

In a glimpse

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Online gambling. Sports betting, e-sport, new gamblers: significant changes observed in 2021

As Santé publique France launched the [first prevention campaign on the risks associated with sports betting](#), the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT) has published *Tendances* No. 152 on online gambling practices, from the results of the E-Games survey conducted in 2021 with 1 983 panelists. What changes have been observed in legal and illegal online gambling practices? What difficulties do gamblers encounter?

Although, given the survey methodology, it is advisable to remain cautious about generalising the results to the entire adult population, the survey nevertheless revealed significant changes in gambling practices: the number of players who started betting for the first time in 2021, the significant proportion of bettors for e-sport competitions which are not regulated in France, but also a significant daily practice that concerns all gambling... The changes in gambling practices observed in the survey are part of a constant progression in the digitisation of gambling as well as a the Covid-19 public health crisis which has affected the daily life of the population for two years (curfew, lockdown, development of remote working, etc.).

67% of respondents played lottery games, 50% bet on sport

Legally accessible to all adults, online gambling is a predominantly male activity, with 71% of online gamblers being men. Lottery games are the most popular activity among online gamblers, at 67%, ahead of sports betting, at 50%. One in five online gamblers said they gambled at least once a day in 2021, and one in three gamblers bet on a virtual e-sport competition in the last year.

59% of respondents bet for the first time online in 2021

The restrictive public health situation may have led some of the respondents to overinvest in digital activities, including gambling. For example, 59% of the respondents were recent gamblers, having gambled for the first time in the last 12 months. These gamblers were on average younger than other gamblers (34 years old vs 37 years old), and played lottery games, slot machines and casino games as much as “older” gamblers but tended to invest more in e-sport competitions. Moreover, in the survey, recent gamblers seem to have more difficulty regulating their behaviour than those with more established practices.

33% of respondents were classified as problem gamblers

Indeed, the difficulties encountered by online gamblers in the survey are significant in terms of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). Among the CPGI criteria, the desire to gamble again to “make up for lost time” was the most common problem shared by all gamblers: 6% of them stated that this happened to them “almost always”. Daily gambling, which is linked to excessive risk, affected 63% of daily gamblers. The difficulties encountered by these players could be explained in particular by the significant participation in unregulated gambling (slot machines, table games, e-sports) for which foreign sites are not required to implement a problem gambling prevention policy, unlike legal operators in France.

Further readings (in French)

Tendances No. 152, [Pratiques de jeux d'argent et de hasard sur internet](#), 6 p.

Note. [Les jeux d'argent et de hasard en France en 2021](#), 9 p. (or read the August 2022 “In a glimpse” on *Gambling in France in 2021* for an insight in English)

Report. [État des connaissances sur les paris sportifs en ligne](#), 25 p. (or read the November 2022 “In a glimpse” on *Current knowledge on online sports betting* for an insight in English)