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PRESS STATEMENT

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Insightful research funded by Responsible Gambling Trust (RGT) reveals patterns of gaming machine player behaviour in casinos.

July 18, London: An RGT funded study reviewed loyalty card data from more than 5 million casino visits made by more than 855,000 visitors between 2012 and 2014.

Researchers from University of Liverpool and University of Salford found that:
- On average players in the study visited the casino 1.2 times per year, but there were some players (1,200) who visited twice a week or more.
- Intensity of play, measured by machine player losses per minute, was significantly higher late at night and in the early hours, compared with other times.
- Less than a third (28%) of all visits to the casinos (excluding those solely for food and drink) involved play on gaming machines. The typical visit included play on gaming machines for close to or a little less than an hour and a loss of around £25.
- Typically, casino gamblers at machines exhibit "loss aversion" demonstrated by longer gaps before returning after a loss.
- However, 2% of the approx. 15,000 players showed a significant tendency towards chasing their losses – returning sooner to the casino after a loss than they would normally do – which is widely considered a key indicator of gambling related harm.
- These 'Chronic Loss chasers' were disproportionately likely to be young, male and heavy-spending players, which matches findings from past Gambling Commission prevalence studies.
- 27% of all players studied had at least one six-month period when they had a statistically significant tendency to between-session loss-chasing.
- There are positive signs that for the vast majority 'extreme behaviour' can be self-correcting. Only 3% of those who had a long session (five hours or more) in the first quarter of the review period proved to be persistently returning for long sessions three years later.

Marc Etches, Chief Executive of the Responsible Gambling Trust, said:

"This new research helps us understand the nature of play in casinos, which in turn will help evolve the design of effective interventions for at risk players in casinos. The research highlights intensity of play as a marker for poorly controlled gaming, which is particularly prevalent late at night and in the early hours of the morning. We note the recommendation for further research on how gambling behaviour varies by time of day.

We'd like to thank Rank for their willingness to open up their data for this research. We look forward to seeing the wider casino industry develop and improve their staff training and intervention work as a result of these findings."

Professor David Forrest, Professor of Economics, University of Liverpool, said

"In the last triennial review, it was noted that very little was known in this field that could inform regulatory decisions. This study was intended to fill part of that knowledge gap. We found that regulation on the stakes and prizes of machines impinged little, if at all, on typical players. Only a small proportion of all visits feature extreme or atypical play. However, the absolute number is still high and were shown to be episodic, which poses challenges for future monitoring and intervention programmes."

Professor Ian McHale, Professor of Sports Analytics, University of Manchester Salford, said

"The broad picture we found is that typical casino users play to a modest scale, with visits lasting about an hour and incurring a loss of around £25. However, our findings underline the need for regular monitoring of play for 'between session loss chasing,' which holds significant potential as a means of identifying at-risk players and designing appropriate interventions."

Richard Wade, Director of Compliance & Responsible Gambling, The Rank Group, said

"The majority of people gamble responsibly but the casino industry recognises its duty to help minimise harm from problem gambling and is constantly looking for new ways to help those who are most vulnerable. Research can only improve our understanding in this area and help us to develop the most effective intervention tools.   At Rank, we are therefore very pleased that our gaming machine data has enabled a comprehensive study of player behaviour to be produced and we will use insight from this research to inform our approach to customer intervention."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Responsible Gambling Trust commissioned Professor David Forrest, Professor of Economics, University of Liverpool and Professor Ian G McHale, Professor of Sports Analytics, University of Manchester, Salford to conduct this research.

The full report is available on the Responsible Gambling Trust website [here](#) titled "Tracked Play on B1 Gaming Machines in British Casinos."

The brief was threefold:
1. To organise the player data to show typical and atypical patterns in relation to frequency of play, level of spend and time spent.
2. To investigate the impact of players winning or losing on decisions about when to return to the casino to play again.
3. To examine the extent to which atypical behavior by players is transient or persistent over time.

To provide some historical context, the 2012 Health Surveys for England and Scotland estimated that 3% of casino table game players and 7% of those playing slot machines in the past year were problem gamblers.

The Responsible Gambling Trust is the leading charity in the UK committed to minimising gambling-related harm. As an independent national charity funded by donations from the gambling industry, the Responsible Gambling Trust funds education, prevention and treatment services and commissions research to broaden public understanding of gambling-related harm. The aim is to stop people getting into problems with their gambling, and ensure that those that do develop problems receive fast and effective treatment and support. Click here to find out more: http://www.responsiblegamblingtrust.org.uk/

The Responsible Gambling Trust raises over £7 million each year in voluntary contributions from the gambling industry operating in Great Britain. This donation based system was proposed under the Gambling Act 2005 and is prescribed by the Gambling Commission in its Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice.

The Responsible Gambling Trust's programme of treatment, education, harm prevention and research are guided by the National Responsible Gambling Strategy, which is defined by the independent Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) and endorsed by the Gambling Commission. The RGSB, the Gambling Commission and RGT work together under the terms of an agreement in place since 2012.