svensson et al. 2011; Trevorrow & Moore 1998; Wardle 2015]. International studies suggest that, for some women who experience harm from gambling, loneliness is a major trigger to gamble, along with boredom, depression and a desire to 'escape' or take an emotional 'time out' [Bowden-Jones & George 2015]. Research suggests that gambling allows women who feel alienated to temporarily escape personal and social pressures, cope with anxiety and tension from social or workplace demands, and alleviate feelings of loneliness and depression [Bowden-Jones & George 2015; Davis & Avery 2004]. Studies on gambling venues have found that these environments may be attractive to women as they provide an accessible retreat from life issues and demands from others, and a place to escape and 'get lost in this virtual world' [Thomas et al. 2011, p. 95]. This research may indicate that gambling venues may facilitate the needs or desires of some women to temporarily escape reality and the pressures of life [Thomas et al. 2011].

Conversely, research also suggests that women are motivated to gamble for social reasons [Hing et al. 2016; Pattinson & Parke 2017; Potenza, Maciejewski & Mazure 2006]. For example, studies have demonstrated that women gamble as a social activity and are motivated to gamble in order to be around other people [Potenza, Maciejewski & Mazure 2006]. Gambling environments such as clubs have been described as safe environments for women, which facilitate social interaction, as well as a place to meet up with friends and socialise, which may lead to increased use of EGMs [Nuske, Holdsworth & Breen 2016; Thomas, Allen & Phillips 2009].

Further, Australian research shows that women, and in particular young women, participate in gambling for social reasons, with gambling embedded within their social rituals with friends [McCarthy et al. 2018]. This suggests that for young women, gambling is socially and culturally accepted in Australia and this may normalise their gambling behaviour [McCarthy et al. 2018]. This may be explained by the changing landscape of gambling environments and gambling products in Australia.

Attitudes towards gambling

Researchers have attributed the increase in female gamblers and the change in women's gambling preferences to a new generation of women being exposed to environments embedded within and surrounded by technology [Wardle 2015]. As a result, leisure, recreation and consumption patterns among young women and adolescents have shifted to reflect new technological waves to which the gambling industry has adapted and on which it has capitalised [Wardle 2015]. Some theorise that online gambling platforms may have removed some of the stigma associated with women engaging in betting. For example, Griffiths [2001] suggests that women may prefer online gambling over male-dominated betting outlets due to a perception that they are safer, anonymous and less intimidating.

Further, international research suggests that young adult women are increasingly engaging in online gambling, and at a younger age (often into adolescence) [Griffiths 2001; McCormack, Shorter & Griffiths 2014; Wardle 2015]. This may be due to the way in which technological advances have facilitated access to gambling and have changed what is perceived to be the normal gambling environment [Deans et al. 2016; Wardle 2015]. However, further research is needed to understand how the changing gambling environment may impact women's gambling attitudes, behaviours and product preferences, and how this may vary with different subgroups of women.

Previous research has highlighted the influence of peers and family members on shaping the gambling attitudes and beliefs of adolescent and young women [Chalmers & Willoughby 2006]. Chalmers and Willoughby [2006] found that women were more influenced by peers and parents than men were, and suggested that gambling

behaviours in young women may be reinforced by peers who support their gambling behaviours. Furthermore, young women were more likely to participate in gambling, and gamble greater amounts, when they are gambling with a social group [Hardoon & Derevensky 2001]. This is also consistent with previous studies that highlighted the influence of peers on the normalisation of gambling for women [Trevorrow & Moore 1998]. For example, Trevorrow and Moore [1998] found that gambling was perceived as a socially approved activity for all women in their study, and those experiencing the most harm from gambling were more likely to have friends and family who also attended gambling venues and spent money gambling.

Research suggests that gambling environments may also influence women's gambling attitudes and facilitate their gambling behaviour through the promotion of non-gambling activities within gambling venues. For example, Thomas and Lewis [2012] found that women, in particular, attended clubs for social reasons, including meals and non-gambling entertainment, but ultimately played EGMs once they were at the venue.

Women also described the way in which venues were marketed as a safe, glamorous and social place and described the social benefits of attending clubs, rather than the financial consequences of gambling [Thomas et al. 2012]. This research also found that women, in particular, were incentivised to visit EGM venues by promotions such as 'free meals and free drinks'. They described how these incentives were extremely attractive and created a mutually beneficial relationship between them and the venue operators [Thomas et al. 2012].

Research focusing on other population groups has also found that venues containing gambling products may be becoming normalised within some communities by the presence and promotion of non-gambling activities [Bestman et al. 2016; Bestman et al. 2018]. These promotions may soften community attitudes towards gambling environments and create a culture whereby the venues gain social acceptance, subsequently influencing the consumption of gambling products within the gambling environment [Bestman et al. 2016]. There is also minimal research that explores how other gambling environments, such as casinos and racing events, both of which contain both gambling and non-gambling activities, may influence gambling attitudes and behaviours.

The marketing of unhealthy products towards women

Men and women consume and interact with products in different ways. Marketing theorists highlight the role of gender-specific targeting in product design, marketing and advertising strategies [Arsel, Eräranta & Moisander 2015]. This includes the way women value their connection with others, their desire to belong, and aspirations of success that are often defined through high standards of physical beauty and self-confidence [Barletta 2003; Harris 2004]. Research also suggests that portrayals of women and feminine characteristics in advertisements are effective in generating positive attitudes towards a product or brand when female actors or celebrities display traits that are consistent with the female target audience [Feiereisen, Broderick & Douglas 2009]. Due to the limited availability of information about the impact of gambling marketing on women, it is useful to understand the strategies that other industries, such as tobacco and alcohol, have used to appeal to women.

Research indicates that, when there is a perception that existing male customer bases may have been saturated, the tobacco industry and tobacco brands have actively targeted female audiences to grow their market share, including through promotions that specifically target women [Amos 1990; Schmidt 2012]. Harmful industries have targeted women by creating specific female brand personalities and developing female-friendly products. For example, following a decline in men's smoking behaviour, tobacco marketing focused increasingly on women. To do this, the tobacco industry tailored its products and promotions to women's presumed tastes, positioning cigarettes as a way of satisfying women's needs and values [Amos 1990; Anderson, Glantz & Ling 2005]. This also led to the introduction of new tobacco products specifically for young women [Amos 1990]. Similarly, the alcohol industry developed products specifically for young women. As one example, researchers have expressed increasing concerns around the development of flavoured alcoholic beverages and the specific tactics used to promote

these products by the alcohol industry [Mosher & Johnsson 2005]. Flavoured alcohol beverages, also known as 'alcopops', are particularly appealing to adolescent women, with marketing strategies targeting youth through sweet flavours and product design [Brain, Parker & Carnwath 2000; Sutherland & Willner 1998].

Further, harmful industries have aligned their products with the lifestyle, values and social patterns of women to tap into a new market and make smoking socially accepted among this population group [Ling & Glantz 2002]. For example, the tobacco industry marketed cigarettes using themes known to appeal to young women, such as glamour, independence and entertainment [Knight & Chapman 2004]. Additionally, the tobacco and alcohol industries have spent millions sponsoring sport and entertainment events, including women's tennis, fashion shows, dance competitions and music concerts and festivals, to reach their female demographic, create credibility and socially legitimise smoking and alcohol use among women [Kaufman & Nichter 2010; McDaniel & Malone 2009; Mosher & Johnsson 2005]. Tobacco companies also sponsored fashion events and placed advertisements in fashion magazines to create an association with fashion [Ernster 1986; Knight & Chapman 2004]. The tobacco and alcohol industries have further targeted advertising in environments that are highly attractive to youth, such as dance parties and nightclubs, on youth websites and in movies and television shows, in order to reach new groups of women [Harper & Martin 2002; Mosher & Johnsson 2005]. To further legitimise harmful products among women, tobacco companies used celebrities who would endorse their tobacco products and encourage smoking in women who aspire to be like their favourite celebrities [Kasujee et al. 2016]. Research has identified the impact of celebrity endorsement on women – for example, that brands endorsed by celebrities generate more favourable brand attitudes among consumers [Misra & Beatty 1990] and that women are more influenced by celebrity endorsements than men [Bush, Martin & Bush 2004]. Researchers suggest that the use of celebrities may have contributed to the normalisation of smoking [Kasujee et al. 2016].

Substantial evidence suggests that the launch of advertising campaigns positioning cigarettes alongside the values of women were associated with a major increase in uptake of smoking among young women [Howe 1984; Pierce & Gilpin 1995; Shafey et al. 2004]. This evidence also indicates that smoking uptake in males did not increase following these campaigns. This suggests that the tailoring of products and promotions towards women effectively influenced their smoking behaviours [Pierce & Gilpin 1995]. Similarly, research into the alcohol industry has linked the introduction of 'alcopops' and other pre-mixed drinks to an increase in female adolescent alcohol consumption due to product design and tailored advertising [Metzner & Kraus 2007]. This research highlights the range of industry tactics that can contribute to the normalisation of harmful products and increase positive consumption intentions. However, there is currently a limited understanding of the range of strategies being used by the gambling industry to influence the gambling attitudes and behaviours of Victorian women.

Marketing strategies used by the gambling industry

There is some evidence that the gambling industry has recognised women as a potentially large and untapped market [Corney & Davis 2010]. Gambling environments are more attractive and acceptable to women, with both gambling venues and online sites coming to be marketed as social and inclusive female-friendly environments. For example, UK online casino site PinkCasino has marketed itself as a female brand that appeals to women's 'style and sophistication' [Pink Casino 2018]. Analyses of online bingo sites in the UK show that bingo websites are female-oriented, with female-friendly design and imagery, and content designed to draw women into an online, social environment [Stead et al. 2016]. Bingo websites emphasised that bingo players would be joining an inclusive community that facilitated social interaction and friendship, with these strategies closely aligned with women's motivation to play bingo [Stead et al. 2016].

Research also suggests that women have come to be increasingly targeted by marketing and product design [Burke 2017; Downs 2009; MacNamee 2017]. For example, researchers have reported that in the 1990s, the design of EGMs to appeal to women's interests was hypothesised to have significantly contributed to an increase

in women's EGM participation rates [Hallebone 1999]. More recently, marketing techniques have been used to make gambling products and environments more attractive to women, with gambling companies using glamour and female celebrities to promote their products [Bartel 2017; Downs 2010; O'Brien 2017]. Researchers have suggested that corporate bookmakers in Australia may be starting to develop advertising strategies that appeal both indirectly and directly to women, by featuring women in lead roles in their advertisements and using female celebrities to promote their brands on social media [McCarthy et al. 2018].

There is also evidence that the gambling industry may use a range of tactics to draw women into gambling environments. This is done through the promotion of non-gambling-related activities and the promotion of venues as glamorous and social environments, which may influence women's subsequent gambling practices [Delfabbro 2012]. For example, research suggests that women are often motivated to attend gambling environments for non-gambling reasons. It also suggests that women perceive there to be a trade-off between the benefits of attending gambling venues, including social connection and inclusion, and the money lost on gambling products [Thomas & Lewis 2012]. Other research shows that these types of marketing strategies may also have an impact on adolescent girls, who report wanting to attend these venues and events for social reasons when they are older [Thomas 2014]. However, it is not known what impact this may have on women's attitudes towards specific gambling products or on their future gambling consumption intentions.

Summary

Research highlights the increased gambling participation rates of women and the rise in women experiencing harm as a result of their gambling [Hare 2015]. However, the research that explains women's gambling behaviours and their attitudes towards gambling products is inconsistent, outdated and extremely limited [Delfabbro 2012; McMillen et al. 2004; Wardle 2015]. Research has found that women gamble for a range of reasons, such as in response to boredom and in order to be socially engaged [Davis & Avery 2004; Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012; McCormack, Shorter & Griffiths 2014; Nuske, Holdsworth & Breen 2016; Potenza, Maciejewski & Mazure 2006]. Importantly, research has also highlighted the role advertising plays in influencing the initiation and continuation of using gambling products [Corney & Davis 2010; McCormack, Shorter & Griffiths 2014]. However, little is known about the direct marketing tactics being used by the wagering industry in advertising to appeal to different subgroups, such as young women.

There is some evidence that demonstrates the influence of non-gambling products within gambling environments. However, there has been little research that acknowledges how the promotion and availability of other non-gambling activities within gambling environments, such as at horseracing events, is able to normalise gambling for different subgroups within these contexts.

What we do know is that women's product preferences are changing, with recent studies from around the world indicating an increase in women participating in skill-based forms of gambling [McCarthy et al. 2018; Svensson & Romild 2014; Wardle 2015]. It is hypothesised that the increase in women's participation in gambling, and their changing preferences, are due to the social acceptability and normalisation of gambling environments influencing women's attitudes towards gambling [McCarthy et al. 2018; Thomas & Lewis 2012]. However, to understand the current gambling attitudes and behaviours of young women, it is necessary to fill a gap in knowledge relating to the range of strategies used by gambling companies to appeal to women. The current research aims to address these gaps.

Phase 1: Development of a typology to assess the impact of marketing on young women's gambling attitudes and behaviours

Overview

Phase 1 of this study was guided by the following research question:

RQ1 What are the range of industry promotional tactics that may contribute to shaping women's attitudes and consumption intentions in relation to gambling and other harmful products?

The aim of this phase was to identify the marketing strategies used by harmful product industries (such as tobacco, alcohol and gambling) to appeal to women. The key themes identified in this review were self-image, empowerment, social connection and acceptance, feminisation of the product, strategic associations and strategic marketing. These themes were then used to develop a typology of appeal strategies that may be used in future research studies to identify how the gambling industry may appeal to adolescent (18–24 years old) and young adult (25–34 years old) women.

Stage 1: Strategies used by the alcohol and tobacco industries to appeal to women

Stage 1 of this phase was to identify literature that demonstrated the way marketing strategies from harmful product industries such as tobacco and alcohol have appealed to women. This involved conducting searches of academic databases including Google Scholar to ensure that the grey literature was also included.

While the following results were not intended to be a comprehensive review of the literature, they did contribute significantly towards an understanding of the evidence to develop a typology that could be used to understand how marketing strategies may be used to appeal to women within gambling contexts and environments.

Self-image

There is evidence that tobacco and alcohol companies may use self-image appeal strategies within their marketing campaigns. This approach may be particularly appealing to women, given that research shows that women value and take pride in their appearance and may be more concerned about their physical appearance than men [Barletta 2003; Lee & Workman 2014; Wang & Waller 2006]. Research suggests that standards associated with physical beauty and self-confidence are consistently aligned with marketing promotions aimed at appealing to women [Harris 2004]. These appeal strategies have commonly been identified in tobacco promotions.

Historically, tobacco advertisements appealed to women using appeal strategies that aligned tobacco products with beauty, glamour and attractiveness [Boyd, Boyd & Greenlee 2003; Krupka, Vener & Richmond 1990]. Tobacco companies also closely associated tobacco branding with luxury and elegance [Ernster 1986]. In the 1920s, smoking became linked with fashion and appearance. Smoking advertisements were published in women's fashion

magazines, such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, and included slogans such as: 'Light a Lucky and you'll never miss sweets that make you fat' [Ernster et al. 2000].

Similarly, in the late 1960s, Philip Morris launched Virginia Slims, a cigarette exclusively designed for women, with advertisements that focused on independent, confident women with a contemporary, glamorous fashion style [Amos et al. 2011; Dewhirst et al. 2016]. Other companies soon followed, introducing lipstick-sized cigarette boxes that were often designed by fashion designers [Amos et al. 2011]. For example, tobacco company Ritz launched a brand of designer cigarettes that featured the logos of high-class fashion designers such as Yves St Laurent as a significant strategy to attract female customers [Ernster 1986], with researchers suggesting that these types of campaigns were associated with an increase in smoking uptake among women [Howe 1984; Pierce & Gilpin 1995; Shafey et al. 2004]. Marketing promotions for tobacco brands were highly aligned with fashion events and fashion magazines, which strengthened the association with products and fashion [Ernster 1986; Knight & Chapman 2004]. Barletta [2003] showed that these marketing tactics appealed to women's interest both in fashion and beauty trends and in products and services that contributed to improving their appearance.

Similar strategies have been used by alcohol companies. Alcohol companies, particularly vodka brands, have aimed to align with lifestyles known to appeal to women. This has predominantly been through associations with the fashion industry. For example, the vodka brand Absolut Vodka has sponsored major fashion shows and cross-promoted a lipstick by cosmetics brand Revlon through specially made Absolut-based cocktails served at up-market parties [Musonera & Hemley 2008].

Empowerment

Research suggests that the empowerment of women was a key marketing strategy used by the tobacco industry, aligning products with the women's liberation movement and portraying smoking as a way for women to express independence [Boyd, Boyd & Greenlee 2003; Krupka, Vener & Richmond 1990; Schmidt 2012; Tinkler 2001]. Tobacco companies also used powerful imagery of strong, confident women to associate tobacco products with freedom, equality and independence [Boyd, Boyd & Greenlee 2003]. Appealing to women's desire to be successful was a key marketing strategy used in tobacco campaigns that portrayed women as having glamorous careers and luxurious consumer lifestyles [Harris 2004]. Evidence suggests that the launch of advertising campaigns that positioned cigarettes alongside women's values of success was particularly appealing to young women, with researchers linking these campaigns to an increase in the uptake of smoking in this audience segment [Howe 1984; Pierce & Gilpin 1995; Shafey et al. 2004]. A less discussed aspect of advertising is how the promotion of products such as alcohol using occasion strategies in targeting women may be indicative of women's socioeconomic independence or power [Jung & Hovland 2016]. This is important as women's economic freedom means that they have more opportunities to socialise outside the home and more consumption power for luxury items.

Social connection and acceptance

Social connection and acceptance have been used as a key appeal strategy in tobacco and alcohol marketing strategies. This is based on women's valuing their close relationships with female friends and family members, and their desire for a social life and a sense of social belonging [Barletta 2003]. Lifestyle was a key strategy used by the tobacco industry, which used the social values and patterns of women to tap into new markets and increase the social acceptance of smoking among women [Ling & Glantz 2002]. Studies of cigarette advertising found that most advertisements portrayed smoking as a positive social activity, which contributed to perceptions that smoking was a normal and accepted part of life [Watson et al. 2003]. Jung and Hovland [2016] have argued that alcohol is reflective of women's economic freedom, and that advertising is part of a process of symbolic consumption that

shows changes relating to women's consumption of alcohol. These changes, they argue, demonstrate socially approved patterns of drinking by women that were previously the exclusive domain of men [Jung & Hovland 2016]. Marketing strategies of alcohol companies increasingly show women socialising with colleagues and friends using alcohol products in the same way that men do [Jung & Hovland 2016]. Advertisements showing women often depict vodka, wine, or tequila products rather than beer and whisky, which appear in male-focused advertisements [Jung & Hovland 2016].

Feminisation of the product

Advertisements in which women are portrayed positively, with traits that are consistent with those in the female target audience, have been shown to be effective in generating positive attitudes towards a product or brand [Feiereisen, Broderick & Douglas 2009]. For example, the success of the tobacco product Virginia Slims has been attributed to the alignment of marketing with the values of young women during the 1970s [Toll & Ling 2005]. Past research also highlights the influence of celebrities on consumer behaviours. Research indicates that brands endorsed by celebrities generate more favourable attitudes among consumers [Misra & Beatty 1990] and that women are more influenced by celebrity endorsements than men are [Bush, Martin & Bush 2004]. The tobacco industry used this strategy to appeal to women: research has found that the celebrity endorsement of tobacco products may encourage smoking in women who aspire to be like their favourite celebrities [Kasujee et al. 2016]. Another strategy employed by the tobacco industry was the introduction of new tobacco brands and products specifically for women [Amos 1990; Pierce & Gilpin 1995]. Research suggests that the tailoring of products and promotions towards women created a distinct 'brand personality', which engaged and appealed to women [Toll & Ling 2005]. Similarly, the alcohol industry tried to engage young women, who had previously been alienated by some forms of alcohol marketing that were highly masculine, by designing a new range of products aimed at specifically appealing to women. For example, Nuvo was a luxurious pink alcoholic drink that was presented in packaging similar to a perfume bottle [European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing 2008].

Strategic associations

Women are more inclined than men to favour cause-related marketing and to respond favourably to companies' acts of social responsibility and community citizenship, which benefit the whole community [Barletta 2003]. Altruistic elements play a major role in women's purchasing decisions: research suggests that a company's acts of social responsibility mean a lot to women [Barletta 2003]. This strategy was successfully used by tobacco companies, which built up their reputation and improved their image among women through corporate responsibility initiatives that were seen as charitable [McDaniel & Malone 2009]. For example, Phillip Morris's highly advertised commitment to domestic violence programs improved the company's reputation among women [McDaniel & Malone 2009]. The alcohol industry also uses cause-related marketing tactics to increase its sales and improve its image. Belvedere Vodka, for example, partnered with the (RED) campaign, which funds HIV/AIDS health and community programs in Africa [Jones, Wyatt & Daube 2016]. Each year since 2011, Belvedere launched a limited-edition vodka bottle, from which 50 per cent of profits were donated to (RED). The bottles are advertised in women's magazines, and women are encouraged to 'BUY (RED). GIVE (RED). SAVE LIVES' [Jones, Wyatt & Daube 2016].

Strategic marketing

The tobacco industry engaged female markets through the sponsorship of entertainment events such as fashion shows, dance competitions, music concerts and festivals [Kaufman & Nichter 2010; McDaniel & Malone 2009]. This created credibility and socially legitimised smoking among women [Kaufman & Nichter 2010; McDaniel & Malone 2009]. The tobacco and alcohol industries placed targeted advertising in environments that were highly attractive to young people, such as dance parties and nightclubs, on youth websites and in movies and television shows, in order to reach new groups of women [Harper & Martin 2002; Mosher & Johnsson 2005].

Stage 2: Development of the typology

This review of the literature was then used in Stage 2 of this phase to create a typology. This typology was developed to illustrate the range of marketing strategies and their related techniques that were used to engage women in the consumption of tobacco and alcohol products, and that could potentially be applied to study these strategies for a gambling context. To support the findings from the tobacco and alcohol literature, additional evidence from the gambling literature was then considered. This search found evidence relating to gambling environments. As gambling has been traditionally viewed as a male activity, gambling environments may be promoted as family-friendly and entertainment facilities, which are viewed as socially acceptable and safe places for women to attend [Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012].

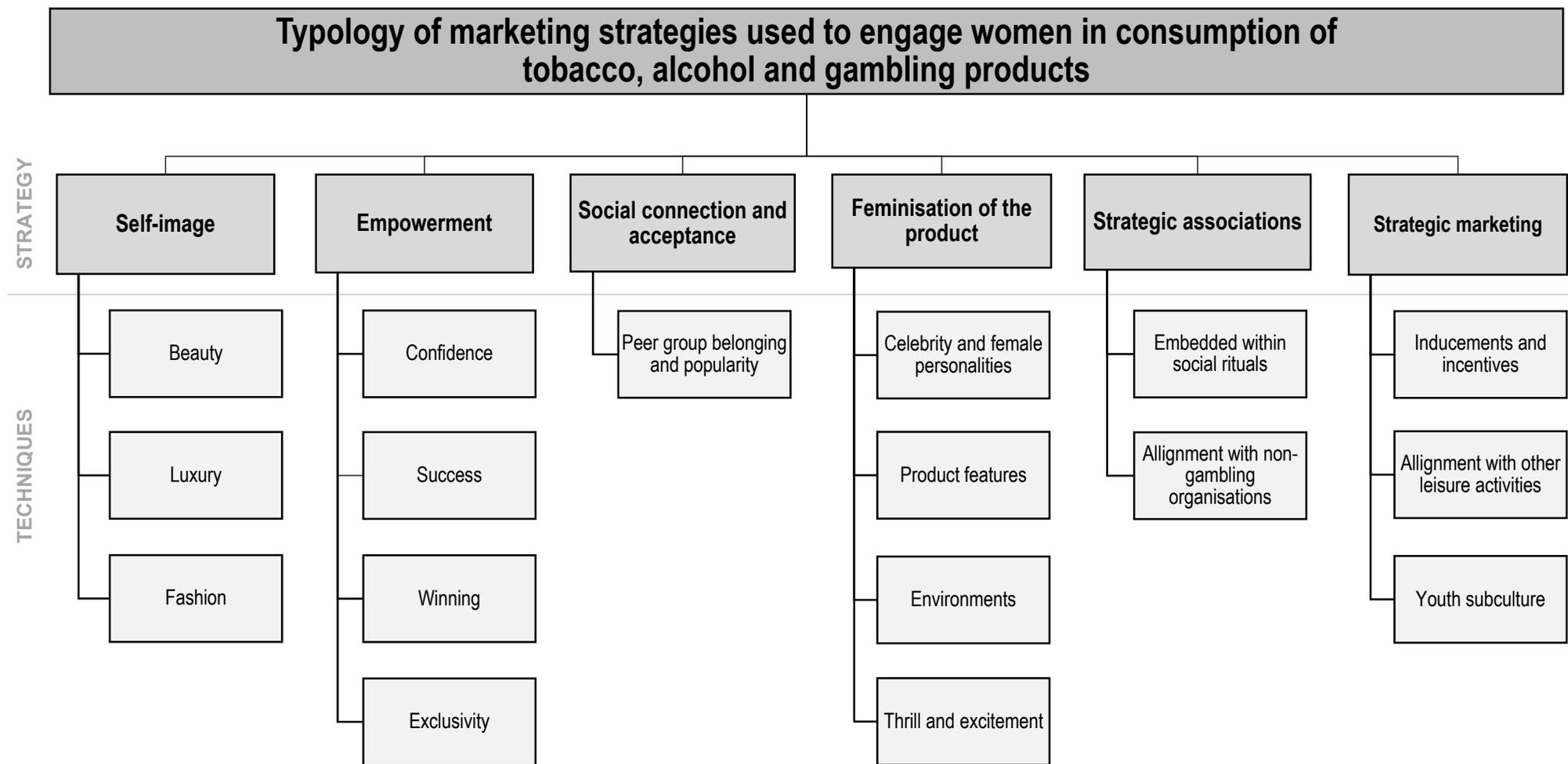
Studies have also identified that gambling advertisements that equate gambling with excitement, while not specific to women, may influence individuals, including adolescents, to gamble [McMullan & Miller 2008; McMullan, Miller & Perrier 2012; Sklar & Derevensky 2011; Thomas 2014]. For example, Sklar and Derevensky [2011] found that, while gambling advertisements were not specifically intended for adolescents, advertisements that contained aspects of excitement and other persuasive strategies were assumed to have strong appeal with under-age audiences. In Australia, research has found that adolescents, including girls, believed that these advertisements made gambling seem fun and exciting [Thomas 2014]. Additionally, online gambling apps have increasingly adjusted their graphics to become more appealing to women by using the colour pink and adapting the language used [MacNamee 2017].

Examples of strategic marketing have also begun to be explored within the gambling literature. Research has found that women are drawn into gambling environments for a range of social reasons, which include the non-gambling activities that are offered at these venues [Thomas & Lewis 2012]. Gambling research has shown that incentives to visit gambling venues, such as entertainment and inexpensive meals, appeal to women and soften community attitudes towards gambling environments by creating a culture in which these venues are socially acceptable [McKay 2005].

Additional techniques were included in the typology after the researchers conducted an initial scan of online marketing strategies aligned with the horseracing industry. While the technique of exclusivity was not identified in the literature on alcohol and tobacco in Stage 1, the authors found examples of exclusivity in the online content. The marketing literature recognises that products and services are used by consumers to identify themselves and transfer desirable attributes of the brand or activity (such as exclusivity) to their own desired self-image. Luxury brands commonly used exclusivity as an attribute to develop aspirations among the target audience to engage with and/or acquire products or services perceived to be desirable [Okonkwo, 2019; Hennings, Wiedmann & Klarmann, 2012]. Examples of exclusivity identified in the context of gambling included promotions for memberships or VIP experiences that referred to women, contained women in imagery, or used content that was directed towards women (for example, pink colouring or images of female-friendly cocktails).

The typology is grouped into six strategies, illustrating the range of marketing appeal strategies that may be used to appeal to women. The typology is separated into two layers: strategies (self-image, empowerment, social connection and acceptance, feminisation of the product, strategic associations and strategic marketing) and techniques (beauty, luxury, fashion, confidence, success, winning, exclusivity, peer group belonging and popularity, celebrity and female personalities, product features, environments, thrill and excitement, embedded within social rituals, alignment with non-gambling organisations, inducements and incentives, alignment with other leisure activities, and youth subculture) (Figure 1). We recommend that this typology is used in future studies, such as content analysis studies, as a starting point for identifying the range of marketing strategies aligned with gambling products and environments that may contain gambling. While the specific aim of this typology is to understand strategies that may specifically appeal to adolescent and young women, it could be developed and adapted for other subgroups of women. This typology is designed to be a starting point, and we acknowledge that the categories may change over time as new products and strategies emerge.

Figure 1: Typology of marketing strategies



Phase 2: Exploring the feminisation of racing

Methods

Study design

Given the development of the typology of marketing strategies used to engage women in the consumption of tobacco, alcohol and gambling products in Phase 1, Phase 2 aimed to use this typology in an environment where there is gambling present and associated with the event. For this study, we focused on how marketing promotions may directly appeal to women, and particularly young women. We chose to explore horseracing as the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation specifically identified that the feminisation of horseracing might be one reason for the increase in gambling rates amongst women [Hare 2015]. Despite this, there have been few studies that have explored how racing may be a sport that is associated with gambling and that may be increasingly appealing to women. Identifying this is important as it may provide information about the need for women to be provided with tailored public education campaigns that seek to minimise the harms associated with gambling, specifically during, and associated with, these events. While this phase was exploratory and aimed to understand the range of promotions for both non-gambling and gambling activities, it aimed to develop a coding framework that could be applied to more detailed and conclusive investigations of the marketing strategies that may appeal to women. Given that an aim of this study was to also understand young women's engagement in horserace wagering, this phase of the study was partly designed to guide the interview schedule and questions used in the qualitative interviews conducted in Phase 3.

The study was guided by the following research question:

RQ2 What are the range of promotional appeal strategies that may indicate that racing is increasingly feminised for women?

Sample description

To explore the marketing strategies aligned with horseracing, we explored the social media sites (website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) of four racing venues and organisations that had hosted horseracing events as part of the Spring Racing Carnival: Country Racing Victoria, Flemington Racecourse, Melbourne Racing Club (Caulfield) and The Valley (Moonee Valley). This carnival was chosen as it runs from September to November each year and contributes over \$700 million to the economy in Victoria [Bagnato 2017].

Data collection and analysis

We used the categories outlined in Table 1 to guide the identification of marketing strategies that may specifically appeal to women. These categories were developed based on the typology and literature review conducted in Phase 1 and on preliminary scans of the websites. However, we also aimed to understand whether there were additional strategies that may appeal to women. Three researchers examined website content between 25 August 2017 (one week before Spring Racing Carnival 2017 began) and 18 November (one week after the last major

event of the Spring Racing Carnival). Once the websites had been explored, researchers then searched social media platforms of companies, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages, during that time period. The researchers met frequently to ensure that there was consistency in the interpretation and use of the typology and that there was an agreement regarding the categorisation of examples. This phase did not intend to be a comprehensive collection of all instances of women-specific gendered marketing appearing on websites and social media sites, but rather was used to explore whether marketing was present that may appeal to women. Data collection occurred until an example was found for each category.

Table 1: Categories and definitions used to guide an analysis of factors contributing to the feminisation of horseracing for women

Marketing strategy	Definition
Self-image	
Beauty	Portrayal of women who have put effort into their personal appearance. Includes use of attractive models.
Luxury	Depiction of women or events aligned with luxury and wealth. Promoted as glamorous, elegant, designer or high class.
Fashion	Fashions on the field, what to wear to the event, tips and trends.
Empowerment	
Confidence	Images of women portrayed as self-empowered and confident.
Success	Portrayal of women achieving success.
Winning	Showcases people who appear to be winning, or who are hopeful to win on a race.
Exclusivity	Promotion of exclusive events or exclusive access within venues.
Social connection and acceptance	
Peer group belonging and popularity	Depiction of women who appeared popular due to the number of people around them, groups of women together.
Feminisation of the product	
Celebrity and female personalities	Someone with celebrity status, or a well-known sporting or television personality, appearing on websites or social media pages.
Product features	The event or product is designed specifically for women.
Environments	Showcases the event as being socially acceptable for women to attend. The promotion of events specifically for women. Event sponsored by a gambling company is promoted.
Thrill and excitement	Women experiencing the thrill and excitement associated with events.
Strategic associations	
Embedded within social rituals	Events and social activities that may appeal to women.
Alignment with non-gambling organisations	Corporate responsibility initiatives, charity work, donations alignment with female organisations and groups.
Strategic marketing	
Inducements and incentives	Female-friendly promotions or incentives to gamble or incentives to attend gambling environments.
Alignment with other leisure activities	Female-friendly non-gambling-related leisure activities that occurred at racing venues.
Youth subculture	Associating racing events with current trends that appeal to young people.

Results

Self-image

Beauty

The women presented in racing promotions were beautiful, well dressed and glamorous. Venue websites heavily featured women dressed up for racing events. For example, Australian models were used to promote the launch of the Spring Racing Carnival event [Spring Racing Carnival 2017g]. Another example showed two women beautifully dressed in the promotion of the 2017 Sofitel Ladies Day at the beginning of the Spring Racing Carnival [Flemington Racecourse 2017i].

Luxury

The next marketing technique aligned racing events with luxury and wealth. This technique was used through specific areas of racing day events, such as the Moët & Chandon Lawn, a venue promoting a high-end champagne brand. The Instagram page for the Melbourne Racing Club stated: 'The Moët & Chandon Lawn is perfect for those who want to indulge in a more upmarket race day experience at the centre of all the colour, fashion and heart-stopping racing action ...' [Melbourne Racing Club 2017j]. Similarly, the launch of the Caulfield Cup was associated with luxury car brand BMW [Melbourne Racing Club 2017o].

Fashion

The Spring Racing Carnival was commonly promoted in online content as a fashion-focused event. This included fashion shows, the provision of fashion tips and advice through blogs, and women and men participating in 'fashion on the field' competitions [Spring Racing Carnival 2017b, 2017d, 2017e]. One example of this appeared on the Spring Racing Carnival Facebook page with an uploaded video captioned:

'This #SpringCarnival fashion is set to have the most fun it's had in over a decade! 2017 Spring Racing Carnival Fashion Stylist Lana Wilkinson shares her top tips and trends to get you races-ready! #TheRacesAreCalling'.

The video went on to state: 'This season is definitely the season to have fun with your fashion. Think big. More is more. Experiment with your style – this is the season to do it. The races are calling' [Spring Racing Carnival 2017b, at 0.57 min].

Empowerment

Confidence

Across racing platforms, images and text relating to confident women in race settings or associated with racing events were identified. For example, the Melbourne Racing Club 2017 Caulfield Cup campaign featured the slogan 'Break with convention' [Melbourne Racing Club 2017g]. This campaign, seen across social media platforms (websites, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) featured a confident woman dressed for the races with a man holding

onto each arm [Melbourne Racing Club 2017b]. The campaign also featured the message 'It's just not racing' [Melbourne Racing Club 2017b], which was used as a hashtag across social media platforms.

Success

Examples of non-monetary success among women were also identified. Often this strategy worked by portraying successful women in the racing industry, which is typically male-dominated. This included the promotion of the 2015 Melbourne Cup–winning female jockey, both through attendances at racing social events, demonstrating social success [Mooney Valley Racing Club 2017d], and her achievements relating to on-track performance, which demonstrates success in her career [Mooney Valley Racing Club 2017c]. Another example of women excelling in the racing industry was found on the Mooney Valley Instagram page, where an image from 28 August 2017 depicts a group of women riders in front of the Mooney Valley Ladbrokes finish line (Ladbrokes is a gambling company), with the caption:

'Great experience for young riders at #TheValley on Saturday as part of the #RideToTime program #LoveTheValley' [Mooney Valley Racing Club 2017b].

Winning

A few examples related directly to winning. These included an image of women cheering on a horse, anticipating a win [Spring Racing Carnival 2017a] and the promotion of winning by female celebrities [Melbourne Racing Club 2017d]. Another reference to winning was found on the Cox Plate website on a promotion for the 'Victory Domain', a food, beverage and entertainment package. This page included a video of the event that contained well-dressed women drinking what appeared to be champagne and cheering for the race [Melbourne Racing Club 2017n]. Social media pages also depicted betting wins by an Australian actress, jumping with friends as the horse on which she had placed a bet won a race [Melbourne Racing Club 2017d].

Exclusivity

Exclusivity was evident through the promotion of member-specific racing events or promotions aligned with racing events. For example, during the Flemington Racecourse 'Sofitel Ladies Day', specialty alcoholic drinks were available only for Victorian Racing Club Members [Flemington Racecourse and Victoria Racing Club 2017c]. Another example was seen on the Facebook page for the Spring Racing Carnival, which featured a range of exclusive events aligned with race days, such as an event held at hotel QT, with the following post:

'Today Melbourne Racing Club launched the 2017 BMW #CaulfieldCupCarnival at QT Melbourne. Can't wait for Ladbrokes Caulfield Guineas this Saturday! #TheRacesAreCalling' [Spring Racing Carnival 2017h].

Social connection and acceptance

Peer group belonging and popularity

Racing promotions contained images of peer groups consisting of women and mixed-gender peer groups. For example, Melbourne Racing Club posted a photo on Instagram containing a group of women holding wine and champagne flutes and smiling [Melbourne Racing Club 2017e], while another Caulfield Cup promotion depicted

women with champagne and men with beer on the edge of the racetrack together [Melbourne Racing Club 2017c]. One Instagram post used the colloquial term 'squad' to refer to women peer groups attending racing events: 'Are you #CoxPlate Day squad ready yet?' [Mooney Valley Racing Club 2017a].

Feminisation of the product

Celebrity and female personalities

Promotions for racing events commonly featured celebrities. Venues used social media to demonstrate the presence of individuals who were associated with racing events and the popularity of these individuals. For example, Flemington Racecourse posted photos containing Australian models and media identities at the Myer Spring Fashion Lunch [Flemington Racecourse 2017e]. This also included the promotion of Australian celebrity models during the racing carnival and spring racing fashion shows [Spring Racing Carnival 2017f, 2017i]. Other pages referred to celebrities travelling from the United States to attend the Caulfield Cup as special guests [Melbourne Racing Club 2017m].

The Spring Racing Carnival had a range of women who were designated as ambassadors for the overall carnival and associated with specific race events. These included Australian models and fashion designers in the following roles: Moët & Chandon Lawn Ambassador at the 2017 BMW Caulfield Cup Carnival, Flemington Ambassador [MRC Staff 2017], Myer Fashions on the Field Ambassador [VRC Staff 2017], Spring Carnival Fashion Stylist [Spring Racing Carnival 2017b] and 'popular models and media identities' as Bet365 Geelong Cup Ambassadors [CRV Staff 2017].

Product features

There were examples of women's racing days such as the Sofitel Girls Day Out [Flemington Racecourse 2017i], Kennedy Oaks Day, also known as Ladies Day [Flemington Racecourse 2017f], and country racing days such as Traralgon Ladies Day Races and Ballarat Turf Club Ladies Day [Country Racing 2017b].

Environments

Evidence was identified of the feminisation of racing environments through the promotion of sponsored brands that may appeal to women. These promotions embedded women's brands into the racing environments. Examples included the 'Catanachs Jewellers Blue Sapphire Stakes Day', which promoted cocktails prepared by bartenders from a restaurant in Hollywood [Melbourne Racing Club 2017i], the Cosmo Australia 'Glam Pit' – 'to perfect your look with nails, lip and perfume touch-ups all day long' [Flemington Racecourse 2017g] – and the Lexus Birdcage, which promoted pink ice cream cones [Spring Racing Carnival 2017c].

Thrill and excitement

Racing content contained examples of women experiencing the thrill and excitement associated with horseracing and events. One example was a video from the Flemington Racecourse website depicting a woman jumping up and down while horses are racing down the track [Flemington Racecourse 2017h]. Another example contains an image of two women cheering on the sidelines of the racetrack as the horses run by [Melbourne Racing Club 2017k].

Strategic associations

Embedded within social rituals

In addition to the social rituals described in the previous techniques, online content aligned racing events with women-focused fashion events including the 'undisputed institution of the Melbourne Cup Carnival', Fashion on the Field, which 'has established its place as Australia's largest and most prestigious outdoor fashion event' [Flemington Racecourse 2017a]. Racing events were aligned with other social activities not specific to women on racing web pages. These included hens' and bucks' nights held by Country Racing Victoria [Country Racing 2017a], children and family marketed Friday Night Lights at Mooney Valley Racing Club [2017e], and the Emirates Melbourne Cup Parade, which included 'free entertainment at Federation Square and a final opportunity to see and hear live interviews with the Emirates Melbourne Cup final field before the race that stops a nation!' [Flemington Racecourse 2017c].

Alignment with non-gambling organisations and cause marketing

Evidence of the alignment of the promotion of non-gambling companies found on racing websites included the alignment with jewellers [Melbourne Racing Club 2017i] and women's magazines [Flemington Racecourse 2017g] identified previously.

Racing websites also contained examples of alignment with women's organisation and groups. One example of this was the promotion of women-focused charity organisations, such as through donations to breast cancer organisations [Mooney Valley Racing Club 2017f] and charity racing events that supported a range of community-based organisations [Melbourne Racing Club 2017a].

Strategic marketing

Inducements and incentives

Examples of race day promotions were identified that contained incentives to encourage women's attendance through activities such as specific cocktails or events (such as a pop-up millinery) [Flemington Racecourse 2017i; Flemington Racecourse and Victoria Racing Club 2017c]. One promotion for the Memsie Stakes was a tweet by the Melbourne Racing Club containing an image of the Caulfield Cup and the following text:

'Get your pic snapped with the 2017 BMW #CaulfieldCup in the #TanquerayLawn today – perfect place to grab a gin cocktail too #MemsieStakes' [Melbourne Racing Club 2017f].

Another example was a competition run with a non-racing group that included the opportunity to win 'the ultimate girls' day (and night) out' associated with the Caulfield Cup, which included four tickets to the race event, 'a private styling session' and overnight accommodation [Melbourne Racing Club 2017i].

Alignment with other leisure activities

Racing was highly aligned with other leisure activities. This included alignment with events such as fashion parades [Spring Racing Carnival 2017d], lunches [Ladbroke's Cox Plate Carnival 2017] and high teas [Flemington Racecourse 2017d]. These often involved well-dressed women wearing flower crowns or fascinators, engaging in activities at the races (for an example, see Flemington Racecourse [2017d]). For example, race days were

promoted as sophisticated events that were not solely focused on racing. Another example was found, relating to the Cox Plate race event, which promoted the Ladies Lunch with the following text:

'If you ever needed an excuse to dress up prior to the Ladbrokes Cox Plate Carnival, ladies this is it! Glam up for one of Spring Racing's biggest and most popular luncheons on course, just two days out from all the action. Be entertained from Australia's leading performers and be delivered all the latest trends of the season at our exclusive fashion parade. Guests will be mingling amongst the finest company with racing royalty, key female figures and media personalities amongst our prestigious guest list ...' [Ladbrokes Cox Plate Carnival 2017].

It is important to note the extent to which racing promotions were associated with alcohol. This included images of alcoholic cocktails in the venue, for example, next to the Caulfield Cup [Melbourne Racing Club 2017f]. Marketing slogans within racing venues such as 'where trendy street food meets your local pub' were also identified [Melbourne Racing Club 2017h].

Youth subculture

A number of examples were found on racing websites that used music artists and performers at race events that may appeal to younger consumers. Events such as the AAMI Victoria Derby Day held at Flemington, included '[music] festival favourite', 22-year-old performer Tkay Maida [Flemington Racecourse and Victoria Racing Club 2017b], and 'Britpop influenced' DMA's [Flemington Racecourse and Victoria Racing Club 2017a], whose 'current single is smashing through the charts' [Flemington Racecourse 2017b]. Racing web pages also featured promotions for family days, such as the Ladbrokes Friday Night Lights at Mooney Valley, which contained family activities [Mooney Valley Racing Club 2017e] and were marketed towards parents with young children.

Summary

This phase of the study aimed to use the typology developed in Phase 1 in a case study of marketing for and during the Victorian Spring Racing Carnival. The findings demonstrate that there were a range of distinct marketing strategies and events within racing carnivals that may appeal to women, and we were able to identify examples for each of the categories within our coding framework. This typology may be useful for other researchers who wish to explore the feminisation of racing, and could be used as an effective mapping and monitoring tool. The literature review from Phase 1 demonstrates the influence of marketing strategies on the behaviour of women. While we did not specifically seek to understand the link between these events and the impact on gambling attitudes and behaviours, the findings highlight that there is a need to understand how these strategies may potentially influence young women's gambling and alcohol behaviours. We would recommend that future research consider whether or not the feminisation of racing may have an indirect (or a direct) influence on the gambling attitudes and behaviours of young women and their potential experiences of harm. In particular, such studies should also seek to explore whether there are links between alcohol consumption and gambling behaviours. Finally, the information identified in this study provides evidence that racing may increasingly appeal to women. There is a need for public education messages about both gambling and alcohol that may need to be targeted specifically to younger women during these events.

Phase 3: Qualitative interviews with older adolescent and young people (18–24 years old) and young women (25–34 years old) who gamble

Methods

Study design

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with young women aged 18–34 years old, with an objective of providing detailed qualitative insights into the socio-cultural and industry factors that may shape gambling beliefs and consumption intentions and behaviours. The findings from Phase 2 and the range of marketing strategies that were found to be appealing to young women within the Spring Racing Carnival guided the development of some of the interview themes.

This study was guided by the following overarching research question and three sub-questions:

RQ3 What are the range of key determinants that may contribute to shaping the gambling attitudes and consumption behaviours of adolescent (18–24 years old) and young women (25–34 years old)?

- a What are the range of key determinants that may be shaping the gambling attitudes and consumption intentions, and low- and moderate-risk gambling behaviours, in young women?*
- b Are there specific social or gambling contexts that may contribute to young women's gambling attitudes and consumption intentions/behaviours?*
- c Do young women engage in gambling as a 'secondary' activity within gambling environments?*

Recruitment

Ethics approval was received from the University Human Research Ethics Committee. Convenience and theoretical sampling techniques were used to recruit women aged between 18 and 34 years [Hansen 2006]. The World Health Organisation defines 'Adolescents' as individuals in the 10–19 years age group and 'Youth' as the 15–24 years age group, while 'Young People' covers the age range 10–24 years [World Health Organisation 2019].

Participants eligible for the study were required to be living in Australia and to have previously gambled at least once in the last 12 months. This study aimed initially to recruit 30 women to participate in the study. However, due to a significant diversity in women's experience, sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached, resulting in a sample size of 45 women.

A convenience sample of participants was originally recruited from a range of sources, including posters advertising the study placed around Deakin University, messages to students at Deakin University, through national media (including radio and online articles) and through a community organisation in regional Victoria. Associate Professor Samantha Thomas also spoke on national radio about women's gambling where the study information was provided to listeners. Additionally, Deakin University produced a press release about the study, inviting anyone

interested in participating to contact the research team. This press release was used in several media articles that contained information about the study.

It should be noted that women were extremely difficult to recruit for this study. Despite the extensive publicity and efforts to reach the relevant groups, it took approximately a year to recruit the 45 women. This may signal that gambling is still a highly stigmatised activity for young women. Further thought will be needed by researchers and public health practitioners to identify strategies to engage this group of women.

The diversity of women's experiences also meant that the sample had to be increased by 50 per cent, with another 15 participants recruited to the sample to ensure that we adequately represented adolescent and young women with a range of experiences in relation to gambling. One of the factors that was most surprising in recruitment was the diversity of types of gambling that women engaged in, and the different pathways to different forms of gambling. While we anticipated from the literature that most women would engage in horseracing or EGMs as their main form of gambling, women also engaged in sports betting, online gambling, casino gambling and lottery/instant lottery gambling. As the study progressed, we deliberately focused on recruiting women who engaged in particular forms of gambling, such as sports betting or casino gambling, to ensure that we had represented women with a range of experiences with different gambling products.

Data collection and analysis

Three researchers conducted qualitative interviews with 45 women aged 18–34 years old. Interviews were conducted between December 2017 and November 2018 and ranged in length from 38 to 75 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of participants. Researchers took notes while conducting the interviews. The interview schedule included a range of open-ended questions that examined the following themes:

- Theme 1: Gambling product use (including frequency of use and the environments where women gambled)
- Theme 2: Gambling behaviours (including gambling motivations, who they gambled with and the factors that influenced their gambling)
- Theme 3: Early experiences of gambling (including gambling of family members growing up and women's first experiences of gambling before and after turning 18)
- Theme 4: Gambling in Australia (including the normalisation and cultural acceptance of gambling)
- Theme 5: Gambling promotions (including the recall of gambling companies and advertisements and how promotions may influence gambling attitudes)
- Theme 6: Harm prevention (including strategies in reducing gambling-related harm for young women).

Participants were also asked to answer questions relating to their demographics and the questions from the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) to measure problem gambling risk [Ferris & Wynne 2001]. However, it is important to note that the PGSI was used as just one of many characteristics that we explored to describe women's gambling behaviours.

Interviews were audio-taped with permission and were then transcribed by a professional transcription company. Researchers used QSR NVivo (QSR International version 10.2) to manage the data. Basic descriptive statistics were used to analyse socio-demographic and gambling data collected. Postcodes were used to identify Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas score for Relative Disadvantage (SEIFA), a postcode level measure between 1 and 10, where 1 is the most disadvantaged and 10 is the least disadvantaged [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013]. These SEIFA scores were then collapsed into three categories representing low (scores 1–3), medium (scores 4–7) and high (scores 8–10) areas. To measure for problem gambling risk, researchers used the PGSI, a nine-item measure of problematic gambling [Ferris & Wynne 2001]. PGSI scores were calculated and grouped into four

categories: non-problem gambling (PGSI scores equal to 0), low-risk gambling (PGSI scores between 1 and 2), moderate-risk gambling (PGSI scores between 3 and 7), or problem gambling (PGSI scores between 8 and 27).

This research employed a social constructionist approach to data collection and analysis [Charmaz 2006]. Consistent with this qualitative approach, interviews were read and analysed in blocks of five as they were conducted. Where new themes emerged, the interview schedule was amended to further examine these concepts. While data was collected, the research team met regularly to discuss the data and themes that emerged, how this related to the existing literature base and what new information was emerging from the data. Initial codes were rendered into larger conceptual categories, which later formed the key themes of the study. The social constructionist approach allowed researchers to explore the individual experiences of participants and how they view and interpret their situations [Charmaz 2006]. Further, this approach enabled researchers to uncover the complexities of young women's gambling and generate theory from this data [Charmaz 2006]. This process also led to specific calls for different types of participants.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics of the women in the study can be found in Table 2. Participants had a mean age of 24.3 years (SD 4.1). The majority of participants indicated they were studying at university, either part-time or full-time (n=29, 64.5 per cent). One-fifth of participants worked full-time (n=9, 20.0 per cent), with just over half of participants employed casually or in part-time work (n=24, 53.4 per cent), nine women said they were full-time students who did not work, and two participants (4.4 per cent) were not currently working or studying.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristic	n (per cent)
Age	
18–23	22 (48.9)
24–29	18 (40.0)
30–34	5 (11.1)
Education level	
Year 10	1 (2.2)
Year 12	20 (44.4)
Certificate I, II, III, IV	2 (4.4)
Diploma/Advanced	4 (8.9)
Bachelor's degree	14 (31.1)
Postgraduate	4 (8.9)
SEIFA	
Low (1–3)	4 (8.9)
Medium (4–7)	14 (31.1)
High (8–10)	27 (60.0)

Gambling behaviours

The majority of participants were in the low and moderate gambling risk categories. Just under half scored as low-risk on the PGSI (n=22, 48.9 per cent), with over one-fifth of women scoring as at moderate risk (n=12, 26.7 per cent) of experiencing gambling harm. Two women scored as problem gamblers (n=2, 4.4 per cent) and nine women scored as non-problem gamblers (n=9, 20.0 per cent).

Gambling characteristics of the participants are provided in Table 3. After lotteries and instant lotteries (scratchies) (n=33, 73.3 per cent), the most popular form of gambling for women in this study was betting on horses, with almost two-thirds reporting having bet on horses in the previous 12 months (n=29, 64.5 per cent). Most of these women reported betting on horses less than once a month (n=25, 55.6 per cent), and many suggested they only bet on horses during the Spring Racing Carnival. The majority (86.2 per cent, n=25) of women who bet on horses were at low or moderate risk of experiencing gambling-related harm.

The form of gambling women most frequently engaged in, after lotteries and instant lotteries (n= 12, 26.7 per cent), was sports betting, with one-fifth of women (n=10, 22.3 per cent) reporting they bet on sports at least once a month. Of those who bet on sports regularly (once a month or more), 90.0 per cent (n=9) were at risk of experiencing some level of gambling-related harm. The majority of women reported gambling on three or more different gambling activities in the previous 12 months (n=29, 64.4 per cent). Of the 29 women who were gambling on three or more products, 93.1 per cent (n=27) were at risk of experiencing some level of gambling-related harm.

Table 3: Gambling characteristics

	Non-problem gambling n=9 (20.0)	Low-risk gambling n=22 (48.9)	Moderate-risk gambling n=12 (26.7)	Problem gambling n=2 (4.4)	Total n=45 (100.0)
Betting on horses					
Never	5 (55.6)	6 (27.3)	3 (25.0)	2 (100.0)	16 (35.6)
Less than once a month	4 (44.4)	14 (63.6)	7 (58.3)	0 (0.0)	25 (55.6)
Once a month or more	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	2 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (8.9)
Gambling on EGMs					
Never	6 (66.7)	7 (31.8)	5 (41.7)	1 (50.0)	19 (42.2)
Less than once a month	3 (33.3)	13 (59.1)	6 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	22 (48.9)
Once a month or more	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	1 (8.3)	1 (50.0)	4 (8.9)
Betting on sports					
Never	6 (66.7)	7 (31.8)	4 (33.3)	2 (100.0)	19 (42.2)
Less than once a month	2 (22.2)	10 (45.5)	4 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	16 (35.6)
Once a month or more	1 (11.1)	5 (22.7)	4 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	10 (22.3)
Gambling at the casino					
Never	6 (66.7)	10 (45.5)	5 (41.7)	2 (100.0)	23 (51.1)
Less than once a month	2 (22.2)	11 (50.0)	6 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (42.2)
Once a month or more	1 (11.1)	1 (4.5)	1 (8.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.7)

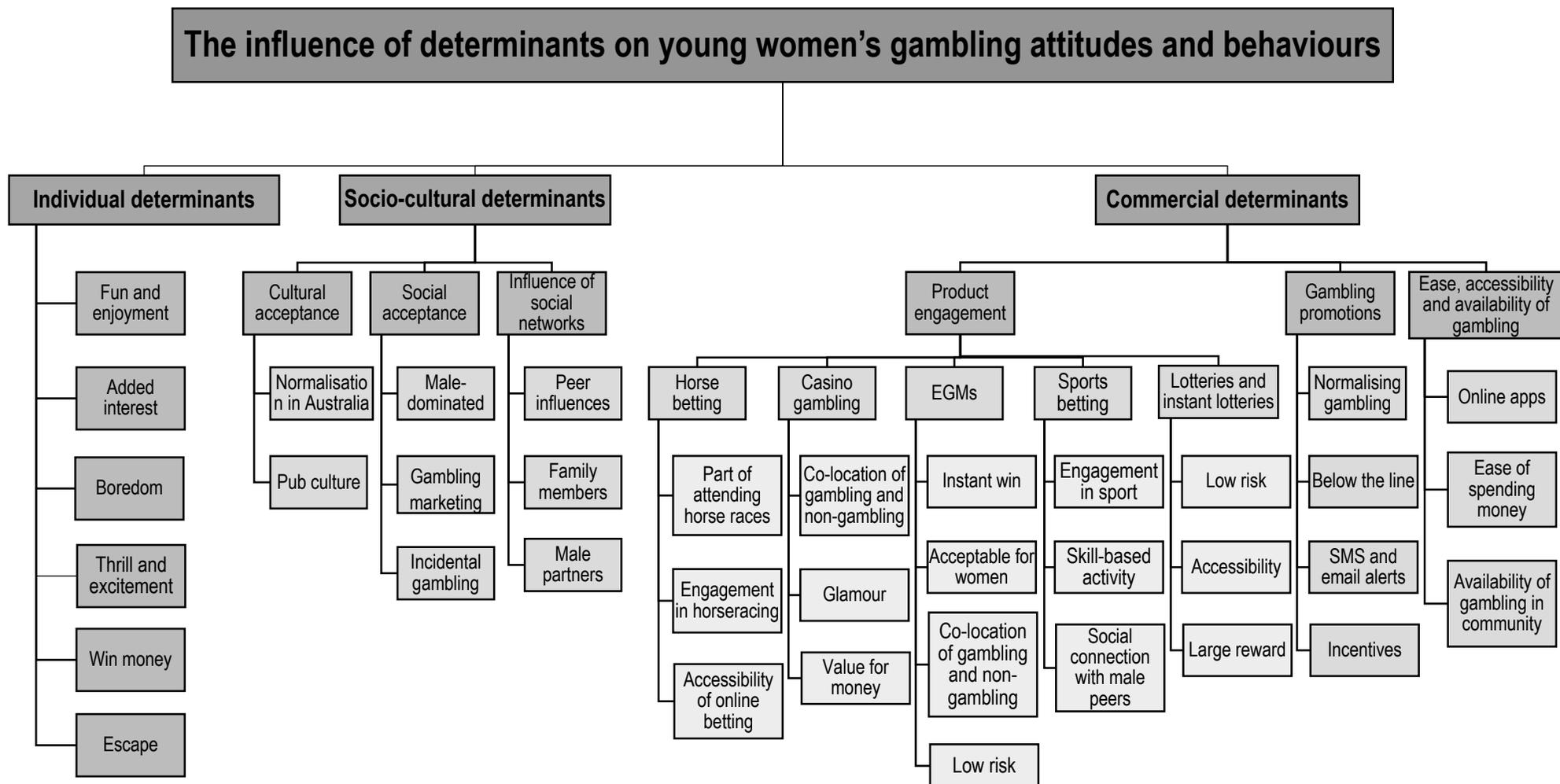
	Non-problem gambling n=9 (20.0)	Low-risk gambling n=22 (48.9)	Moderate-risk gambling n=12 (26.7)	Problem gambling n=2 (4.4)	Total n=45 (100.0)
Using lotteries or instant lotteries (scratchies)					
Never	4 (44.4)	5 (22.7)	2 (16.7)	1 (50.0)	12 (26.7)
Less than once a month	4 (44.4)	9 (40.9)	7 (58.3)	1 (50.0)	21 (46.7)
Once a month or more	1 (11.1)	8 (36.4)	3 (6.7)	0 (0.0)	12 (26.7)
Gambling on other					
Never	8 (88.9)	16 (72.7)	10 (83.3)	1 (50.0)	35 (77.8)
Less than once a month	1 (11.1)	5 (22.7)	2 (16.7)	0 (0.0)	8 (17.8)
Once a month or more	0 (0.0)	1 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	2 (4.4)
Number of products used at least once in last 12 months					
1	2 (22.2)	1 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (50.0)	4 (8.9)
2	5 (55.6)	3 (13.6)	3 (25.0)	1 (50.0)	12 (26.7)
3 or more	2 (22.2)	18 (81.8)	9 (75.0)	0 (0.0)	29 (64.4)

Women's gambling behaviours were sometimes difficult to quantify by participants owing to their seasonal betting frequency. For example, some women described only engaging in gambling during the Spring Racing Carnival, so the overall frequency of horse betting was less than once a month. However, some women described attending several race days during these periods, at which they would place bets throughout the day. This included one woman who attended 'four race meets a year', at which she would place 'seven bets, like, one for each race'. Another woman described how, during the AFL season, she would place a bet 'maybe once a week, more like once a fortnight', however 'around Spring Carnival closer to three or four times a week. But, the rest of the year, not so much'.

The influence of individual, socio-cultural and commercial determinants on young women's gambling attitudes and consumption intentions and behaviours

A range of individual, socio-cultural and commercial factors influenced women's gambling attitudes and consumption intentions and behaviours. It should be noted, however, that each of these factors cannot be considered on its own; rather, many factors overlap and are interconnected. Figure 2 captures the range of themes and subthemes that emerged from the interviews, and how these determinants were interconnected to influence women's gambling attitudes and behaviours.

Figure 2: The influence of determinants on young women's gambling attitudes and behaviours



Individual determinants of gambling behaviour

1 Fun and to enjoy themselves

First, women were motivated and influenced to gamble by a variety of different individual factors. Women gambled to have fun and to enjoy themselves. To these women, their gambling was justified as 'harmless' fun. Their rationale for this was that they were not spending a lot of money, could afford to gamble, spent limited time gambling and were not gambling alone. Additionally, these women perceived gambling as a recreational pastime where their enjoyment was not determined by the outcome. One woman thought that having a good time was worth spending and potentially losing money on gambling, just to be part of the experience:

'It was out of character for me to go and spend \$100 on something I couldn't guarantee I'd make anything off. But I knew I wanted that fun, different, new experience.' – 24 years old, low-risk gambler

2 Create added interest in an activity

Second, a few women gambled to create an added interest in an activity. Women who watched sport commonly described this. Some women did not identify as sports fans; however, their friends often watched sport together. Women then placed bets on the game in order to find watching sport more interesting. While a few women liked watching sport, they thought that by placing a bet there was greater reason to be engaged in the activity.

'I enjoy watching the football but I'm not a huge fan, like I'm not one of the crazy fans. But it's more exciting to watch if I do have a bet on it.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

3 Relieve boredom

Third, women gambled as a way to relieve boredom in their lives. For example, some women gambled if they had 'nothing else to do'. Some participants perceived that boredom could be relieved by checking gambling apps; this which had been increased by the ability to access different gambling opportunities through apps on mobile devices. For example, one woman said that when she was bored on a Saturday she would 'have a quick look through [gambling apps] and see what's going on'. Additionally, women described gambling to relieve boredom in social settings. This was commonly described by women who decided to join in with friends or partners when they were gambling so that they were not bored. For example, one woman described gambling on EGMs because her boyfriend wanted to:

'Yeah I don't want to sit here being bored, so I might as well join in.' – 26 years old, low-risk gambler

4 Thrill or excitement

Women also gambled for the thrill or excitement of the gambling activity and the prospect of winning, stating that winning gave them an adrenaline rush and made them feel good.

'Yeah I think it's just how good it feels to win. It's just that kind of adrenaline that you get from winning, and winning that money. It doesn't matter how much you lose, because that always gets cancelled out by when you have a win.' – 34 years old, low-risk gambler

5 Win money

Some women were specifically motivated to gamble in order to win money. This narrative was particularly common among students who had limited funds and were attracted to gambling to make money without having to work while studying. These women believed gambling could add 'a couple of extra dollars in your pocket' in an easy and accessible way.

'Depends how poor I am at the time. I think last time I probably went in because I was like, oh, this would be great if I won some money.' – 26 years old, non-problem gambler

While some women gambled to earn money, other women envisaged what they could do with winnings before they gambled. Some women spoke about gambling every week in case their numbers came up, or only betting on lotteries with large jackpots. One woman bought lottery tickets as the thought of what she could win was enough to improve her mood:

'Well I guess I can do it on my computer which is nice, and I've never really seen myself as a gambler, but like I don't know, I just like really like TattsLotto, because I really like to imagine winning, so I can just like buy my ticket and then like fantasise all week which is like really fun.'
– 23 years old, moderate-risk gambler

6 Escape or mitigate other stressful issues

Finally, a few women discussed gambling as a way in which they could escape or mitigate other stressful issues in their lives. For example, one participant stated that she gambled on EGMs online because it provided her with a break from her household responsibilities, including caring for her husband and children. Recounting a situation in which she nearly lost all of her money, she described the attraction to online gambling sites as one of the only things she did for herself in her life, but was conflicted by the guilt she felt, thinking that she had jeopardised her children's wellbeing by gambling:

'I still beat myself up. It's been a couple of weeks now and I still beat myself up for it. Yes, I had a big win but what if I didn't? I always go back to the "what if this had happened and what would I have done" so I think personally I'll never just do it like that. If I do it again I'll make sure I really put – well I hope I'd make sure I only put so much in and I had so much there if the kids needed anything and – it's just hard for me because I never do anything for myself. It's always about the kids or the hubby. I go without all the time. So I think when I played the pokies online I think it was more screw everyone else, I'm going to do this for me sort of thing.' – 28 years old, problem gambler

Escaping from everyday life was a common theme for some women. One participant described that she used to go to the casino alone because 'no one would disturb you', while another emphasised that winning money from gambling would make them feel better about themselves:

'I don't ever want to be a huge gambler but when I get so low that nothing else matters, it's like the other week for instance I was feeling really, really, really down in myself so I guess that's another reason I decided to just give it a shot and see what happens. Then I won big and I was like "Well I feel so much better about myself now".' – 28 years old, problem gambler

The socio-cultural environment

Women's gambling practices were influenced by a range of socio-cultural influences and contexts. This included the cultural and social acceptance of gambling and gambling environments in Australia, as well as the influence of their social networks.

1 The cultural acceptance and normalisation of gambling in Australia

Most women in the study agreed that gambling was culturally accepted in Australia. Women perceived that gambling was embedded into Australian culture and that 'it's just part of everyday life'. Women perceived that gambling in Australia was framed as a 'social' and 'fun' activity and that gambling was part of the Australian experience. They described that the link between gambling and social events contributed to creating a gambling culture in the state of Victoria and more broadly in Australia. Activities such as the Melbourne Cup, watching sport, or going to a pub with friends where gambling also occurred, made gambling more accepted. Some women described that gambling in these contexts became 'part of being social'. Several participants who were recent arrivals to Australia also reiterated this concept. For example, one international student described attending race events when she came to Australia as a way of experiencing the local culture in Melbourne:

'We thought we needed to do something as the locals do just to experience the culture ... [at the races] we were kind of influenced and we thought, "maybe we'll try".' – 26 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Another international student said she did not expect gambling to be such a big part of the Australian culture:

'When I did my research, I don't think I researched on this part of Australia, this culture of Australia. Actually, I didn't realise that it was legal to gamble. I thought it was illegal. So it was a little bit of a shock, yeah. But you absorb it because people have been doing it so it's a part of their culture ...' – 27 years old, low-risk gambler

Another factor that contributed to the cultural acceptance of gambling was the Australian pub culture. Participants believed that attending pubs was a traditional leisure activity for Australians and their families, which reinforced the acceptance of the drinking and gambling that occurred in these venues. Some described the risks associated with having gambling within settings where there was alcohol, commenting on how easy it was for individuals to get pulled into gambling with their peer groups once they were in these venues.

'Probably just the pub culture, I tend to think it's mainly male, but I think it is kind of unavoidable sometimes when you're in a pub and especially like a sports bar when it's kind of all around you, a lot of people get roped in.' – 22 years old, low-risk gambler

2 The social acceptability of gambling

Many women perceived that gambling was a socially accepted activity in Australia due to excessive marketing and the availability of gambling products, where you were able to 'bet on everything'. However, women considered gambling to be a more socially acceptable activity for men. This was often due to their knowledge of the gambling behaviours of men they knew and their perception that women gambled much less or not at all. This may be because some participants thought that women were less open about their gambling behaviours as compared to men. For example, the following woman described that when individuals thought about gamblers, and in particular

people who engaged in casino gambling or betting, they would rarely think of a young woman. Thus she described that gambling was an activity that was hidden or silent for women:

'I think it's more just hidden, or silent. Women don't talk about it; it's not the image that we have of a gambler in our heads. But I don't think that there's anyone ... Well, at least not among people I know. There's no particular stigma against it for women. It's more that our mental image of who gambles is not a woman.' – 25 years old, non-problem gambler

While women did not necessarily think that gambling was stigmatised for women, they still believed that gambling was a male-dominated activity. For example, the following participant, who bet regularly on sports with her male friends, stated that, while she did not personally feel that she was stigmatised, she recognised that gambling was not a popular activity for women:

'I don't think it's stigmatised, I won't say that. I just think it's not as popular. I just think it maybe is a bit overwhelming for a lot of females, the whole concept. With all my male friends, none of them really question that I'm getting involved with it. I do notice that I'm, obviously, in a minority.' – 22 years old, moderate-risk gambler

The perception that gambling was more popular among men was reinforced by gambling marketing. Women described that gambling marketing, particularly for sports betting, was often clearly targeted at men, with advertising depicting male characters participating in gambling within male social settings. However, some women described the changing marketing tactics of the gambling industry and had noticed more gender-neutral gambling advertisements, with some advertisements featuring females in lead roles. This was thought to be contributing to an increase in the social acceptance of gambling as an activity women could engage in:

'I think that they're [gambling advertisements] all very male orientated, regardless. None of them really lean that way to a middle ground at all. CrownBet put a female in their ads recently ... I love it.' – 22 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Some participants believed there were certain times and events where gambling was considered a more socially acceptable activity for females. This predominantly included incidental gambling, when they had attended a venue or event for non-gambling reasons and ended up gambling. For example, women described the acceptability of using EGMs with friends when attending a venue for the purpose of dinner or another event. Similarly, women described that gambling was more socially accepted for women when it was part of a social occasion, such as the Spring Racing Carnival:

'Betting on the races or like the sport especially if you're there, that's totally fine.' – 26 years old, low-risk gambler

Some participants perceived that when gambling consistently became the sole activity within a venue, for example, if an individual only went to a casino to gamble, it would not be acceptable.

Finally, participants' perceptions of gambling products as being socially acceptable for women often reflected their exposure to or engagement with gambling products and environments. Women who described attending EGM venues with friends or who lived close to EGM venues described this as being a socially accepted activity for women, while women who did not use EGMs felt that this form of gambling was not as acceptable for young women. The same was true for women who did not participate in sports betting. Some of these women perceived this form of gambling to be a 'male activity' and less acceptable for women, while others who actively engaged in

sports betting perceived that sports betting was a more acceptable activity than other forms of gambling because it was so highly endorsed by sporting organisations.

'Sports betting has become a huge part of sport now [...] But, if males are doing it and there are females that enjoy sport, it makes sense that females would be doing it as well.' – 22 years old, moderate-risk gambler.

3 The influence of social networks on gambling behaviours

Women's gambling practices were influenced by their social networks. In particular, peers, partners (for example, boyfriends) and families played significant roles in shaping women's attitudes towards, and consumption of, different forms of gambling.

a Peer influences

Young women described that peers had a range of different influences on their gambling behaviours. The majority of participants stated that gambling with their friends had a clear social dimension to it and was part of a range of activities that they participated in when they were socialising.

Participation in different forms of gambling was also linked with different social networks. Some of these gambling activities were gender specific. The most commonly described example of this was engagement in horse betting with female friends. For example, the following woman stated that she would only gamble on EGMs with her boyfriend, but would gamble with her female friends as part of a day out at the races:

'I think for pokies it was mainly with a boyfriend, but then I would go to the races with my group of girlfriends. So the more social part of gambling would definitely be with the group of girlfriends.' – 24 years old, non-problem gambler

Other women described the horseracing event as a planned 'girls' day out', associated with glamour, fun and excitement that was appealing to women. For these women, betting was a fun addition to the overall experience of the Spring Racing Carnival with their friends:

'Well I went to the races with my friends. Like we dressed up pretty and went, and that was like a girl's day out thing ... I bet on horses just like once, [laughs] just like for fun, as part of the experience.' – 23 years old, moderate-risk gambler

One woman described the influence that one of her female friends had in encouraging her to gamble. Describing her as a 'bad influencer', she discussed how her friend would specifically encourage her to go to her local club to gamble:

'I use the pokies with one of my friends. She is a bad influencer, you could say. Sometimes, if we're just out for lunch or something, she'll be like, oh, let's go to the pokies. We'll just go down the road or whatever's closest and maybe just like chuck \$10 or so in.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

While gambling with female friends was predominantly a small part of social activities they were involved in, gambling with male friends was often a larger focus of their social activities. This included attending more intensive gambling environments, such as the casino or EGM venues. These women spoke about engaging with gambling products in these environments to join in with their male peers but were often not interested in sitting with their

male friends who played 'intimidating' table games at the casino. Instead, in these environments women in the friendship group preferred engaging with EGMs, which were more familiar to them. Participants described attending with male friends after participating in another leisure activity, such as going to a movie. For example, the following participant described that she would only go to the casino with her male friends, after participating in other entertainment options at the casino complex:

'Usually it's just like something to do like going into the city either you go drink or have dinner. Or go watch a movie then there is also the casino. [So then it's part of the night then you guys would go then gamble?] Yes pretty much. [Are you with the same group of friends?] Not always. We are one big group but we don't all go together. I think I have gone to the casino with just say there is five people in the group I have gone with them individually but not altogether. [Are they male or female friends or mix?] Male.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

Some participants specifically described that their female friends would not attend the casino and would rarely gamble outside of horserace events:

'At the races, all females. Like, it was just me and my girlfriends that went that day. It was just us girls. Then as far as the casinos in the past, it's been really just with like, my boyfriend, or our group of guy friends ... My girlfriends wouldn't gamble any other time of the year except when we went to Derby Day that time, to my knowledge.' – 24 years old, low-risk gambler

However, participants also described group-based situations in which peers influenced gambling behaviour within the group. This was particularly the case in local community gambling venues. For example, the following participant described the competitions and games that were created around EGMs with her social group:

'I guess it is one person that kind of suggests [playing the pokies] but then we're kind of like all thinking about it. I think the most recent time it was in a pub where – to get to the bathrooms, you have to walk past the pokies lounge. So we like made it that every time you go to the bathroom, you put two dollars in on the way.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

b Family members

Some of the women described gambling with family members. Some participants described that gambling was embedded in their cultural traditions and was normalised within the family growing up:

'Growing up in a Vietnamese family, my parents were immigrants so I guess gambling was a part of our culture for all I had known. We celebrate the Lunar New Year, which is similar to the Chinese New Year and a lot of our culture speaks to money as success and as children we'd receive red pocket envelopes during the Lunar New Year with money inside and it was socially accepted that we can play board games around that time with family members because we visit family members. And the idea is you want to win money. You put to win other people's money. So my parents were gamblers themselves so I guess to me, that was already a given in my upbringing.' – 34 years old, non-problem gambler

Similarly, the following young woman described her grandparents' link with greyhound racing. She described being brought up around greyhound tracks, and still engaged in greyhound gambling once or twice a year:

'In regards to racing as well, when I was younger, I used to go to the greyhound races with my grandparents all the time, so I kind of was brought up in that environment, as well. So, every now and then, I might just head over to the greyhound track, maybe like once or twice a year, and then just, yeah, be there for that.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

Gambling was described as a rite of passage by some young women. A few described how as soon as they turned 18 years old (the legal age of gambling in Australia) they went to the casino to gamble with their family members:

'On my 18th birthday, as soon as it turned midnight, I actually walked straight into Crown. My parents went there to spend my 18th birthday there.' – 20 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Siblings, and particularly brothers, were also influential in regular gambling behaviours, particularly relating to sports. For example, the following participant described that her brother first influenced her to start gambling due to a loophole that he had discovered in a gambling app. She stated that betting was more normalised and accepted while with her brother. She observed that she would not bet in front of her friends because of the stigma attached to gambling but felt that it was socially acceptable to bet with her brother:

'I'd never like pull out my phone to place a bet with friends. I guess there is a bit of a like stigma to it. I know like somebody will be like, what are you doing? Whereas if I'm sort of just watching sport with my brother, he's probably betting on it as well or has bets on it.' – 22 years old, non-problem gambler

However, it was fathers who had the most influence on current gambling behaviours. Many women described the direct influence that their father would have in taking them to gambling environments, providing them with advice about gambling, or encouraging regular gambling:

'My dad is probably like the biggest influence on my gambling. He'll just get home from work or something and I'll be sitting here and he'll be like, 'Oh do you want to go to the pub'? And I'm like OK ... [Are you going there to gamble? Or is it more to have a drink or have dinner?] Nah, it's going there to gamble.' – 23 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Some participants described that their fathers had played a role in normalising gambling from a young age and still remained influential in their gambling behaviours today:

'But my Dad also like my whole life I guess would always say like he was betting. He'll be like "Tell me a number and I'll put a bet on it".' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

However, the influence of family members did not always mean that participants developed positive attitudes towards gambling. Family influences at times had the reverse effect and made participants feel more negatively towards gambling. Describing that she had experienced the negative impacts of gambling for most of her childhood, the following participant stated that her attitude towards gambling, and particularly casino gambling, was one of sadness:

'I think having mentioned that my parents gambled, I'd go into the casino now and that emotional connection that I have is, it's quite sad.' – 34 years old, moderate-risk gambler

c Male partners

Women's gambling outside of horserace betting was significantly influenced by the gambling attitudes and behaviours of men. Male partners appeared to have the most influence out of all members of the social network in encouraging regular or high-intensity gambling. Male partners (and their male friends) were also instrumental in giving women advice about gambling, including which bets to make and when to make these bets:

'My boyfriend and his friend go to the TAB one a week on Thursdays and I just came along once and that's kind of pretty much what influenced it ... [I gamble] just as it comes, sometimes like my boyfriend or his friend will say don't put it on the next race just wait for two more weeks or something like that.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

Some women commented that while they did not have gambling apps on their phones, they would regularly use their partners' betting accounts and mobile apps to gamble. One woman stated that she only used her partner's betting account because she perceived that if she downloaded her own account then it would mean that she was seriously involved in gambling.

'I don't have [apps] on my phone but I have that on my partner's phone. He has maybe like seven all of them. Different companies like Bet Easy, Crown and all that types of apps. He has multiple apps. [Do you use his phone if you're betting on sports?] Yeah. I have thought about [downloading the app] before but then I feel like for me downloading the app is like "wow I'm really in this" if that makes sense.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

However, a few women also described that they felt pressured to gamble by their boyfriend's gambling behaviours. For example, the following participant stated that she felt an expectation to gamble when her partner gambled. This led her to gamble more regularly than she normally would, and to spend more money than she normally would on gambling:

'I think it's also a bit of peer pressure, like my boyfriend gets money out and I feel like I should get money out as well. Yeah, it's peer pressure.' – 20 years old, moderate-risk gambler

The following woman stated that her boyfriend introduced her to casino gambling. While she had rarely gambled before, she engaged in gambling with her boyfriend because he enjoyed it and it was something that they could do together. However, she described that since starting to gamble, this had become increasingly problematic for her. She described attending a casino on a holiday with her partner and experiencing a significant first win on an EGM:

'I sat down in front of a pokie machine and I didn't know how they work. I didn't know what to do with them. I put \$5.00 in and pressed a button and it turned into \$200.00. Then I cashed that straight away because I didn't know what I was doing on a pokies machine. The losses didn't seem so bad and we kind of walked away with not losing too much and I pulled him off the tables and that was the end of it for the night. I wouldn't have gone and done that with my girlfriends. That's something that my boyfriend has been interested in and through that, it's been a bit of fun for both of us. And it's now become kind of an issue for me.' – 23 years old, low-risk gambler

For some women, gambling was perceived as an activity that their partner was interested in and that they could do together. One woman, who bet on a range of gambling products, said that if her partner was gambling usually 'I'm doing it too ... so it's what we do together'. She described attending her local venue with her boyfriend and gambling together:

'There's not much else to do. So you'll go and play the pokies and then you go and sit in the bar area and the bar has got the TAB right next to you so it's easily accessible ... Sometimes we do just go, so we'd go for lunch and then put a bet on the dogs and stuff and play the pokies in between and have lunch but [we usually] like watching the races down at the club or the pub.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

Commercial determinants

Several key themes emerged as commercial factors that influenced women's gambling behaviours. These included product engagement, the promotion of gambling and the ease, accessibility and availability of gambling.

1 Product engagement

While the majority of participants gambled on multiple products, women often expressed clear preferences for different forms of gambling products. Product preference was clearly linked to other determinants – the role of gambling in broader feminised social activities, the embedding of gambling in other valued social activities, the ease of access of gambling products (particularly relating to incidental gambling) and the perceived risk of gambling products.

a Horse betting

For some women, gambling was a significant part of attending horseraces, adding to the enjoyment of the day. However, women often described how their gambling at horseraces differed from that of their male friends and downplayed the seriousness or intensity of the gambling as compared to men. For example, the following woman stated that, while her male friends saw gambling as a skill-based activity, by studying the form guide, the women in her friendship group bet on horses for a bit of fun and as a social activity:

'I think it's the social aspect of it. We don't really know a whole lot about it. So it's more just gambling on a feeling, or what you think is a nice-looking horse. That's with sort of the girls in my group, but with the guys, they look at the forms and they get quite into it, and they look at previous races. So for them, it's more about almost a calculated bet. They're a bit more serious about it. But with the girls, it's just a little bit of fun, while we're at the races.' – 24 years old, non-problem gambler

Others described that they enjoyed gambling on horses as an embedded part of many activities that they participated in during Spring Racing Carnival. These women stated that betting on horses was part of the day. Many women stated that they preferred gambling on horses because it was an inherently social activity that they participated in with friends. These women described rarely gambling at any other time of the year. However, some also said that they often bet more than they intended to when at racing carnivals. These women attributed this to the endless prompts to gamble, or because everyone was engaging in gambling at these events:

'I guess it's a social occasion and you're there to watch the horses, so I guess like you want to sort of engage with the horses a bit. It's like you get swept up in it I guess, because everyone's doing it.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

Very few women stated that they were interested in gambling on horses outside of attending race events, and specifically the Spring Racing Carnival. These women described their interest in horseracing as a sport. They clearly described a high level of engagement in horseracing, that they would always gamble while at horseracing events, would watch racing on television, and would gamble on horses even if they did not attend events. For example, the following woman stated that due to her interest in horseracing, she gambled more than most of her female friends and was the only one of her female friends who gambled outside of racing events.

'I guess, I'm also a little bit interested in the horseracing as well, just as a sport and as an industry. It's a bit of a leisure activity on the weekends or something with that one. If I go to an event, I'll definitely be betting on those races. But, more often than not, I wouldn't be at the event, I'd just be watching it on TV, or sometimes, not even watching it, actually. Usually watching it, but not always.'
– 22 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Participants also described that the development of mobile betting apps made gambling on horses more easy and accessible. Some described that these apps also removed the stigma and perceived judgement that was associated with physical betting venues:

'Oh my God, walking into the TAB is so daunting. Horrible. When I was in Queensland doing it I would go to the TAB by myself to put on the bets for the horses because I'd do it before – early in the morning because I was doing stuff on that day because it's normally on a weekday which is very inconvenient. So I'd do that first thing in the morning. Here I am walking into a pub at 9:00 am on a Tuesday to put this horse bet on feeling horrible about myself because that's what I'm doing. But yes, I hated it. Then I didn't know what I was doing so then I had to go and ask this guy for help and he's like "Why are you doing this?" I like having my phone now.' – 25 years old, moderate-risk gambler

b Casino gambling

Women who preferred gambling at the casino spoke about the co-location of gambling activities and non-gambling activities. Women perceived casinos as a place that provided entertainment, with gambling just one of the many activities they liked about attending the casino. Women described the glamour associated with the casino, and that this attracted them to this environment:

'I think the glamorous side of it definitely attracts me personally. Getting to dress up, and then it's a good atmosphere. And then the gambling is so readily available, you're walking through Crown casino to get to the club. You're walking past all of those poker machines and all of the gambling tables. I think it's kind of inevitable that some form of gambling will happen.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

Women who described the glamour of the casino stated that they preferred the 'up-market' environment of the casino over pubs or bars:

'I think I personally would prefer to go to the casino, because the casino has kind of an atmosphere about it that my local pub or bar couldn't replicate, it is like a very nice upper-class feeling to go to the casino, depending on which part of the casino you're in so yeah something different.' – 19 years old, non-problem gambler

Some women believed casinos were social places and preferred this form of gambling because they could gamble with friends. For example, one woman discussed attending the casino with friends for the restaurants and viewed gambling as part of the night out.

'I think that's a good place to go out to with friends, because there's other sorts of entertainment around that I guess with restaurants and bars and everything, and [the casino] is just – there's lots of things, and gambling just becomes a part of that experience I guess.' – 18 years old, non-problem gambler

Some women suggested that they preferred casino gambling over other products because of the greater value in the engagement in the forms of gambling offered at the casino. For example, some women, and particularly those who enjoyed playing table games, perceived that their money would go further on gambling at the casino. These women described that casino gambling was also more associated with skill, including learning how to play, developing strategy and understanding the odds of winning. The following participant described that she felt like more of an active participant in casino gambling:

'I think it's more social and you're more involved. With the horserace you just watch it. With [casino table games], you actually participate, if that makes sense.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

c EGMs (pokies or slots)

Very few women preferred playing EGMs over other gambling products. Women who preferred EGMs talked about enjoying the instant win and the social acceptability of this form of gambling when at venues. Participants discussed that they played EGMs the most because they enjoyed winning and that there was an 'instant gratification'. These women compared EGM gambling to sports betting, where you would have to wait for the game to be over to be rewarded. For example, one woman discussed placing multi-bets where she would have to wait for multiple games to be over before seeing any money:

'I think it was like you were getting that instant gratification. When you were playing like horseracing, you've got to wait a few minutes. I know it's only a few minutes, but you're still waiting. Also like with AFL and that you're waiting, you've got that longer period, especially if you do a multi and you're waiting for eight games to be played out. Whereas with poker machines it's instant.' – 34 years old, low-risk gambler

Other participants spoke about playing EGMs only when attending venues for non-gambling activities. They believed that there was an element of social acceptance associated with this form of gambling among those who attended pubs and clubs, where many others were engaging in this form of gambling for social reasons. However, some participants also stated that engaging in EGM gambling was a more spontaneous or incidental form of gambling that was inherently linked to drinking cultures in pubs. For example, the following woman stated that while she would never put money into an online gambling account, she would often put \$10 into an EGM when out drinking with friends:

'I would never just transfer money into an app, but I think when you're out and you're drinking and you put like \$10 in a machine, like you just do it.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

A few women perceived that EGMs were a less risky form of gambling because it was difficult to overspend on this form of gambling:

'And with the online betting, it's probably so much easier to spend more, whereas at the pokies, if they only take one-dollar coins and you run out of one-dollar coins, it's sort of like, "Oh well, that's enough". Whereas online, they can just keep taking your money.' – 23 years old, low-risk gambler

d Sports betting

Women preferred sports betting over other gambling products for a variety of different reasons. Many of those betting on sports did so because they had an interest in sport and described that it allowed them to be more involved in the sporting match they were watching:

'I think because there is definitely like an element of like watching an event, and then anticipation that's like associated with it. So it's not so much like a fast notification, it's more of like a long-term, you can like, you know, yeah just have more involvement in an event.' – 27 years old, non-problem gambler

These women also perceived that sports betting was a skill-based activity that was linked to their 'invested interest' in sport. Some perceived that betting on sport also encouraged them to 'keep up to date' with the sport, including the technical aspects of the game, the players and the statistics. Many of these women preferred sports betting because they perceived that their knowledge of the sport would help them be more successful at gambling.

Many women who preferred sports betting also perceived that this form of gambling had a lower risk of losses as compared to other forms of gambling:

'I guess it's something that I follow more frequently and I guess sport because like I said before, sport was a big part of my work. So it's something that I constantly follow and I'm involved in events and stuff. So it kind of just made it easy to keep up to date so that I know who is playing in that team or that person's injured, they're not going to play well this weekend, I should bet on that.' – 29 years old, low-risk gambler

Some women enjoyed sports betting because of the social connection it created with their male friends, or with their male partners. As discussed previously, women valued sports betting as an activity they could do with their male partner and saw it as a way to engage with something that he was interested in. These women gambled as a 'social thing' with their partners:

'So I find it's the social thing and I guess my partner and I, we bet a lot against each other's teams for fun, just to annoy each other in that sense and then you end up making some money.' – 29 years old, low-risk gambler

Others preferred sports betting because of their potential to win money. These women perceived sports betting as an easy and accessible way to win money. For example, one woman described the process of putting on multi bets and her potential payout on the betting app increasing as she added more 'legs' to her bet. These women were heavily influenced by promotions and the potential to win a lot of money from a small financial outlay across multiple events:

'Yeah I think it was about the reward for the multis yeah, because I think you sort of see – as you're clicking through it, as you're selecting your teams, like the app that I was using was giving you how much you would win at the bottom, like if you just picked that extra team to win that would tell you how much you would win. You see that amount and you're like oh my gosh, if I win – like that's a big dollar amount for only putting on you know a \$20, \$30, \$40 bet, so yeah I think it was only about a reward for that sort of thing.' – 34 years old, low-risk gambler

e Lotteries and instant lotteries (scratchies)

Many women's most preferred form of gambling was lotteries and scratchies. These women perceived these products as low-risk, with some women suggesting that 'it doesn't really seem as though you're gambling'. These women communicated that, due to their perceived low risk, lotteries were 'widely accepted' in Australia.

'When I buy a Lotto ticket, I don't consider it like gambling.' – 27 years old, low-risk gambler

Women talked about the accessibility of lotteries; many young women buy tickets online. Women described lotteries as easy and affordable with the potential for a large financial reward. Many of these women had a desire to win big. They dreamed about what they would do with their winnings. Even those experiencing moderate risk from their gambling described lotteries as fun:

'Well I guess I can do it on my computer which is nice. I've never really seen myself as a gambler, but like I don't know, I just like really like TattsLotto, because I really like to imagine winning, so I can just like buy my ticket and then like fantasise all week which is like really fun.' – 23 years old, moderate-risk gambler

2 The influence of gambling promotions

Women regularly discussed the role of advertising on encouraging individuals to gamble. For example, some women stated that advertising had played a significant role in normalising gambling in Australia. Some stated that individuals were unable to avoid the marketing for gambling in Australia, with regular prompts to gamble in everyday life:

'You can't escape it. There's just ads for it all the time, just normalising it and making it easier.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

However, it was not just television advertising that women described as having an impact. Many women in this study who had betting accounts described the range of below-the-line promotions that they received when signing up to betting accounts. Women who bet on sports described company offers they received, primarily through text messages or emails. Many of these promotions occurred at specific times of the year and were associated with incentive and inducement-based promotions. One woman stated that these promotions made her feel uncomfortable, and led her eventually to delete the app.

'The whole idea of having a [betting] account was making me uncomfortable. [Did they send you texts or emails?] Yeah. Definitely. Just like promotions and like offers and they like send you a welcome pack to your home address. That's why I told my parents. [What's in that?] I don't really know. I didn't look. I guess it's probably just like all the terms and conditions and things, but it's probably got like a poster or something and brochures. I don't know, I didn't look. Yeah and it comes in like a confidential envelope, so you can't actually see what it is on the outside, which I was – yeah, it just seemed not nice.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

Other women stated that they received SMS alerts or emails from companies on a weekly basis. Some stated that these were mainly deal-based promotions and that they found them 'annoying':

'They send me stuff all the time. It's so annoying it's like put \$20 in today and we'll match it with a bonus bet and you know, 25 per cent back and all this stuff – stuff like that. I don't even bother reading them. They're mostly text messages, unless I click on it and then get out of it. [How often do they normally message you?] I don't really know, probably once a week, yeah probably. I'm actually just having a look right now. Yeah, it's nearly like once a week.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

While many participants stated that they ignored or deleted this marketing, others stated that they took up offers from these companies. Some women stated that they first started gambling on mobile apps because of sign-up offers from gambling companies:

'Yes, well that's how I was enticed in I guess because I was enticed in on a bonus bet ... because it was on TV. Bonus bet, sign up today. Okay, that sounds good. So that's what got me in.' – 25 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Some women explained that when they had several betting companies on their phone they looked for 'the best deal'. Women described these deals as 'tempting' and said that the information sent to them gave them 'a feel for how generous they're going to be with their deals'. For example, one woman said her betting was influenced by the bonus bet deals she received:

'It was those bonus bet offers so it's like have a look in your account, there's \$10 bonus bet. So it's essentially \$10 of free money where I can possibly change that into not free money and turn it around into something. So that was enticing for me.' – 25 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Another woman said she usually used the app that she perceived to be the easiest unless she received a deal from bookmakers:

'[I'll use] whichever one is the easiest, so like the most user-friendly. Otherwise sometimes they send me messages with deals and stuff and then I'll use whichever one has got the best deal ... Sometimes I don't even think about it. When they send me messages, I think, "Oh, that's a good idea".' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

Although many women described being sent these incentives, some described requesting not to receive them or had them sent to a hidden email folder (such as the junk folder). Other women described receiving the deals but said that these did not affect their behaviour. For example, one woman described herself as a 'safe bettor' so the deals did not 'entice' her to gamble more than she otherwise would.

Finally, commercial incentives, in combination with the influence of friends' or a partner's gambling behaviour, tended to encourage women to gamble more. For example, one woman described positive outcomes from a female friend who took up a time-specific sports betting company deal where, if a bet was placed before the game and a second bet was placed during the game, one of the bets could be 'refunded'. After hearing about this deal from the friend during a sporting game, the participant also used this offer; she stated that she 'invested' \$200:

'So it was \$200 minimum bet, so then you put \$100 before the game and then \$100 in-game. So your initial investment was \$200.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

3 The ease, accessibility and availability of gambling

Women's gambling practices were also influenced by the accessibility of gambling through apps or online. This was particularly mentioned by women who bet on sports or horses. Women described how the ease of use and accessibility of gambling apps gave users the opportunity to gamble at any time of the day. These women described that gambling technology and marketing for gambling products facilitated excessive gambling behaviours:

'I feel like the easier it is, the better – the more I'll bet.' – 29 years old, low-risk gambler

Besides the ease of betting, women also described the ease of spending money:

'And with the online betting, it's probably so much easier to spend more, whereas at the pokies, if they only take one-dollar coins and you run out of one-dollar coins, it's sort of like, "Oh well, that's enough". Whereas online, they can just keep taking your money.' – 23 years old, low-risk gambler.

However, some participants were critical of online gambling, as it was making it easier to gamble than ever before. These women described that this traditional gambling culture had become more normalised with the introduction of online gambling platforms and a rapidly changing gambling environment:

'I think just the advertising, it's just ridiculous. During the game you can bet, and you never used to be able to do that I don't think. I think the accessibility on the phone, it takes like five touches and you've made a bet. Instead of having to get in the car and drive.' – 22 years old, low-risk gambler

Finally, women's gambling practices were also influenced by the availability of gambling in their community. Women described the plethora of gambling opportunities and commented that gambling was everywhere:

'I just think it's so prevalent in today's society I guess [...] You go to a pub and there is always someone in at the pokies, or there's someone betting on horses. Like, it just seems to be everywhere you go these days.' – 20 years old, low-risk gambler

Strategies to reduce and prevent harm in young women

Women in the study provided a range of strategies that could be implemented to reduce gambling-related harm. Some women in this study argued that there needed to be more effective regulatory structures to prevent gambling harm. These participants were particularly focused on the need to protect women who may be more vulnerable to gambling products and environments:

'I think they can probably regulate it a lot better. I think people's misconception of the addiction, I don't get addicted to gambling but I can see how people can get addicted and how it can become a problem. So there needs to be stuff in place. If an 80-year-old starts putting money on the pokies and they don't know that they're spending three or four hundred dollars and it all of a sudden becomes a problem and then they need to figure out a way to stop and they don't know how to do that, that's a bit sad.' – 29 years old, low-risk gambler

However, the majority of young women focused on individual mechanisms for reducing harm. These women emphasised the importance of education. While one woman acknowledged, 'all the information is out there', she said that it needed to be 'more accessible'. Other women commented that there needed to be more education around what harmful gambling looked like and where to get help. One woman suggested that Gambler's Help advertisements should be updated to reflect the current gambling landscape. She said:

'I guess probably an update of the Gambler's Help ad. Yes, there are still people that go to the pokies but the face has changed so much that – I don't gamble very often but I look at those ads and go who is that? I don't know anyone like that. They're not showing the risks of people betting on their apps or stuff like that or downloading apps that you're feeding money into kind of thing like your slots and stuff like that ... I guess a lot of people would probably look at the pokies ad and go well that's not me ... It's not like that. I'm not at that point.' – 30 years old, non-problem gambler

Other women suggested that public education campaigns should show 'what harm looks like before you reach problem gambling' and how women can help other gamblers if they are concerned about their behaviour. There was an overwhelming consensus from participants in this study that young women were completely missing from public education campaigns about gambling risks and product harms. Young women talked about not being able to relate to current public education campaigns that were overwhelmingly targeted to young men or older women. Some women noted that advertisements warning individuals of the risks associated with gambling predominantly contained older women. Women observed that young women were rarely featured in campaigns about the risks associated with gambling or how to seek help. Many commented that the appeal strategies used in existing campaigns were not relatable for young women:

'I'm thinking of one in particular and it's like this old lady playing the pokies and I find that they tend to focus on older adults or like middle-aged.' – 25 years old, low-risk gambler

Many women in this study commented on the stigma that young women would experience if they tried to seek help for a gambling problem. For example, one woman stated that she didn't know who young women could talk to about gambling because there was a perception that 'women aren't addicted to gambling'. Several women also suggested that education should focus less on 'responsible gambling' and more on the harms associated with gambling products. For example, one woman said:

'I definitely think that there needs to be more put on rather than just 'gamble responsibly' said so quickly at the end of it because it's just like the tiny term and condition that they must put in there.' – 25 years old, moderate-risk gambler

Some women suggested that harm minimisation measures could be employed for both online and land-based gambling. Several women believed that given the digital nature of app-based and online gambling, harm prevention measures should be digitised – in a national register, for example – so ‘if you self-exclude from one company, you’re self-excluded from all of them’. Another app-based measure suggested was to implement gambling limits. For example, one woman suggested that notifications could be sent out informing users how much they had spent on gambling and asking if they wanted to continue. Alternatively, several women described venue-based measures such as not allowing bets to be placed using racing venue wi-fi or modifying EGM rooms in hotels and clubs. A small number of women described how these changes would help gamblers who may be triggered through accessibility or exposure to sounds made by gambling products.

Summary

The gambling behaviours of adolescent and young women are diverse and are influenced by a range of individual, socio-cultural and commercial determinants. There were three key determinants that influenced young women's gambling behaviours. Firstly, individual determinants influencing young women's gambling attitudes and behaviours included fun and enjoyment, to add interest into an activity, to relieve boredom, thrill and excitement, to win money and to escape or mitigate life stressors. Second, the socio-cultural environment, which included the cultural acceptance and normalisation of gambling in Australia, the social acceptability of gambling and the influence of social networks such as peers, partners and families on behaviours. Third, commercial determinants such as gambling product engagement (horse betting, casino gambling, EGMs, sports betting, and lotteries and instant lotteries), the promotion of gambling and the ease, accessibility and availability of gambling. The findings also showed strategies to reduce and prevent gambling-related harm in young women. Strategies suggested by young women included the need for effective regulatory structures; and some women focused on individual mechanisms for reducing harm, such as education, and the need for social marketing campaigns to be targeted and specific to women. The following section of this report discusses the findings of the three study phases and the implications of the findings for public health research, policy and practice.

Discussion and conclusion

The present research contributes towards developing the evidence base in the area of the gambling behaviours of adolescent and young women, and the factors that influence these behaviours. While Victorian prevalence data shows that women's participation in most forms of gambling has increased in the last decade, there has been little research that has sought to explain the factors that may contribute to this increase. We discuss the key findings of the study and the implications for strategies aimed at preventing and reducing gambling-related harm in young women.

There is evidence of a range of strategies used by harmful industries specifically to target and appeal to women. Further research is needed to map and monitor whether similar strategies are being used to promote a range of different types of gambling products or gambling environments, and how these may impact on young women's gambling attitudes and behaviours.

This study provides evidence that marketing strategies are being used across a range of harmful product industries to appeal to women. The typology presented in this study, based on a review of available literature from tobacco, alcohol and gambling research, identified six key strategies that may be used by industries to appeal to women. These were (1) self-image, (2) empowerment, (3) social connection and acceptance, (4) feminisation of the product, (5) strategic associations and (6) strategic marketing. Moving forward, we recommend that researchers use this typology as a framework to map and monitor how gambling marketing may appeal to adolescent and young women, including the role of marketing in normalising gambling and/or gambling environments. The framework should be adapted over time to reflect new strategies and products and to examine different sub-populations of women.

Many of the strategies identified in Phase 1 of this research were also identified when exploring the range of marketing strategies that may be contributing to the feminisation of racing for adolescent and young women. Given that these environments are increasingly attractive entertainment options for women and also contain gambling, there could be some direct outreach during these events to ensure that women are fully informed of the risks associated with gambling. Public health practitioners should consider how best to engage young women in public education campaigns about gambling-related harm, including education during seasonal events, such as Spring Racing Carnivals, which may have particular appeal for young women. Given that the marketing for these events is predominantly focused on peer groups, interventions may look at peer groups rather than individual responsibility messages. Messages should also consider how alcohol may contribute to harmful gambling.

A complex mix of individual, socio-cultural and commercial factors may be influencing young women's engagement in gambling.

First, **individual determinants** influenced adolescent and young women to gamble. Many of the individual determinants described by adolescent and young women in this study were similar to those documented elsewhere in the gambling literature. As described in the literature review presented earlier in this report, researchers have highlighted the importance of understanding the contexts and key motivators that may explain why women engage in gambling [Bowden-Jones & George 2015; Davis & Avery 2004; Holdsworth, Hing & Breen 2012; Svensson et al. 2011; Trevorrow & Moore 1998; Wardle 2015]. For a small number of women in this study, gambling was clearly described as a way to escape negative aspects of their everyday life, such as stress, boredom or routine. While most of these women engaged in venue-based gambling, one woman sought this escape via an online gambling website. This provides support for international literature that suggests that for some women, the need to escape or take time out from everyday life may be a major driver for risky gambling behaviour, and that women use gambling as a coping mechanism to alleviate social stressors such as anxiety, loneliness, or depression [Bowden-Jones & George 2015; Thomas et al. 2011]. While it is generally assumed that gambling venues may provide this place of

escapism for women, this study also shows that for adolescent and young women, online gambling sites may also be providing these places to escape. This finding aligns with other international research that supports escapism as a key reason for engaging in gambling for other subgroups of the population, such as older adults and indigenous people [Nixon et al. 2013; Pattinson and Parke 2017].

This study adds new information about the desire to win money as a key determinant in adolescent and young women's decision to engage in gambling. Some young women described that winning money from gambling was a way of lifting their mood or making them feel better about themselves. Using a gendered approach to understand the specific individual determinants that may contribute to harmful gambling is important in understanding how to tailor specific services to reach and meet the needs of specific groups of adolescent and young women.

Second, **socio-cultural and environmental factors** are associated with the gambling attitudes and behaviours of adolescent and young women. Researchers have argued that women are motivated to gamble for a range of social factors, including that gambling is a social activity that creates connections with other people [Hing et al. 2016; Pattinson & Parke 2017; Potenza, Maciejewski & Mazure 2006]. Many of these factors relate to the social contexts in which gambling occurs and the social norms that co-exist alongside these contexts. One of the gaps in the gambling literature is that researchers have predominantly focused on women's gambling behaviours in EGM venues [Nuske, Holdsworth & Breen 2016; Thomas, Allen & Phillips 2009]. While this may be an important focus of research for some groups of women, this study reinforces work by McCarthy et al [2018] that some gambling contexts are increasingly feminised and are particularly appealing to women. While gambling may be an incidental activity for women attending these events, this study suggests that gambling may be a socially accepted activity to participate in with female friends. However, this study also suggests that young women may underestimate the risks associated with these events. Further research should specifically seek to examine the range of activities that may occur during these events, including the consumption of alcohol, and develop targeted prevention strategies in response.

This study also supports previous research that questions whether there is a clear gender divide in gambling behaviours in social networks – where only women gamble with women and men gamble with men [McCarthy et al, 2018]. This study clearly shows that women gamble with, and are significantly influenced by, their male peer and family networks. For some women, gambling with their male peers or family members appeared to increase the risks and harms they experienced from gambling, particularly in terms of signing up to betting accounts and regularly betting on sports. This raises a number of questions about the key socialisation processes that may contribute to women's gambling. Research in alcohol has demonstrated the clear influences that the family environment and peers may have on drinking behaviours, demonstrating that these environments and the social norms associated with them can have a significant impact on the development of beliefs and behaviours associated with the consumption of alcohol [Hogan, Perks & Russell-Bennett 2014; Wang et al. 2015; Zhai et al. 2017]. Peer relationships have been identified as a key risk factor in alcohol use, with the social contexts of these behaviours influencing the consumption practices associated with alcohol. Similarly, in gambling, researchers have demonstrated that peer groups may have a significant impact on the gambling behaviours of young men [Deans et al, 2016].

In this study, very specific peer groups had an impact on the gambling behaviours of adolescent and young women. Male peers and partners were highly influential in women's regular and risky gambling behaviours, and in the normalisation of certain forms of gambling; including women feeling pressured to gamble. Yet women who gambled regularly with their male peers stated that they would be reluctant to tell their female peers that they were regularly engaging in gambling because it would be frowned upon. While gambling appeared to be a socially accepted activity for the adolescent and young women in this study, there were clear boundaries surrounding where, when and which type of gambling was acceptable. This suggests that, while gambling may be accepted among women's social networks, the type of gambling that is perceived by women as 'acceptable' is also highly context-specific (for example, during racing carnivals) and only occurs at levels that may be considered safe or non-problematic. While further research is needed to understand the types of factors that may shape how women conceptualise gambling, and their perceptions of gambling harm, there is enough evidence to show the need

for public education and other harm reduction and prevention strategies that are specifically targeted towards young women.

Women also downplayed the risks associated with their gambling. Women rarely believed that their gambling was risky. This was because they perceived that their gambling was not at the same regularity or intensity as that of their male peers. Women's descriptions of gambling as 'fun' or 'totally fine' because it was part of a fun day out were typical of the downplaying of risks associated with gambling. There may be a number of reasons for this, including the male focus of commercial marketing and harm minimisation campaigns, and the gambling behaviours of male peer groups. While this research has provided insights into how adolescent and young women conceptualise gambling, further research should explore the dynamics associated with gambling across different peer groups. This includes whether conceptualisations about the gendered social norms associated with gambling may (a) lead adolescent and young women to gamble more, (b) lead them to underestimate the potential harms associated with their own gambling, (c) serve as a protective factor if women believe it is less socially acceptable to gamble at the same level as men or (d) prevent women from seeking help if they are experiencing gambling harms. Further, researchers should seek to understand whether the feminisation of some gambling environments such as horseracing carnivals, which are also associated with alcohol, may increase the propensity for higher-risk or binge gambling during these events. What was missing from adolescent and young women's narratives were discussions about strategies to prevent themselves from gambling excessively, particularly within environments where gambling was encouraged and socially accepted, such as casino environments and racing carnivals.

Finally, **commercial determinants** influence adolescent and young women to gamble, including the products that adolescent and young women engaged with, the various mechanisms they used to gamble, and the promotions aligned with these products.

While women in this study appeared to be ambivalent towards or disengaged from hyper-masculine promotions for some gambling products such as sports betting, this study provides new information about the influence of below-the-line marketing promotions. These types of promotions are those outside mainstream media channels, such as television, radio or print media, and can include text messages, emails and other forms of direct or indirect mail promotions. Women who signed up for online betting accounts described the volume and frequency with which they received these promotions. While there has been significant research investigating the influence of above-the-line gambling promotions on different population subgroups, there is still very limited knowledge about the content, impacts and influences of below-the-line marketing techniques. However, one recent study found that adults who were signed up to wagering accounts received significant amounts of marketing materials, and often this material had an influence on increasing betting behaviours [Hing, Russell & Rawat 2018]. With the increasingly strict regulatory frameworks associated with above-the-line advertising and the further development of new technologies, it is likely that industry will use these mechanisms increasingly in an effort to reach and engage individuals in their products. While the new National Consumer Framework [Department of Social Services 2018] contains some provisions relating to direct marketing, researchers should seek to map and understand these promotions, including via social media advertising.

While the majority of adolescent and young women in this study still gambled through land-based gambling outlets, there was an indication that some adolescent and young women were engaging in the consumption of gambling products online. They did this most commonly through mobile sports betting applications. There were a number of distinct findings in relation to engagement with these applications. While there has been significant attention relating to young male sports fans' engagement with mobile betting applications, women who are sports fans are equally exposed to promotions for gambling during sports. There were similarities between the narratives of women who gambled on sports in this study and in studies that have investigated male betting behaviours [Deans et al. 2016]. These include using betting as a way to be more engaged in sport, taking up inducements, and using sports betting to test an individual's knowledge and understanding of sports. Like men, some women in this study perceived that knowledge of sports would contribute to increased likelihood of winning. This has been suggested to be an influencing factor for gambling harm [Jenkison, de Lacy-Vawson & Carroll 2018]. Further, some women

were starting to use mobile applications to gamble so that they did not have to go into male-dominated venues. Again, this suggests that harm reduction strategies aimed at sports betting should aim to engage both male and female audiences.

There was also evidence that a few adolescent and young women who were experiencing harm were regularly consuming lotteries through websites. Lotteries were the most regularly consumed form of gambling in this study; however, there is very limited information about the harms associated with lotteries and how they may shape gambling attitudes and opinions in young people. Lotteries are generally considered a less harmful, non-continuous form of gambling, and as such receive limited attention in the gambling literature. Lottery providers have moved to more accessible and available websites, developed and diversified a new range of products, and engaged in new forms of promotions in a highly competitive gambling market. Researchers and policymakers should therefore map and monitor the impact of these products on gambling attitudes, risks and related harms so that appropriate preventive strategies can be developed and implemented. Given that many participants in this study did not conceptualise lotteries as gambling, and given literature that suggests that many young people have their first entry to gambling by using these products, researchers should investigate how the next generation of lottery and instant lottery products may appeal to and engage different audience segments.

Clear and targeted harm prevention strategies should be developed that specifically target and seek to engage young women in a discussion about gambling harm.

The findings of the present study suggest a need to develop a range of public health and educational prevention strategies that engage adolescent and young women, and alert them to the risks and harms associated with gambling.

These strategies should be targeted towards behaviours, but also to the different products that young women may gamble on. As demonstrated in this study, adolescent and young women appear to be diversifying their gambling behaviours towards products that are more commonly associated with male gambling, such as sports betting, and on online platforms. In developing strategies, it is therefore important that a gendered approach is taken that avoids making generalisations about the types of individuals who are most likely to experience harms associated with different products. This approach, as applied in relation to tobacco, will potentially enable public health policymakers and practitioners to understand and respond to the unique (and diverse) attitudes and behaviours of women. Participants in the present study repeatedly indicated that there were very few public health or health promotion strategies and, in particular, public education campaigns that specifically reached out to adolescent or young women who were engaging in gambling. Rather, participants perceived that the vast majority of messages and media campaigns were targeted towards older women or young men, with participants describing that they did not feel that they could relate to existing harm prevention messages.

Given that research trends have indicated that women's gambling is both increasing and changing, why is there a lack of focus on preventing and reducing the harms associated with the gambling behaviours of young women? There could be three reasons for this.

First, as we found in recruiting participants for this study, while gambling is becoming more socially acceptable for women, adolescent and young women may still be very reluctant to come forward to talk about their experiences with gambling. This suggests that there is still a significant stigma associated with gambling, and gambling-related harm, for young women. Using a range of media channels (both traditional and online media) and community-based forums may help to remove this stigma and enable young women to engage in discussions about gambling-related harm. Participants in this study had highly individualistic perceptions relating to the strategies that may contribute to preventing gambling-related harm, with a particular focus on education. Targeted strategies aimed at opening up a discussion about women also helps to engage women in public health advocacy responses. This will further help to ensure that the unique needs of women are considered in public health policy and practice responses.

Second, the lack of focus on young women may be due to the overwhelming focus on young men as the target market for sports betting marketing campaigns and the consequent public and policy focus on this area in recent years. While a few studies have started to show that there are very few differences in attitudes towards sports betting between adolescent girls and boys (aged 18 and under) [Thomas et al. 2018; Nyemcsok et al. 2018; Pitt et al. 2017], the vast majority of research has focused on the gambling behaviours of young men [Deans et al. 2016; Mark & Lesieur 1992]. Researchers have clearly argued that young men are at particularly high risk from sports betting harm. This has been because of the significant amount of marketing and promotions featuring appeal strategies that aim to reach this group, and the alignment between these products and sporting environments. Current statistics show that the harms associated with these products are increasing in young men. However, as researchers have noted, many women in Australia are highly engaged in sport and are exposed to the same messages as men when watching sport.

Further, recent industry marketing strategies appear to have extended beyond campaigns that traditionally target men to campaigns featuring women. While there has been some investment in education programs and campaigns to counter these messages, such as harm prevention and reduction public education campaigns, they have traditionally targeted men. These campaigns may not have adequately reached young women, who appear to be increasingly engaged in gambling on a range of sports, novelty and horse betting activities provided by online bookmakers. The findings of this study should assist in the process of identifying the most effective strategies to engage adolescent and young women in a discussion about the risks associated with sports betting, and how existing and new education and harm prevention strategies may be tailored to meet the needs of young women.

The third possible reason relates to the seasonality of gambling behaviours for young women, which may create a perception that young women are not at the same risk of harms associated from gambling because they are not gambling regularly throughout the year. Given that this research has indicated that racing is increasingly feminised for women, and previous research which has hypothesised that the feminisation of gambling may be contributing to increased participation in gambling by younger women [Hare 2015], there is a need for specifically targeted harm reduction and prevention strategies which are specifically aligned with horseracing carnivals. These could be targeted at two different groups: (1) those who are gambling at risky levels, but do not perceive that their gambling is a risk; and (2) those who have very positive attitudes towards gambling during racing carnivals, particularly linked with the gambling behaviours of their social networks. One factor that may lead young women to downplay their own gambling risk is the comparison to the gambling behaviours of their male friends. Further, given that this study found that there was substantial marketing for alcohol during these carnivals, harm prevention strategies should consider the role of alcohol consumption in harmful gambling behaviours.

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