

Second Session at the Virtual Poker Table: A Contemporary Study of Actual Online Poker Activity

Online poker availability has increased over the past decade.

Online poker players tend to play more frequently than live (e.g., in a land-based casino) poker players and may be at elevated risk of experiencing gambling problems.



Investigated **online poker and financial activity** using electronic betting records over a **two-year period** from a cohort of **2,489 players** newly subscribed to a major European gambling operator.

Measures of poker activity:



Number of Sessions

Total number of sessions played (cash games and tournaments)



Sessions per Day

Number of Sessions divided by Duration



Average Spend per Session

Total Overall Spend divided by Number of Sessions



Percent Lost

100 x Net Loss divided by Total Overall Spend



Duration

Number of days between the first and last days of poker activity, inclusive



Net Loss

Difference between Total Overall Spend and total winnings



Total Overall Spend

Total Euros (€) put into pots in cash game hands and spent on tournaments



Measures of financial activity included **total amount deposited** (sum of Euros deposited via completed deposits to the gambling site over the two-year study period).

The Study

Key Findings

Poker Activity Measure	Number of Sessions	Duration (days) max = 730	Sessions per Day	Net Loss (€)	Average Spend per Session (€)	Total Overall Spend (€)	Percent Lost (%)
Median for most involved 1% (players in top 1% by Total Overall Spend)	1,149.0	354.0	3.5	- 46.0 *	318.2	272,581.4	0.0
Median for remaining 99% (players not in top 1% by Total Overall Spend)	42.5	77.0	0.8	52.4	7.7	427.2	13.9



Among all players, the median total amount deposited was €176.4.

*A negative net loss means total winnings were greater than Total Overall Spend.

Key Takeaways

At the lowest stakes U.S. live cash games, most players start with \$200 to \$300 on the table. Most players in this study deposited less than €200 over two years.

Compared to available stakes and minimum allowable bets in live poker, most online poker players play lower stakes and commit less cash per session to poker play.

The most involved 1% had disproportionately higher financial involvement and time commitment, but that involvement did not translate to higher losses.

More research on play patterns is needed to determine when higher financial involvement and time playing poker are signs of problems.