

# A generational comparison of gambling among older adults in Ontario

**Dr. Mark van der Maas**

**Post-doctoral fellow**

**Institute for Mental Health Policy Research**

**camh**

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# Background

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# Older Adults and Gambling

Older adults have shown generally lower rates of gambling participation and problem gambling compared to other adult cohorts.

Most older adults gamble because they enjoy it and do so safely

- Casinos provide a safe environment to engage in social leisure activities
- Some suggest that concern over older adults is the result of stereotypes surrounding older age, not real harm (Hope & Havir, 2002)

Some features of older adulthood could create vulnerabilities for PG

- Fixed or limited incomes, shrinking social networks, reduced leisure options

Demographics in Canada are shifting where older adults make up increasingly large portions of our society

- Largely a result of baby boomers entering into older adulthood.

# Older adults and the gaming industry



# Generational differences

Two generations in older adulthood now

- Silent Generation: 1925-1942
- Baby Boom Generation: 1943-1960

Why would we expect to see differences?

Explanation 1: The Silent Generation has more conservative attitudes toward gambling

- Negative attitudes are associated with lower odds of participation and problems
- The Silent Generation generally shows more conservative attitudes
- The Baby Boom generation has had legalized gambling for a larger portion of their lives

Explanation 2: The Baby Boom Generation has more liberal spending habits

- The Baby Boom Generation hasn't dealt with major financial hardship (WW2, The great Depression)
- The Baby Boom Generation have fewer savings and value leisure more highly

# 2

## The Study

# Research questions

## Question 1

- Are there actual differences between these two generations in terms of gambling activities and gambling harm?

## Question 2

- Are there differences in attitudes toward gambling and gambling spending habits?



# Survey description

This research was conducted with support from Gambling Research Exchange Ontario and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

2087 older adults over 55, collected fall 2013

Intercept- 1 Casino, 6 Racinos (all have slots/EGMs)

- Entering and leaving the gambling venue
- Space provided by the venue

Small gift card incentive

Assisted survey with trained interviewer on tablet computer –in English

Quotas based on age and gender

# Analysis and Measures

Weighted for number of visits per year

- Accounts for regular gamblers being more likely to be included in survey.

Largely descriptive

- Comparisons between continuous measures made with independent samples t-tests
- Comparisons between categorical measures made with chi square tests
- Log transformations used for non-normal distributions

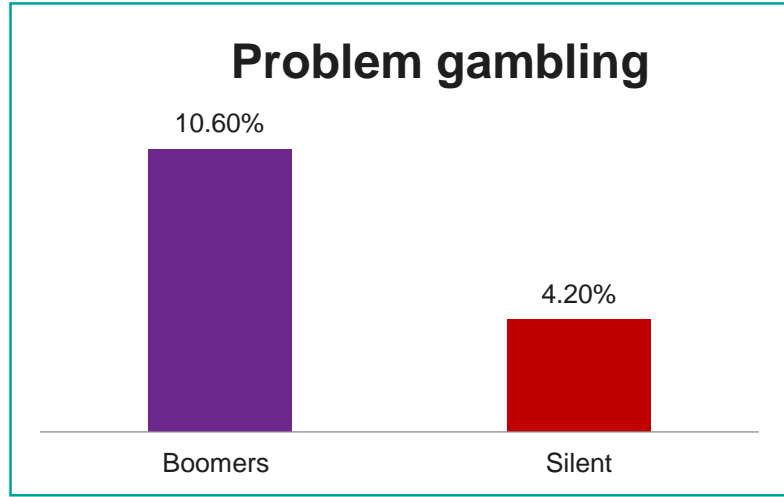
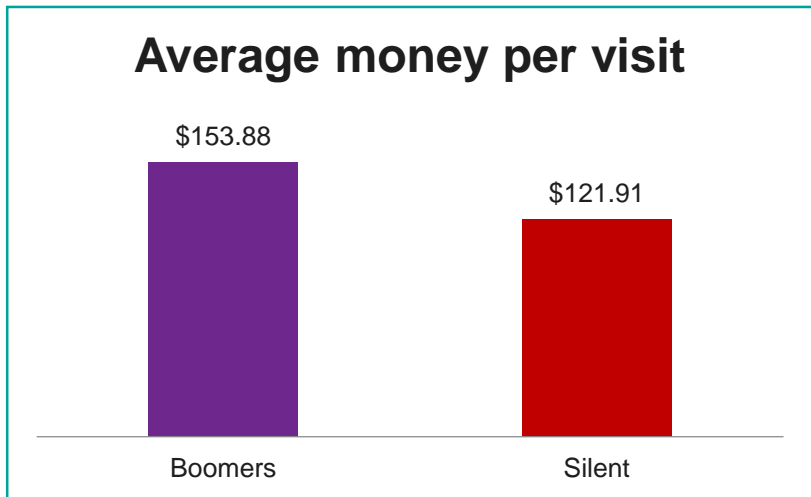
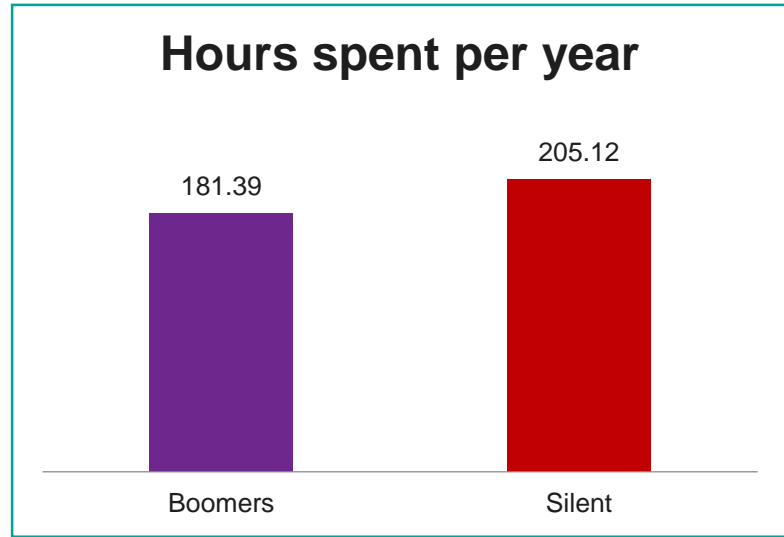
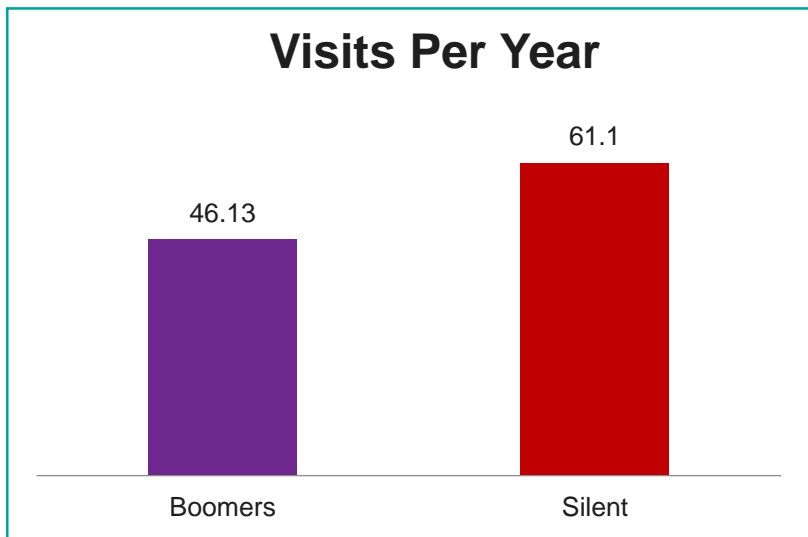
Measures

- Problem gambling as measure by PGSI (8+)
- Number of visits to the casino
- Money spent per year
- Time spent per year
- Legal status of types of gambling
- Opinions on availability

# 3

## Results

# Results: Gambling behaviours



## Results: Attitudes

Both generations were largely in support of all forms of gambling being legal

- Greater proportion of Baby Boomers were unsupportive of dog racing and animal fighting
  - > Both were supported by the majority

Greater proportion of Silent Generation thought gambling had equal harm and benefit for Canadian society (48.5% vs. 43.2%)

More Baby Boomers thought gambling was too widely available (20.6% vs. 16.6%)

More Baby Boomers supported expansion of casinos in Ontario (44.8% vs. 37.1%)

# Discussion

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# Conclusions

The younger generation of older adults showed much higher rates of problem gambling

- Despite spending less time gambling in the past
- Largely seems tied to per visit spending

The older generation does not show more conservative attitudes toward gambling

- Baby Boomers were significantly less supportive of some forms of gambling
  - > Appears to be linked to more to attitudes about animal rights than gambling

Baby Boomer were both more wary of the benefits of gambling and more supportive of casino expansion

- Seems somewhat contradictory

# Implications

Higher rates of problem gambling in the incoming cohort of older adults deserves more attention

- Previous assumptions about the protective nature of older age needs to be reassessed

Higher rates of problem gambling in the Baby Boom generation does not appear to reflect more liberal gambling attitudes

- This challenges possibly stereotypical assumptions concerning conservatism of older adults affecting gambling behaviours

Baby Boomers have higher spending on gambling but attitudes about spending were not captured

- More rigorous design is needed to further explore the relationship between spending and problem gambling as an explanation for generational differences



## Citation

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Contact: [mark.vandermaas@camh.ca](mailto:mark.vandermaas@camh.ca)

**Thank You**

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