

Prepared by: Prof. Sally Gainsbury, Dr Dilushi Chandrakumar, Catherine Yang, Sue Bin Oh
 Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic - Brain and Mind Centre
 School of Psychology, University of Sydney

An **online survey** was conducted to **understand user experiences** with an **online gambling blocking software**, which blocks access to both regulated and offshore gambling websites, and understand how blocking software use **supports recovery from gambling-related harms**.

The **aims** of the study were to:

- (1) Understand user experiences with an online gambling blocking software, including acceptability, satisfaction, motivations for uptake and gain feedback to improve the software's effectiveness;
- (2) Explore the role of the online gambling blocking software in contributing to recovery from gambling harms, including use of the software in isolation or in combination with a range of gambling support types; and
- (3) Investigate factors that may influence recovery outcomes, including lifetime gambling severity, software breaches (i.e., gambling despite using blocking software), and length of software use

Survey Participants Characteristics:

- ◆ 156 BetBlocker gambling blocking software users (average age 33 years) participated in the study.
- ◆ Participants were mostly male (70%), English speaking (76%), employed full-time (56%) and had completed tertiary education (38%).
- ◆ Most participants lived in Africa (40%), Europe, and North America (20%).
- ◆ Average gambling blocking software use was for 202 days with most selecting the maximum 5-year blocking period.
- ◆ Lifetime gambling severity levels were moderate (27%) to severe (57%) in the sample.

Gambling Recovery

- ◆ The average total gambling recovery score was 29/60, which indicates that the participants have not reached the recovery threshold (i.e., score of 45+).
- ◆ Participants showed higher recovery in the domains 'recovery wisdom', 'gambling reduction', and 'urge coping' compared to the other domains (Figure 1).
- ◆ No significant associations were found between gambling recovery and lifetime gambling severity, support use, breaches, or duration of gambling blocking software use, likely reflecting limited statistical power

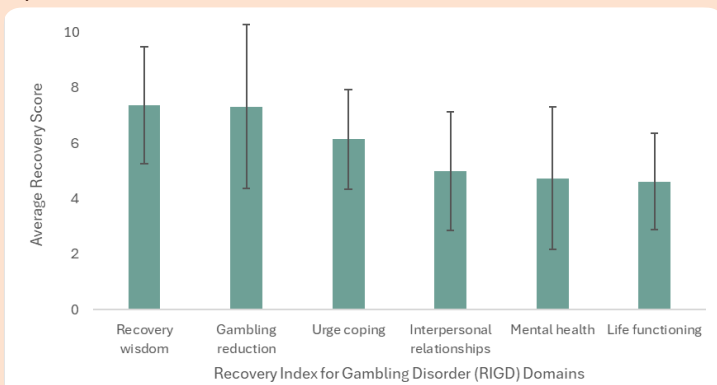


Figure 1. Average scores across the six recovery domains. Error bars represent standard deviations.

Participant Feedback

- ◆ Participant's suggestions for improvements to the gambling blocking software included:
 - (1) Expanding the blocking coverage to a wider range of websites;
 - (2) Offering longer or permanent blocking periods;
 - (3) Increasing safeguards to prevent easy software removal, and allow software providers to follow-up with users to support decision-making around software removal;
 - (4) Providing motivational support via progress insights to sustain engagement and reduce the likelihood of breaching the software; and
 - (5) Integrating access to support resources (e.g., counselling services, peer support) or other tools to complement gambling blocking software use.

Conclusions

- ◆ The gambling blocking software was perceived as acceptable and effective in reducing or stopping gambling, supporting its use as a harm-minimisation tool.
- ◆ This study was the first to investigate how third-party gambling blocking software can support gambling recovery and how consumers perceive these tools.

The Use of Alternative Gambling Recovery Supports

- ◆ Participants reported having used 10 other types of gambling support with operator-based self-exclusion used most frequently (Figure 2).

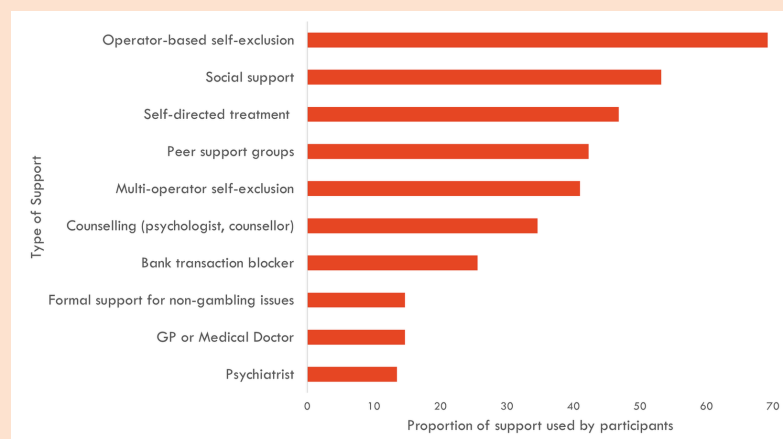


Figure 2. Proportion of different supports used by participants.

Gambling Blocking Software Breaches

- ◆ 62% of participants reported gambling online despite using the gambling blocking software. These participants reported 12 breaches on average
- ◆ and rated the ease of gambling despite using the software as 6/10 with higher scores representing greater ease.
- ◆ 18% of participants reported gambling via land-based gambling while using the online gambling blocking software.

User Experiences with Gambling Blocking Software

- ◆ Software satisfaction rating was 9/11 and acceptability (i.e., ease-of-use, trustworthiness, likely to recommend to others, and overall star rating) was 4/5, demonstrating high acceptability.
- ◆ The software was rated as effective in helping participants control or stop gambling, with a mean perceived effectiveness score of 4/5.
- ◆ Losing more money than intended was rated as the most likely motivator for using the blocking software (Figure 3).

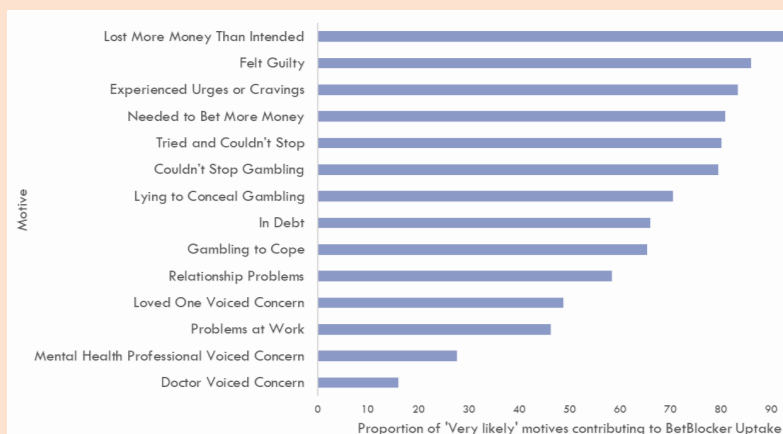


Figure 3. Proportion of motives selected as very likely in contributing to software uptake