

Sports betting becoming 'normal' – potentially leading to peer pressure and risky gambling

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Credit: Flickr/Tom Reynolds

Sports betting is becoming a normal social group practice but could potentially lead to peer pressure and risky gambling behaviour.

A study into sports betting – the fastest growing segment of the wagering market – has identified that the activity can lead people to gamble to 'fit in' with [social groups](#).

The study, conducted by Macquarie University and Swinburne University of Technology, and funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, identified that sports betting is becoming embedded as a normalised and regular social practice among young adults.

Dr Ross Gordon from Macquarie and Dr Lauren Gurrieri from Swinburne conducted focus group research with [young adults](#) aged 18 to 30 years old who were sports betting consumers, and found that they were often highly aware and engaged by sports betting brand activities.

The research also found that consumers of sports betting effectively form lifestyle consumption communities, which sees social ties and connections form between people that bet on sport. The sociality and passion of being interested in sports (and sports betting) were found to be important factors that attract people to a lifestyle in which they bet on sport.

As sports betting becomes more socialised there are obvious concerns about what effect this may have on individuals, communities and society.

Dr Gordon said: "This raises concerns that the social side of sports betting could lead to some people engaging in risky [gambling](#), or feeling social pressure to gamble."

Further research will observe whether rates of problem and pathological gambling rise as the market for sports betting increases. This is foreshadowed in the current research, which highlights how some of the

behaviours hint at problematic gambling consumption, social harm, and potential pathways for compulsion.

Dr Gurrieri commented: "If more people bet on sport, and bet more often, this may have negative impacts on themselves, their friends, families and society."

More information: "Broadening an understanding of problem gambling: The lifestyle consumption community of sports betting," *Journal of Business Research*, Available online 19 March 2015, ISSN 0148-2963, [dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.03.016](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.03.016)

Provided by Macquarie University

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