



The Psychological effects of gambling in the wake of Covid-19

Presentation by
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OVERVIEW



- ☞ **Behavioural addiction**
- ☞ **Psychological impact of the lockdown**
- ☞ **Observed rise of the online betting trends**

Introduction: Behavioural addiction

- ⇒ Self-determination theory focuses on motivations underlying human behaviour and assumes that individuals have fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.
- ⇒ Neurologically, these needs have been described to associate particularly with reward processing networks and insular activity, which are present in various motivation-based and emotional tasks including addictive behaviours.
- ⇒ It can therefore be assumed that basic psychological needs are also involved in the trajectories of gambling and gaming behaviours.



BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTION

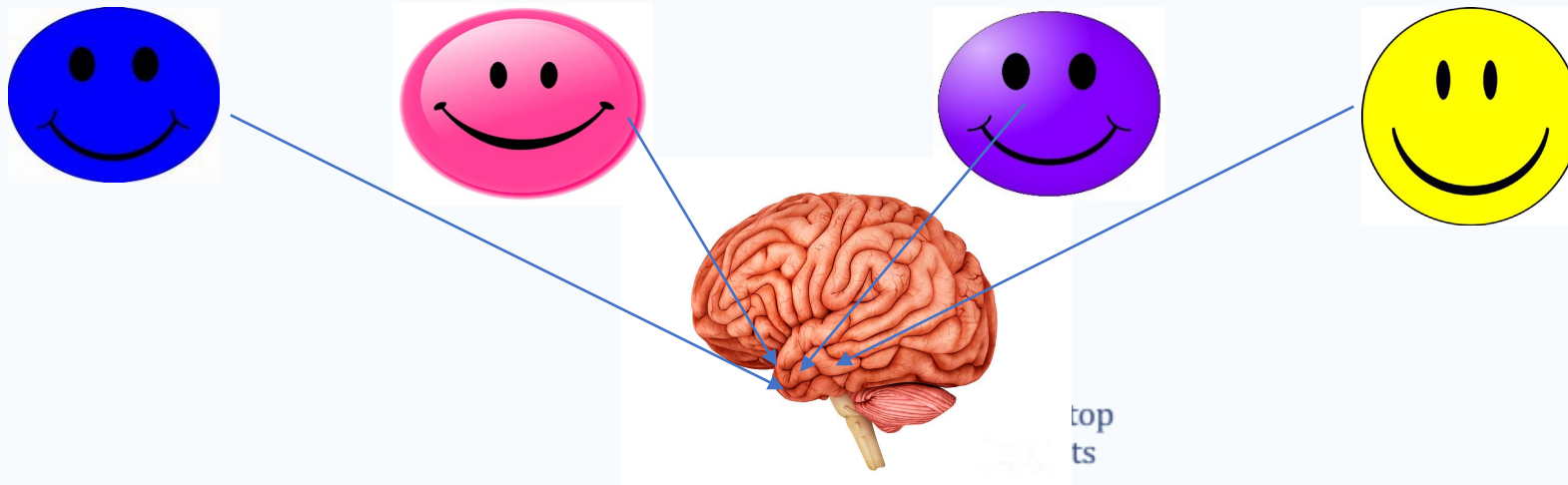
- ☞ What happens to the brain when one gambles?
- ☞ The brain registers pleasure
- ☞ It releases your happy chemicals
- ☞ Meet your happy chemicals

☞ *Dopamine*

Serotonin

Oxytocin

Endorphin



BEHAVIOURAL ADDICTION

Addiction involves:

- ↻ Craving for something intensely
- ↻ Loss of control over its use
- ↻ Continued involvement despite adverse consequences



Psychological impact

- ⇒ During the hard lockdown land-based gambling and betting establishments were banned/closed down, this could have led to increased anxiety as punters were now forced to stop gambling.
- ⇒ For those punters who used gambling as a coping mechanism may have started to show stress and some of the depressive symptoms.
- ⇒ Due to the unique circumstances whereby individuals were confined to their house/homes, other punters may have experienced some suicidal ideations.

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Social Impact

- ⇒ The stress and social isolation associated with the pandemic had potentially led to gambling as an emotional escape and frequent motivation for gambling that is linked to Gambling Disorder.
- ⇒ Other effects could include boredom and lack of social support.
- ⇒ These impacts might have also led to increased relapse among people in recovery from Gambling Disorder
- ⇒ Furthermore, the sale alcohol and cigarettes during the lockdown was banned and this may have led to illegal purchasing of these substance and increased their urges.
- ⇒ Thus other punters developing other addictions including online gambling addiction.
- ⇒ And these addiction may have negative effects on their health such as developing, lung cancer, liver problems etc.

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Financial impact of the lockdown

- ☞ Lockdown forced individuals to take break from work, some without a salary, salary cuts and some even got retrenched thus the financial pressure resulted to job insecurity and unemployment.
- ☞ It could be argued that the financial and job insecurities motivated individuals to use gambling as a means to manage debts and as a substitute for financial losses they suffered.

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CASE STUDY OF MR X

- ☞ Mr X is a 45 year old male, who is married with 3 children. He used to gamble occasionally on weekends to socialise at the casino and entertain himself.
- ☞ He was an office administrator; during the Covid-19 pandemic he got retrenched which had a major financial implication on him.
- ☞ He then started betting frequently online using his severance pay seeking to get more money.
- ☞ He lost his money which resulted to him being under stress and started getting depressive symptoms. This led him to start using alcohol and cigarettes as a coping mechanism.
- ☞ His family life started getting miserable and his wife threatened to file for divorce and primary custody of their children.

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Observed rise of the online betting trends

- ⇒ Online gambling has been increasing rapidly worldwide. It is particularly concerning due to its availability and velocity; moreover, online non-sports gambling has been associated with higher debt levels.
- ⇒ The Foundation in 2019/20 financial year has received about 19 and 36 Clients who indicated that their gambling preference is online betting and illegal online gambling respectively.
- ⇒ The number for online betting (61) increased in 2020/21 financial year while the illegal online gambling (29) number decreased.
- ⇒ For financial year 2021/22 the number of clients who preferred to bet online rapidly increased to 143 while the online illegal gambling (17) mode continued to decrease.

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Observed rise of the online betting trends

- ⇒ Typical reasons for gambling online include ease and availability, although relief from boredom and escapism are also cited. These factors were particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ⇒ Other reasons could be that punters were now exposed to online gambling which is more convenient than land based gambling and hence the drastic increase of online betting.
- ⇒ We also had the Qatar FIFA world cup in 2022 hence a lot of punters were betting on sport.

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Observed rise of the online betting trends: Relapse stats

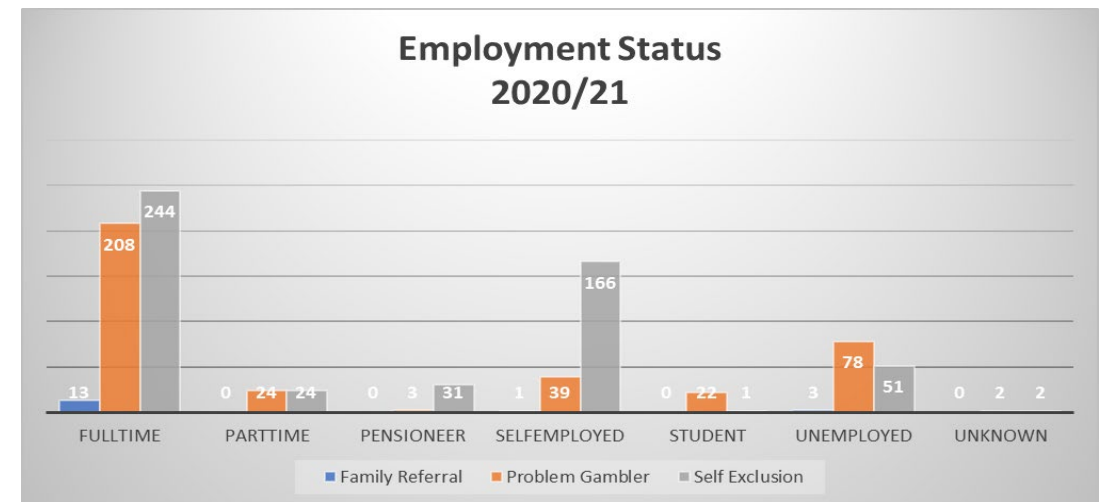
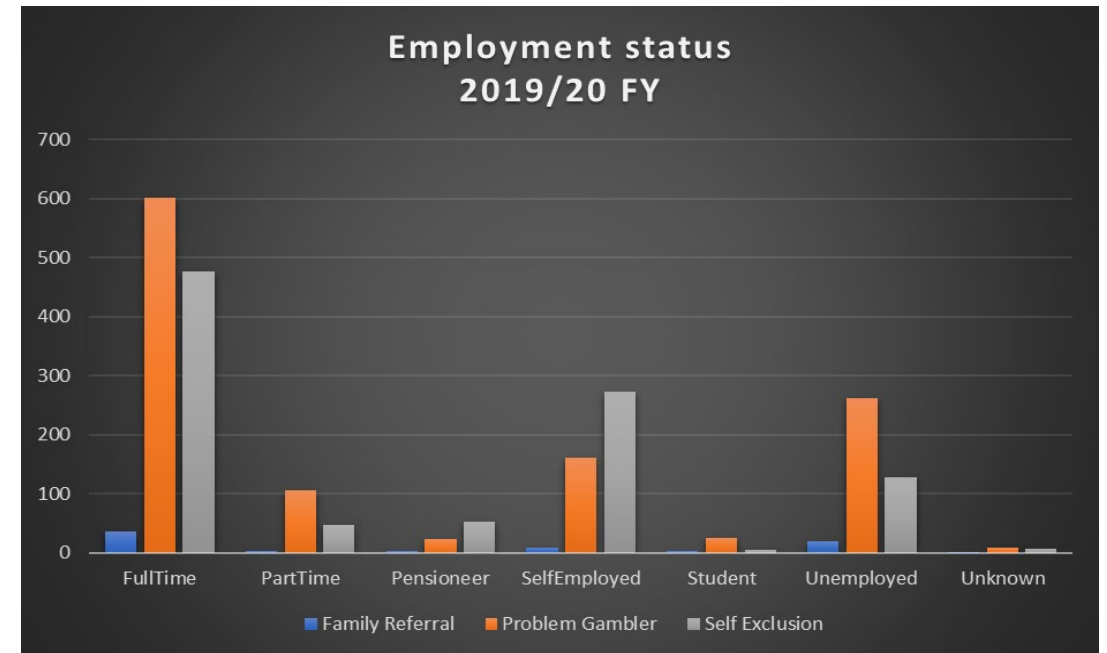
- ⇒ Due to social isolation during spatial distancing, and these stressors in conjunction with substantial changes in gambling markets (land-based, online) during the pandemic have significantly influenced gambling behaviours.
- ⇒ For both 2019/20 and 2020/21 financial year we had 2 Relapse clients respectively and in 2021/22 the number increased and we had 16 relapse clients.

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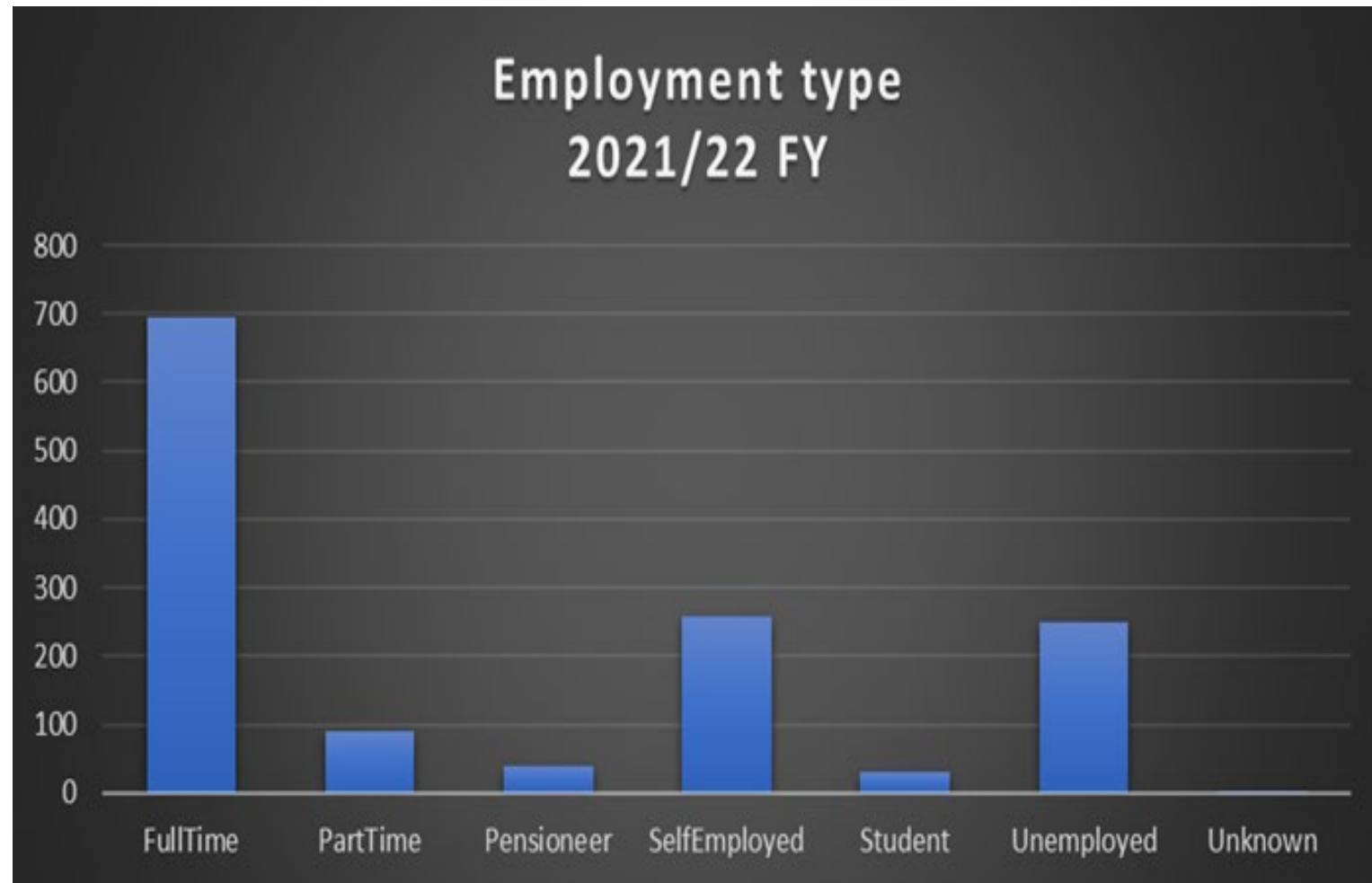
Observed rise of the online betting trends: Employment status

☞ In the 2019/20 the Foundation received a referral of about 866 punters who were employed (part-time/self-employed/full-time employed) and in 2020/21 the number decreased to 271 and then increased drastically in 2021/22 financial year to 1042.



Observed rise of the online betting trends: Employment status

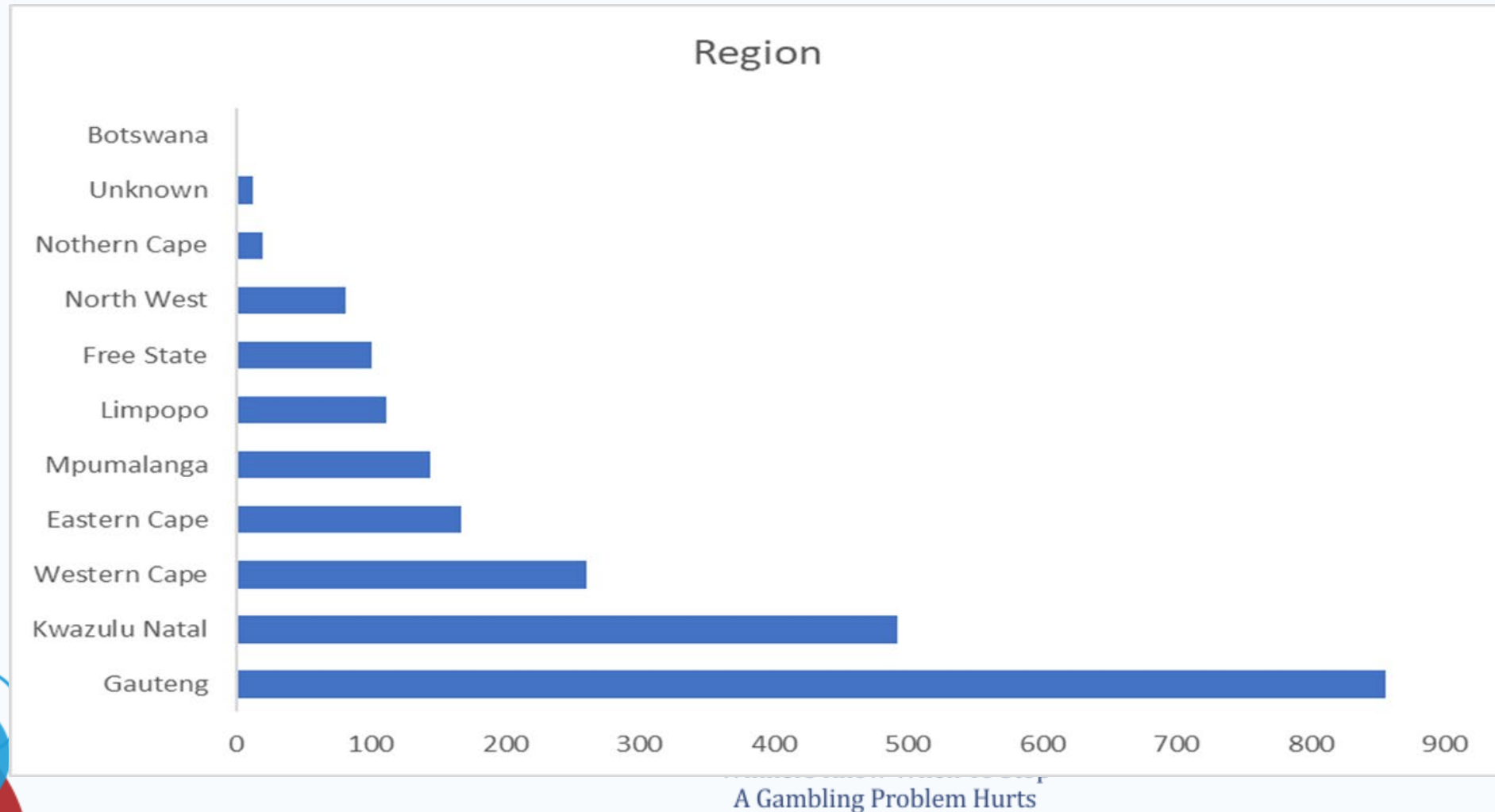
- ☞ In terms of those who were unemployed the number of clients referred in 2019/20 financial year were 262 and the number rose to 878 in 2020/21 financial year.
- ☞ In 2021/22 FY, the number dropped rapidly to 250.
- ☞ These financial crises could have influenced gambling behaviours and exacerbated gambling problem.



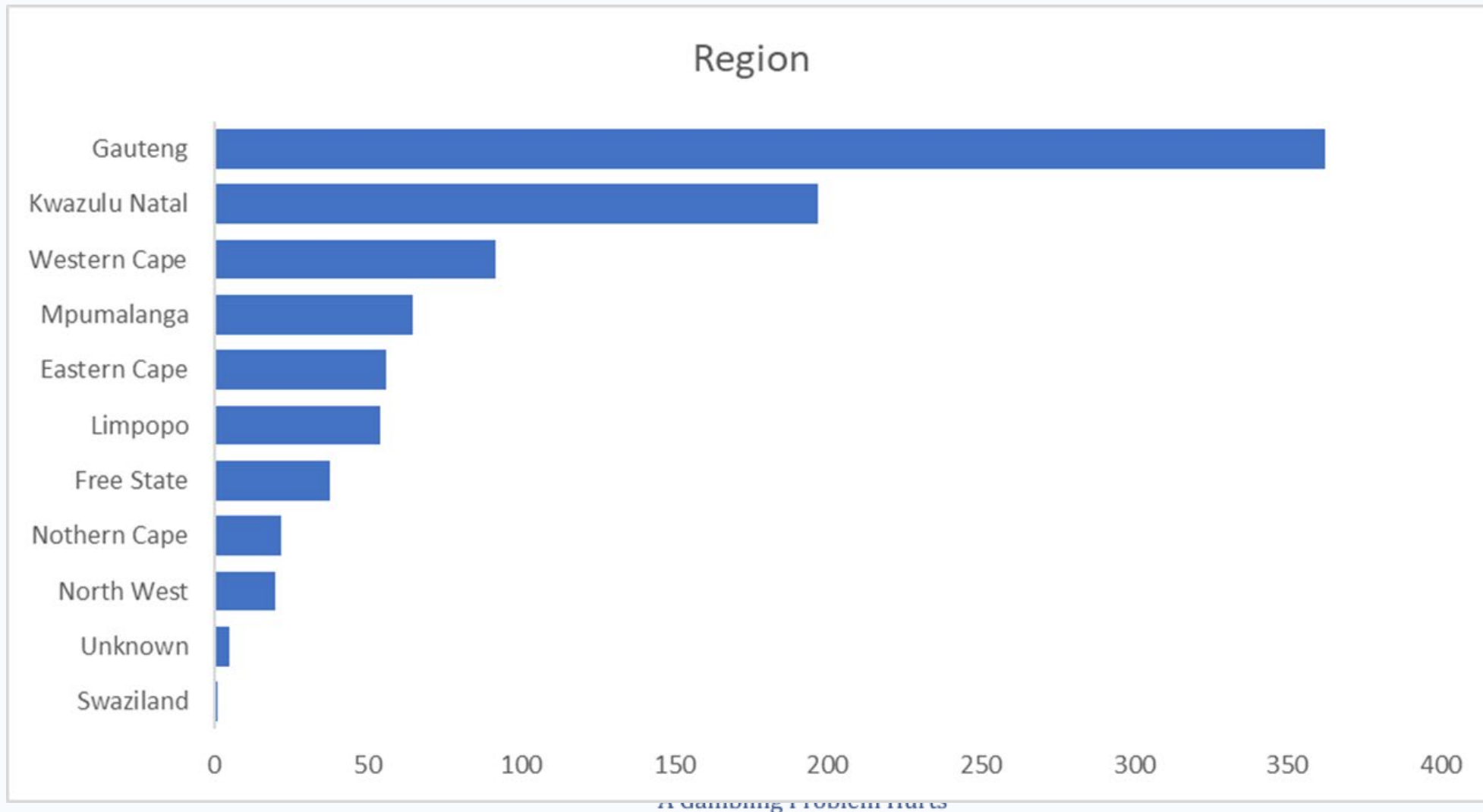
Observed rise of the online betting trends: Age group

- ☞ We have seen a change in terms of the age group of punters whereby in 2019/21, the Foundation received a referral of 965 youth; 1056 adults and 132 elderly persons.
- ☞ Lesser youth(349) sought psychotherapeutic intervention in 2020/21 than the previous year and the number of adults (451) drastically decreased as compared to 2019/20 financial year and far lesser elderly persons (94) were assisted.
- ☞ In the financial year 2021/22 the number of youth referred for therapeutic intervention doubled the number referred from the previous year; and the number of adults referred was 569 in this financial year. Moreover the number of elderly person increased with 7 from the previous financial year.

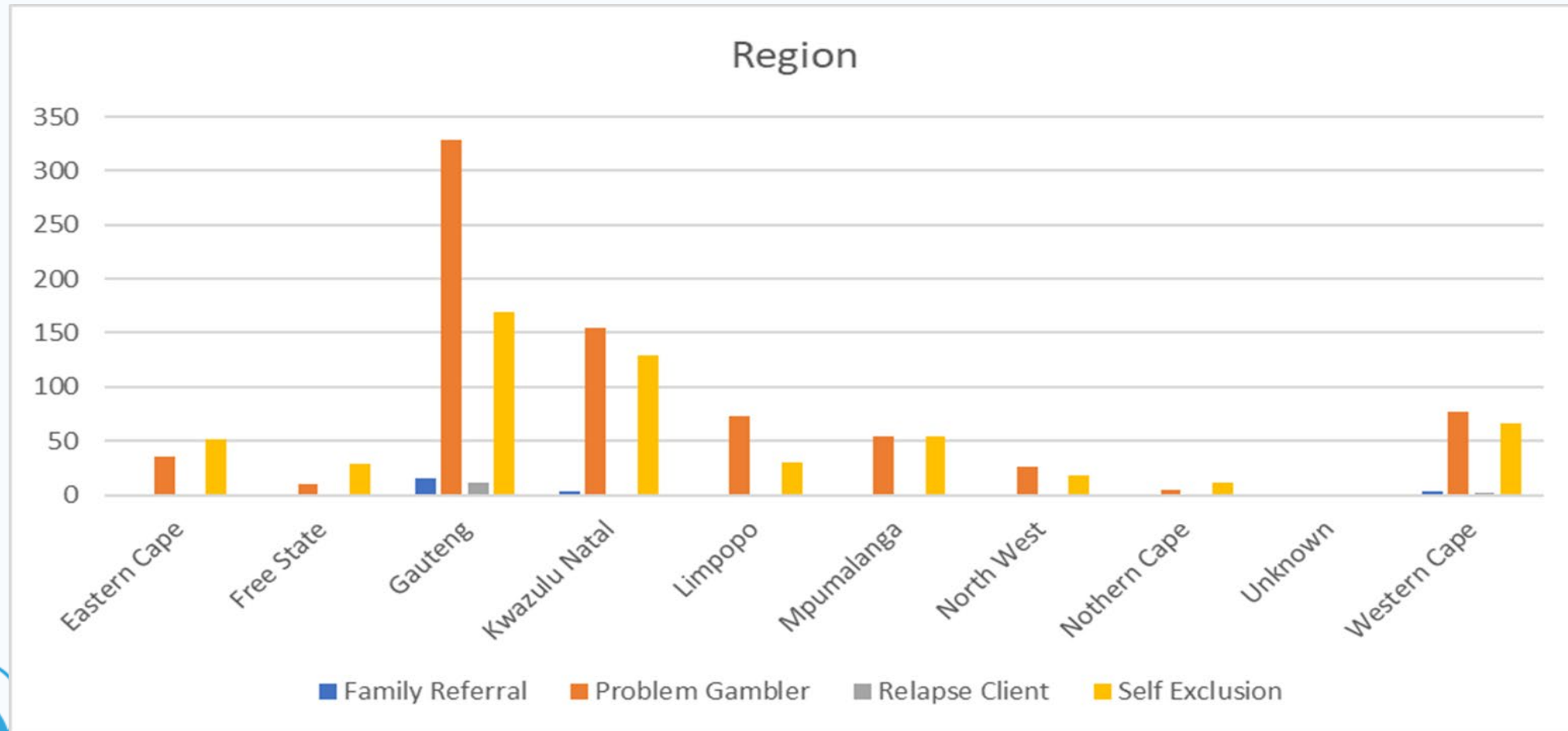
Observed rise of the online betting trends: Provincial stats for FY 2019/20



Observed rise of the online betting trends: Provincial stats for FY 2020/21

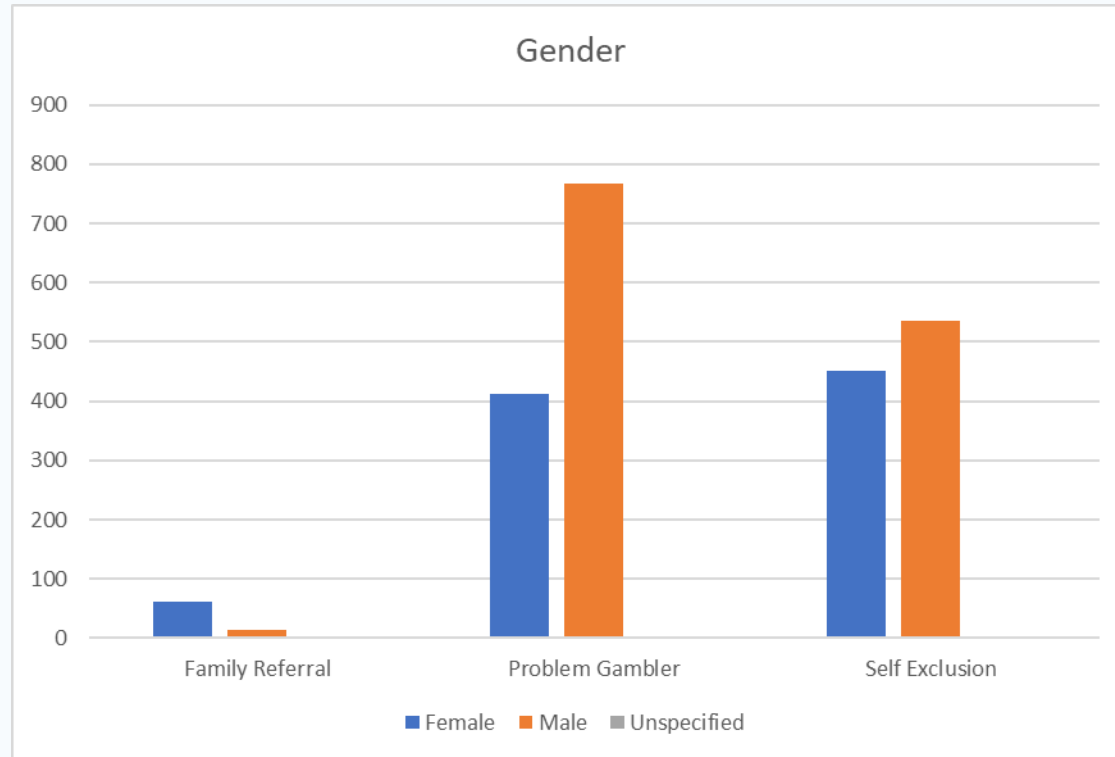


Observed rise of the online betting trends: Provincial stats for FY 2021/22

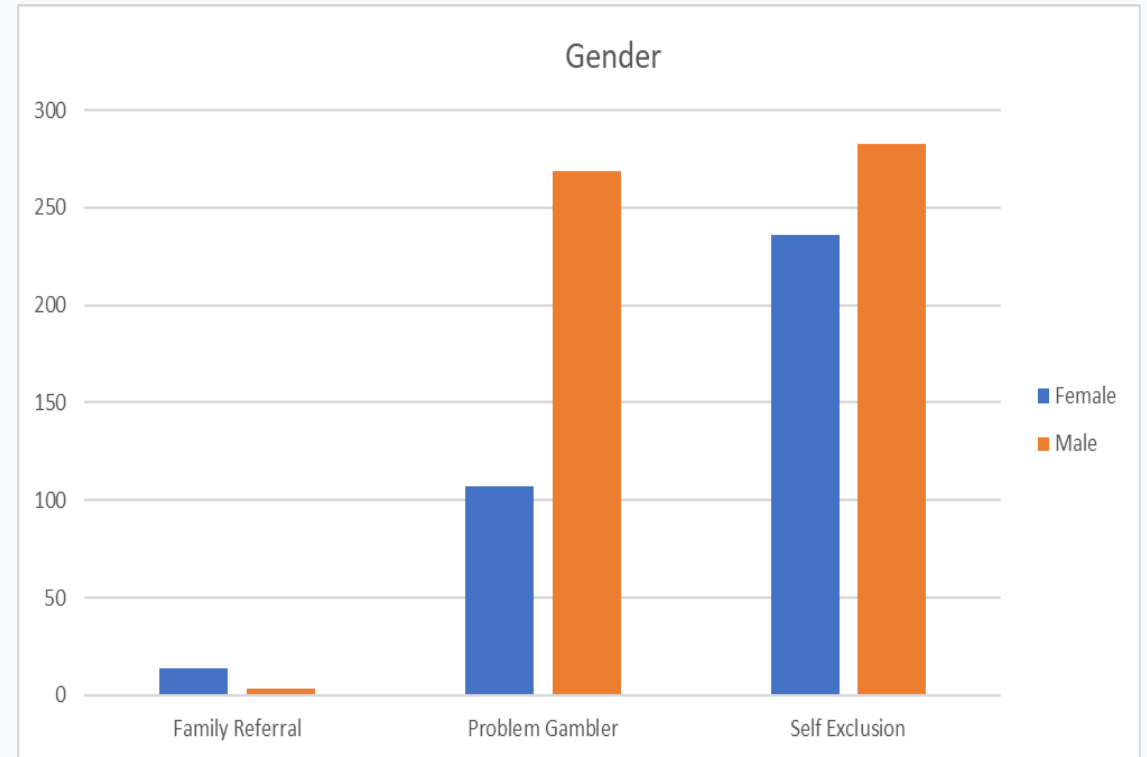


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2019/20 FY

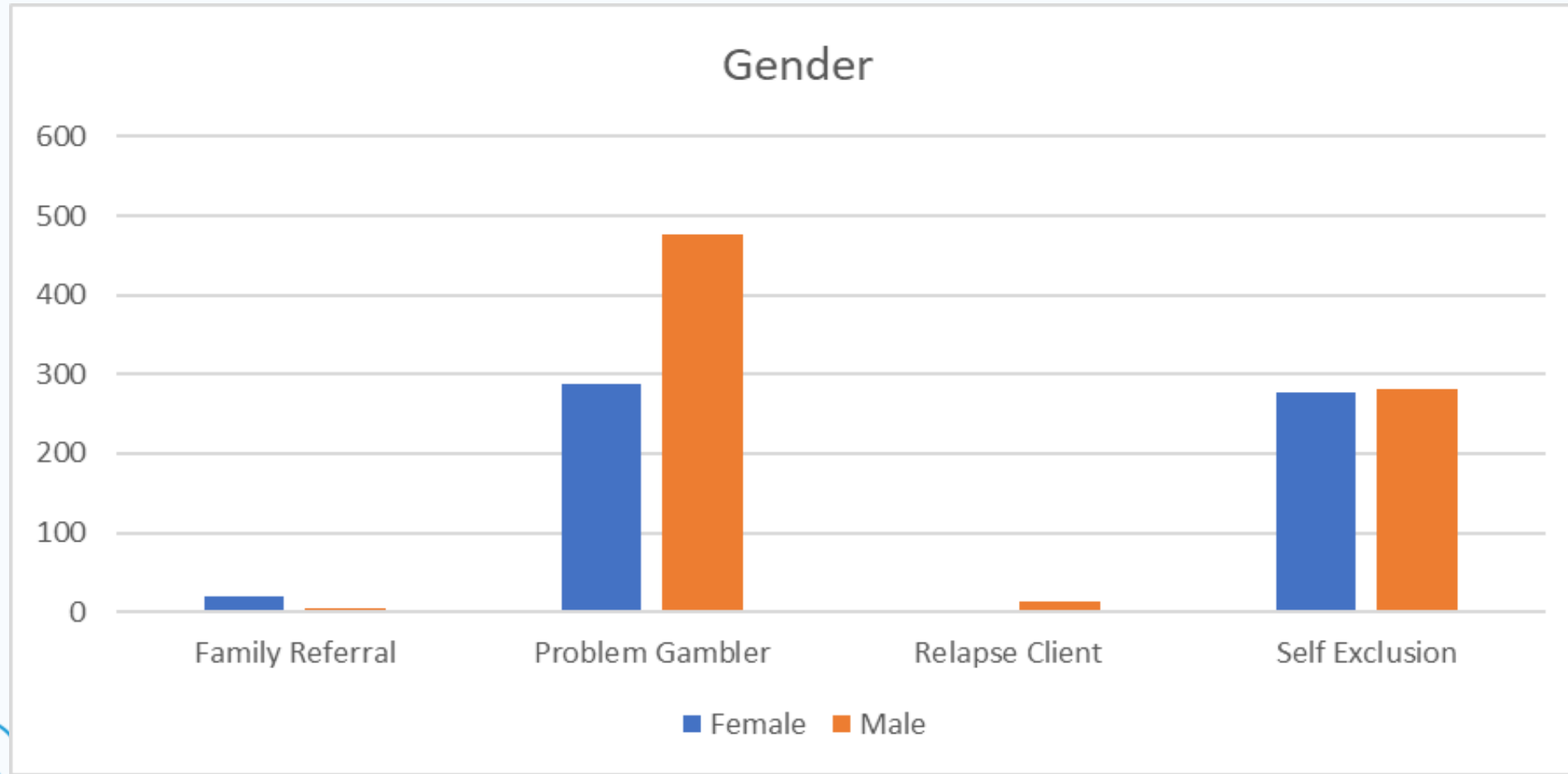


2020/21 FY



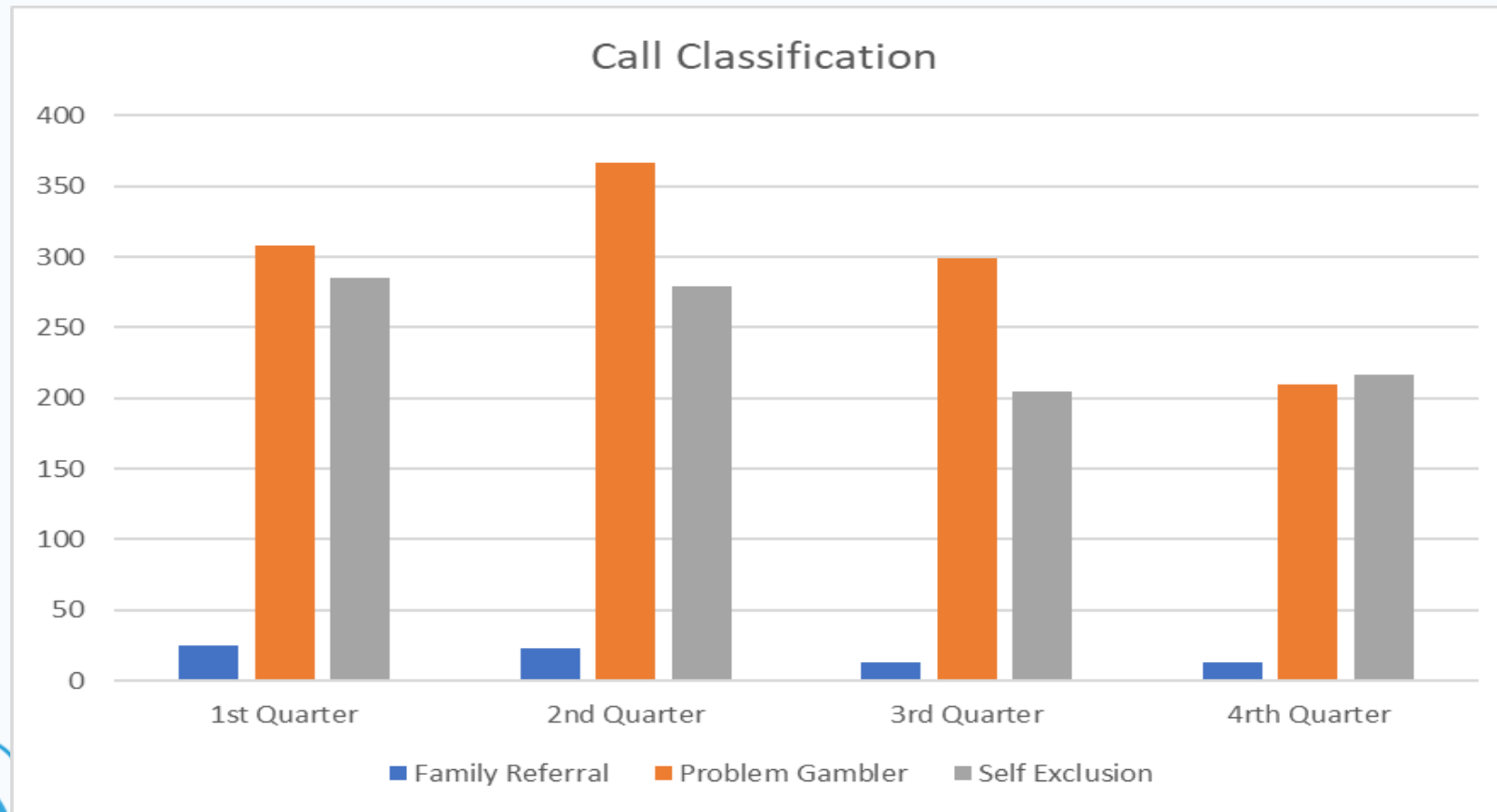
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2021/22 FY



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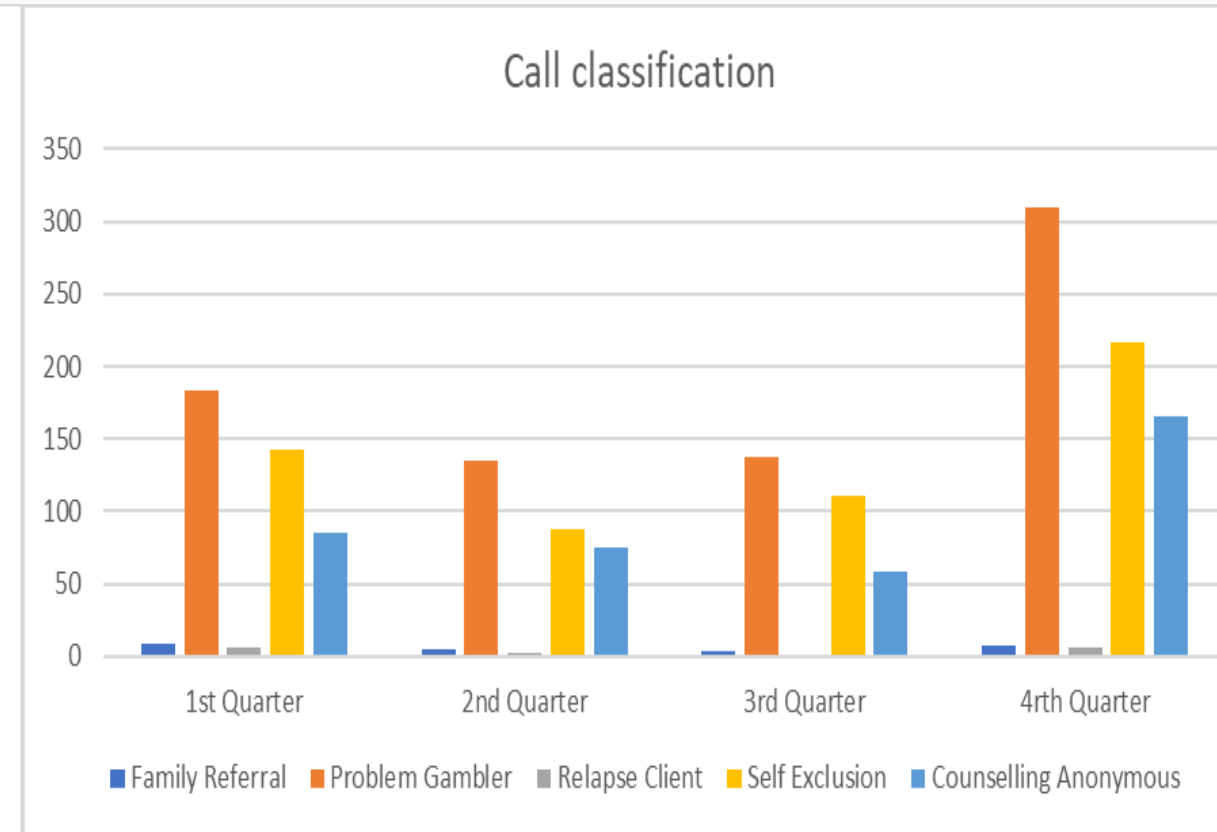
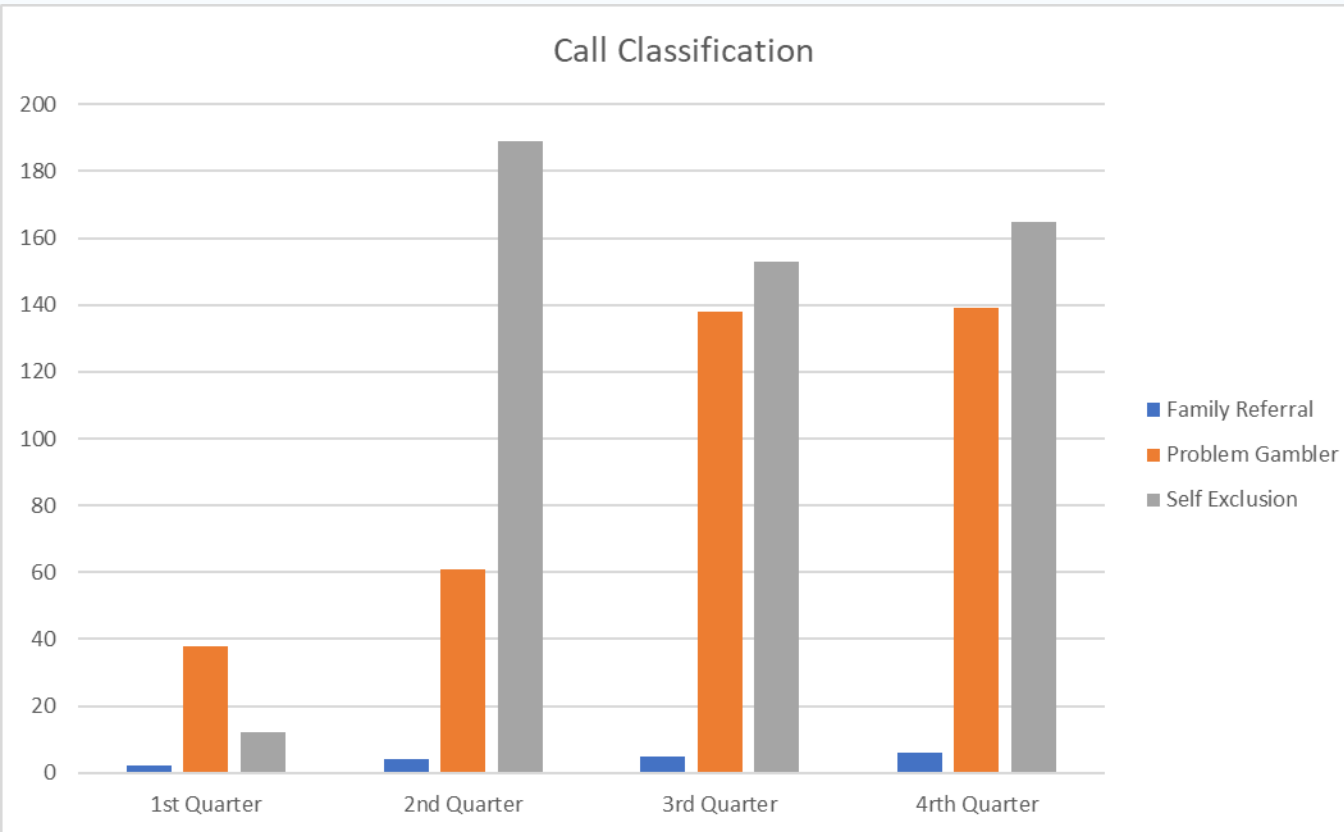
Observed rise of the online betting trends: Stats by case classification 2019/20 FY



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2020/21 FY

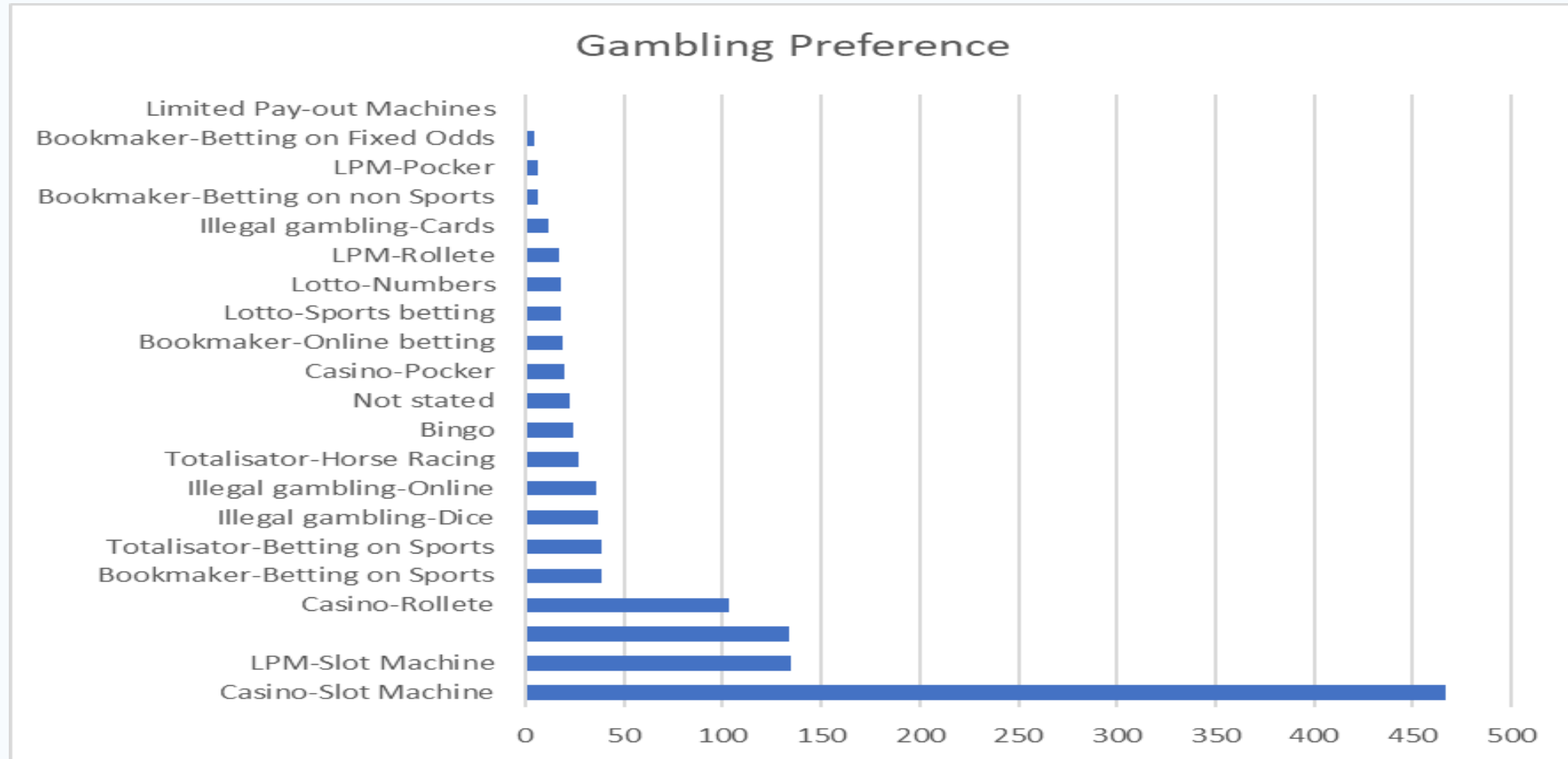
2021/22 FY



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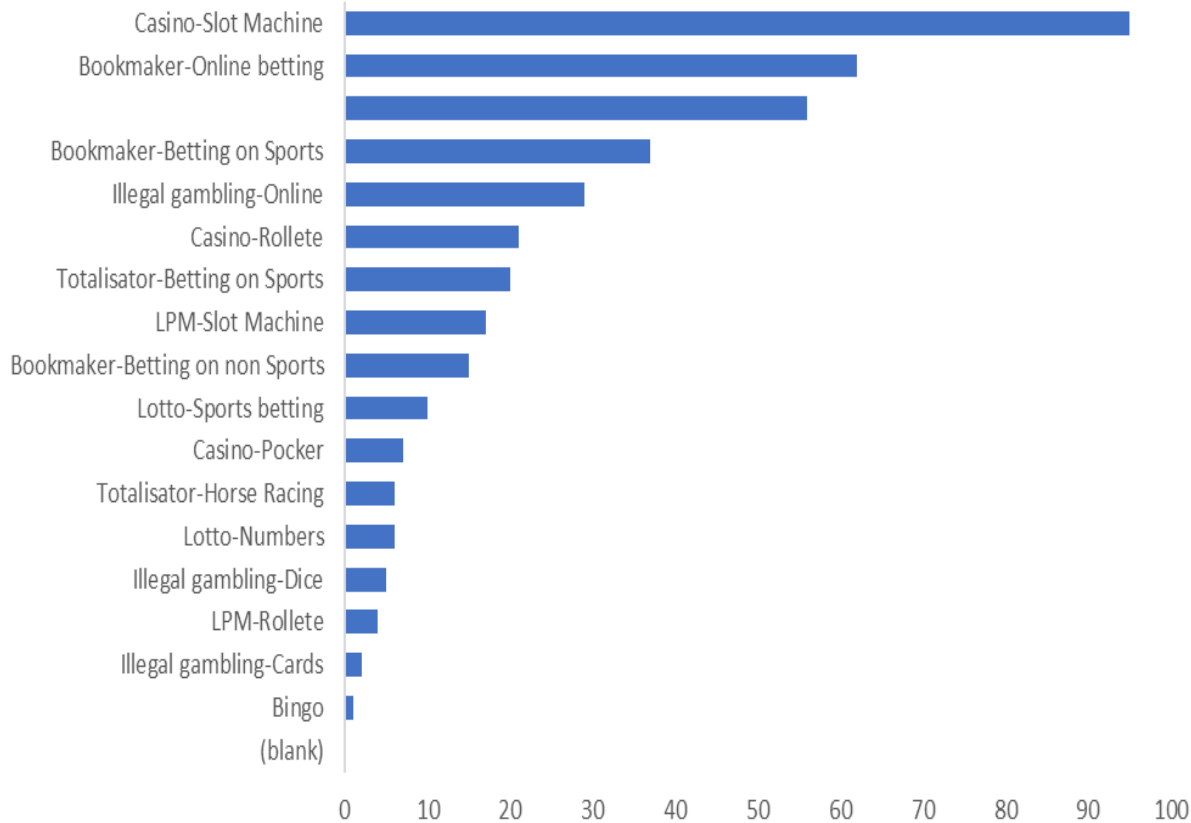
Observed rise of the online betting trends: Difference in gambling mode 2019/21 FY



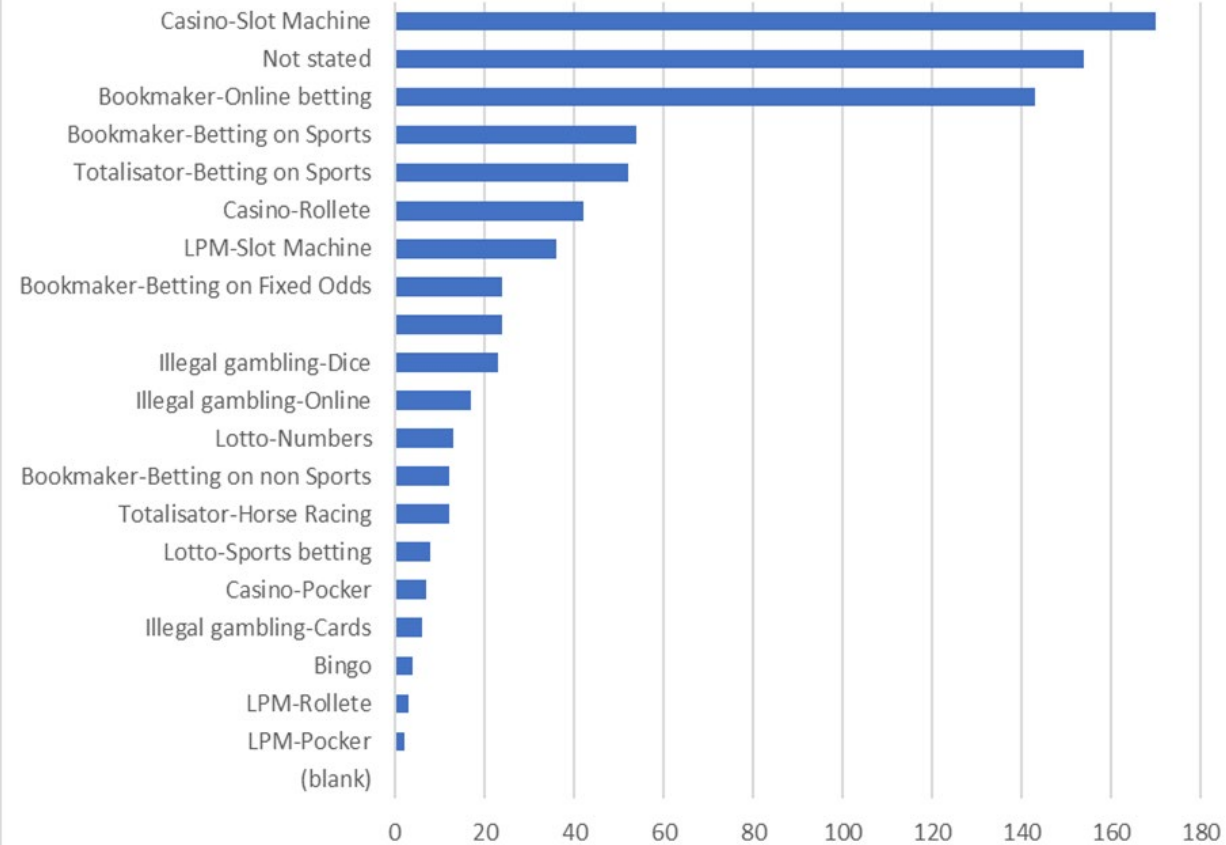
2020/21 FY

2021/22 FY

Gambling Preferences



Gambling preference



Thank you

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