



Online gambling and free-to-play online gaming engagement and harms - Findings relevant to Māori

Online gambling is highly accessible and is converging with other technologies. For example, free-to-play (F2P) online games often contain gambling-like elements. F2P games are free to download and play online but often encourage players to repeatedly spend small amounts of real money (a microtransaction). A common type of microtransaction is a 'loot box' where players can purchase a randomly generated virtual item, such as a new appearance for their playable character (called a skin), or an in-game weapon. Loot boxes are like an old-fashioned lucky dip with the chance of receiving a rare or 'valuable' item being very slim.



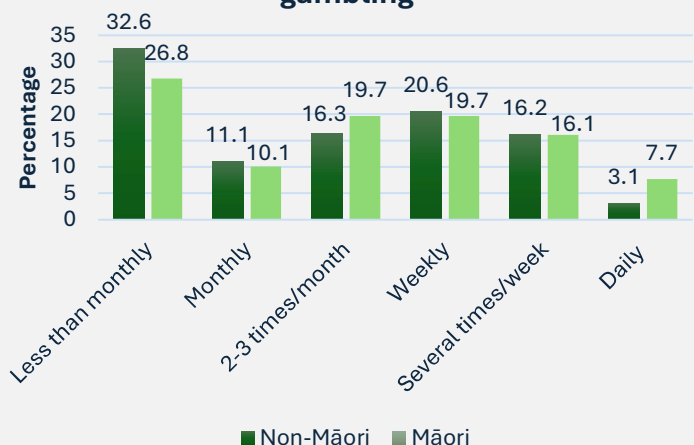
To explore online gambling and F2P online gaming behaviours and identify populations that are most at risk of harm from these activities, we conducted an online survey of 4,180 adults across New Zealand who engaged in online gambling, F2P gaming, or both (dual users). Of these, 726 (16.8%) identified as Māori.

Online gambling and F2P gaming

Māori engaged in more online gambling activities for *real* money than non-Māori ($p \leq 0.001$) and spent a longer time gambling with *real* money compared to non-Māori ($p \leq 0.001$). Māori were 1.96 times more likely to engage in online gambling activities for *virtual* money than non-Māori and spent a longer time gambling with *virtual* money compared to non-Māori ($p \leq 0.001$).

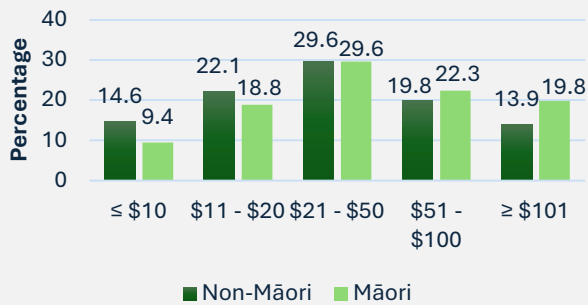
Frequency of F2P gaming, and spending money on microtransactions and loot boxes was similar between Māori and non-Māori.

Frequency of virtual money online gambling



Māori were 1.62 times more likely to be a dual user rather than an online gambler, compared with pākehā.

Typical monthly online gambling spend

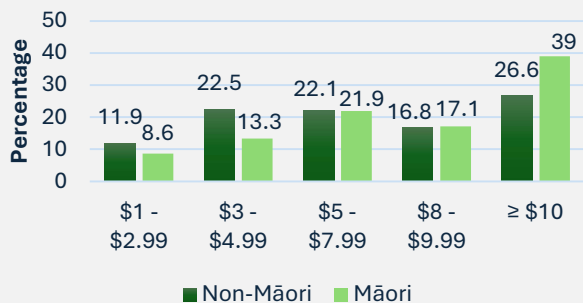


Spending on online gambling and F2P gaming

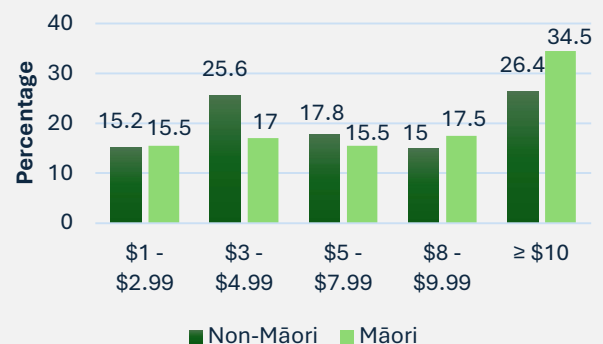
Māori spent more money each month on online gambling than non-Māori, specifically in the \$51-\$100 and \$101+ ranges ($p=0.001$).

Māori were more likely than non-Māori to spend \$10+ per microtransaction ($p = 0.001$) and loot box ($p = 0.02$).

Typical spend in a single micro-transaction



Typical spend on a single loot box




Online gambling and F2P gaming risk and harm


Māori were 2.27 times as likely to be risky (low, moderate or problem) gamblers, compared with non-Māori, and were 2.09 times more likely to experience any gambling harm. Māori had the same risk as non-Māori for being risky F2P gamers and had the same risk as non-Māori for experiencing any gaming harm.

Acknowledgements

The research was funded by the Ministry of Health. We thank Horizon Research Ltd who conducted the online survey, the participants, and our international study advisors and advisory group for regular guidance and advice.

AUT Gambling and Addictions Research Centre: Contact Information

 garc@aut.ac.nz

 <https://garc.aut.ac.nz>