

# Study finds scratchies and lotto tickets can lead to problem gambling

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New Curtin research has found that contrary to the general perception that lotteries products such as 'scratchies' and lotto tickets are safe forms of gambling, people who only gamble using these products can

experience gambling-related harm such as financial difficulties, psychological problems, and issues with interpersonal relationships.

The research, published in international journal *Addictive Behaviours*, identified 'scratchies' as being particularly harmful, supporting the contention that they are especially appealing to problem gamblers.

Lead author Research Associate Mr Leon Booth, from the School of Psychology at Curtin University, said 2112 Australians were surveyed about their gambling behaviors. The study focused on 540 Australians in this sample who gambled using lottery products only, and found that almost one-third of these people reported some level of gambling-related problems due to their use of lottery products.

"The data revealed that scratchies were particularly harmful. We believe that this is because some features of scratchies make them more appealing to problem gamblers, such as instantly letting the user know if they have won a prize and giving users the impression they were close to winning," Mr Booth said.

"We also found people who are generally vulnerable to developing gambling issues, such as younger adults and males, were most likely to experience problems with lottery gambling."

Study co-author John Curtin Distinguished Professor Simone Pettigrew, from the School of Psychology at Curtin University and The George Institute for Global Health, said lottery products were commonly seen as being 'soft' forms of gambling yet the study results highlighted a need for greater public education to ensure people understand that use of these products can be associated with gambling-related harm.

"The public needs to understand that lottery products such as scratchies and lotto tickets are a true form of gambling and are therefore

inappropriate gifts for children and youth," Professor Pettigrew said.

"Lottery products need to be acknowledged as more than harmless fun and a genuine type of [gambling](#), and [policy makers](#) should act accordingly to reduce harms that result from these products.

"Our new findings add to an increasing body of evidence showing [lottery](#) products are associated with harm in a substantial minority of users."

**More information:** Leon Booth et al. Gambling-related harms attributable to lotteries products, *Addictive Behaviours* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106472](#)

Provided by Curtin University

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