



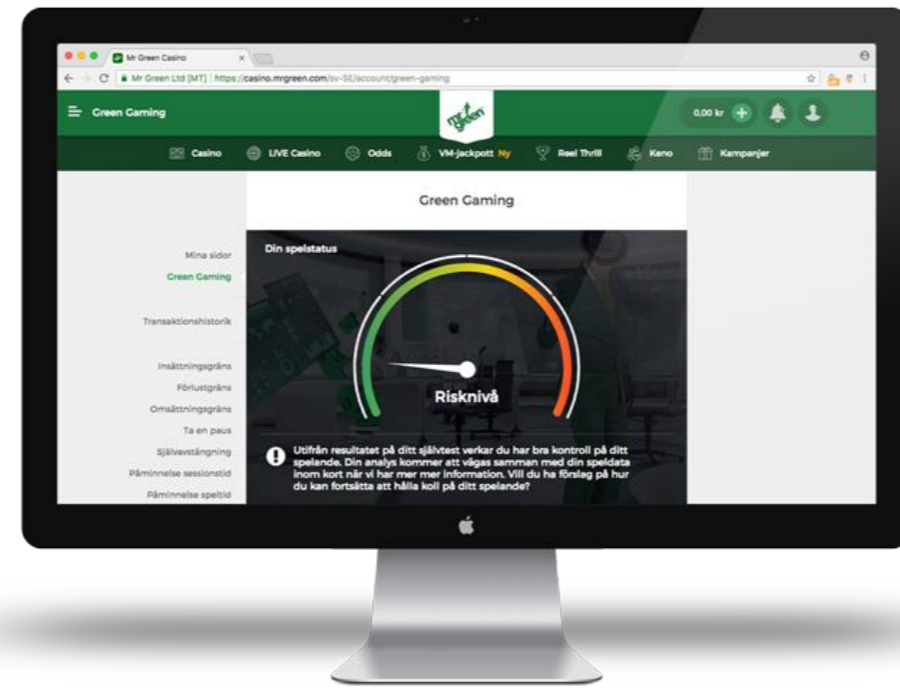
## **Contacting high spending gamblers**

A RCT of brief motivational contact providing  
gambling expenditure feedback

Jakob Jonsson Sustainable Interaction & Stockholm University  
Presentation at New Horizons in RG 2019



**Self Assessments & Interventions**



**Player Tracking Systems**



**Online Training & Treatment**

Sustainable Interaction provides intervention services, which give players and customers the tools to monitor their own gambling and gameplay in order to keep gambling on a healthy and sustainable level.

Online First Posting

# Reaching Out to Big Losers: A Randomized Controlled Trial of Brief Motivational Contact Providing Gambling Expenditure Feedback

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[Author Affiliations](#) ▶

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## Psychology of Addictive Behaviors

Editor: Tammy Chung, PhD



# Disclosure

- Project run and funded by Norsk Tipping (NT)
- Sustainable Interaction external partner regarding training and research
- Full sovereignty in design of study. Conducted without any review or approval by Norsk Tipping regarding any of the content presented and published

# Norway – some facts

- One of the Nordic countries
- 5.3 million inhabitants
- Strict regulated gambling market
- BNP per capita 71,500 USD (2017)
- A land full of oil, fish and cross country skiers



# About Norsk Tipping (NT)

- Owned by the Norwegian state
- Controls around 70 % of the regulated market in Norway
- Broad product portfolio: physical slots, on- and offline lotteries and sports betting, online bingo & online casino
- All gambling at Norsk Tipping is identified and registred (except physical scratch tickets)



# About this project

- Based on an idea from a recovering gambler (+ a parallel Swedish project)
- Internally recruited staff from customer service at NT making the calls, trained in MI (5 days) and supervised by external psychologists
- Pilot in 2015 (n=185) with promising results (Post pilot phase 2016)
- Full scale RCT 2017
- Now a permanent project

# Earlier research

- **Heavy gambling involvement and over consumption predicts gambling problems a year later** (Jonsson et al, 2017)
- **High density of problem gamblers among those with high expenditure** (Pallesen et al, 2016; Public health agency of Sweden 2016)
- **Personalized text feedback in an online gambling environment has shown promising results** (Auer & Griffiths, 2015, 2016; Auer, Malischnig & Griffiths, 2014; Jardin & Wulfert 2014; Wood & Wohl, 2015)
- **Non-problem gamblers do not tend to be disturbed or channelled away by RG tools** (Ivanova et al, 2019)
- **Brief telephone and workbook interventions for people with gambling problems have shown promise** (Abbott et al, 2012, 2018; Hodgins, Stea & Grant 2011)



## Intervention – content in phone call

- Customer asked to estimate their last-year loss...”do you want feedback on the real figure?”
- MI techniques as asking for permission, open-ended questions, reflections and reinforcement of change talk to make customers reflect upon their gambling habits
- Information about possible actions (setting limits, taking a pause/self-exclusion, treatment referral)
- If possible: action taken during call
- Translating setting/changing limits into how much the customer would save
- Letter designed to mirror the telephone call as good as possible

# Research questions

- Investigate the effects of feedback on gambling intensity among the high consumers.
- How does behavioural feedback by telephone and letter affects gambling consumption and use of responsible gambling tools?
- Does a booster follow-up contact impact the results?
- Can we move the customers readiness to change?

# Design

Statistical triplets – matched on age, gender and net losses – randomly assigned to Phone, Letter & Control condition

ITT  $n = 3 \times 1003$

Per protocol  $n = 3 \times 596$

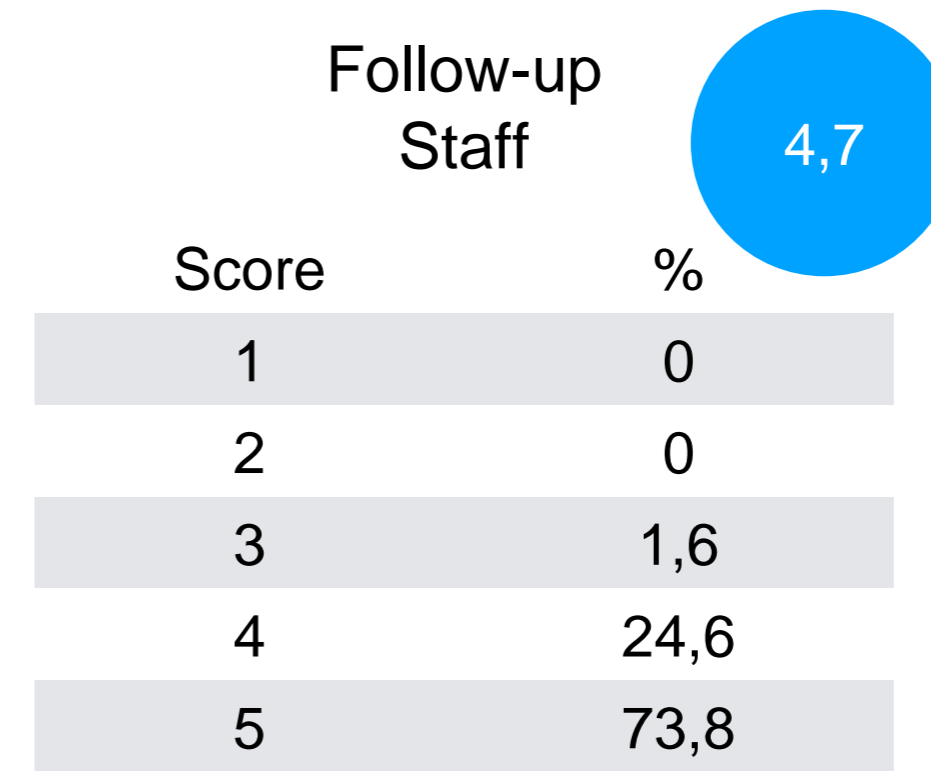
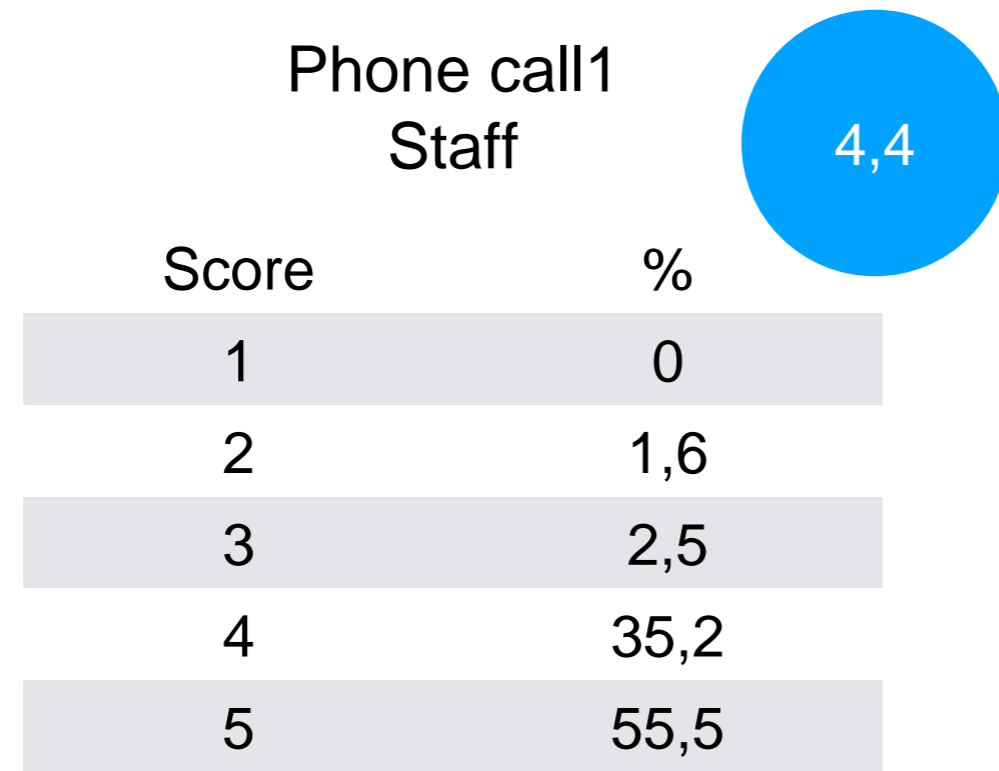
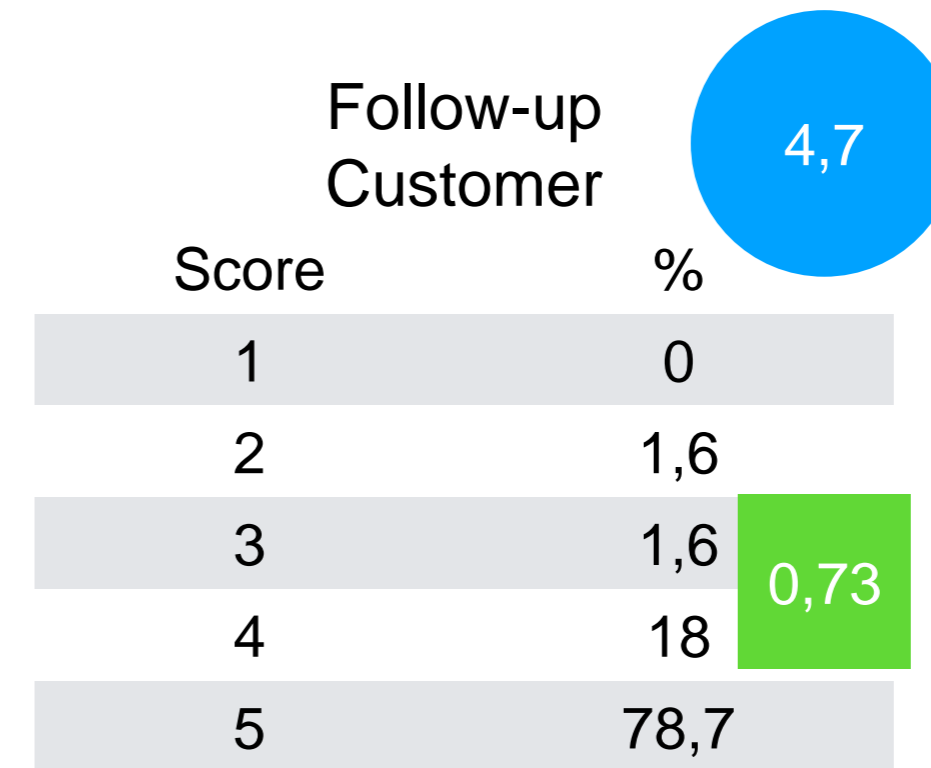
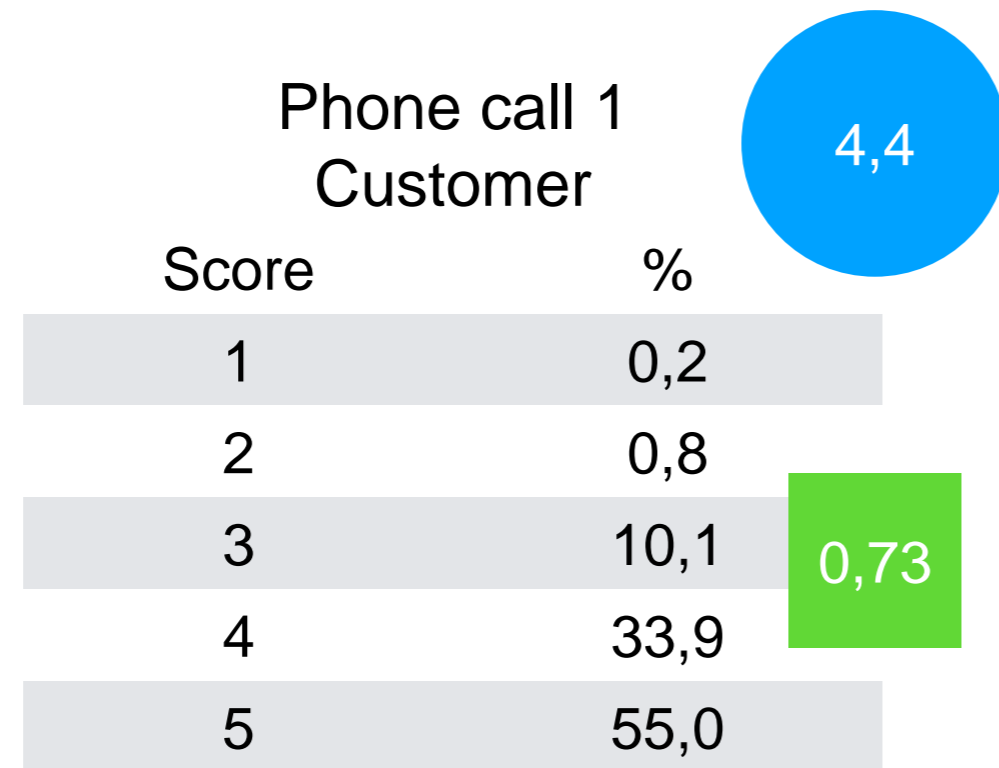
Pairwise comparisons

73 % reached in Phone condition, 85 % of these interested in a conversation

Results 12 weeks after intervention (and exclusive pre-view of 12 month results!)

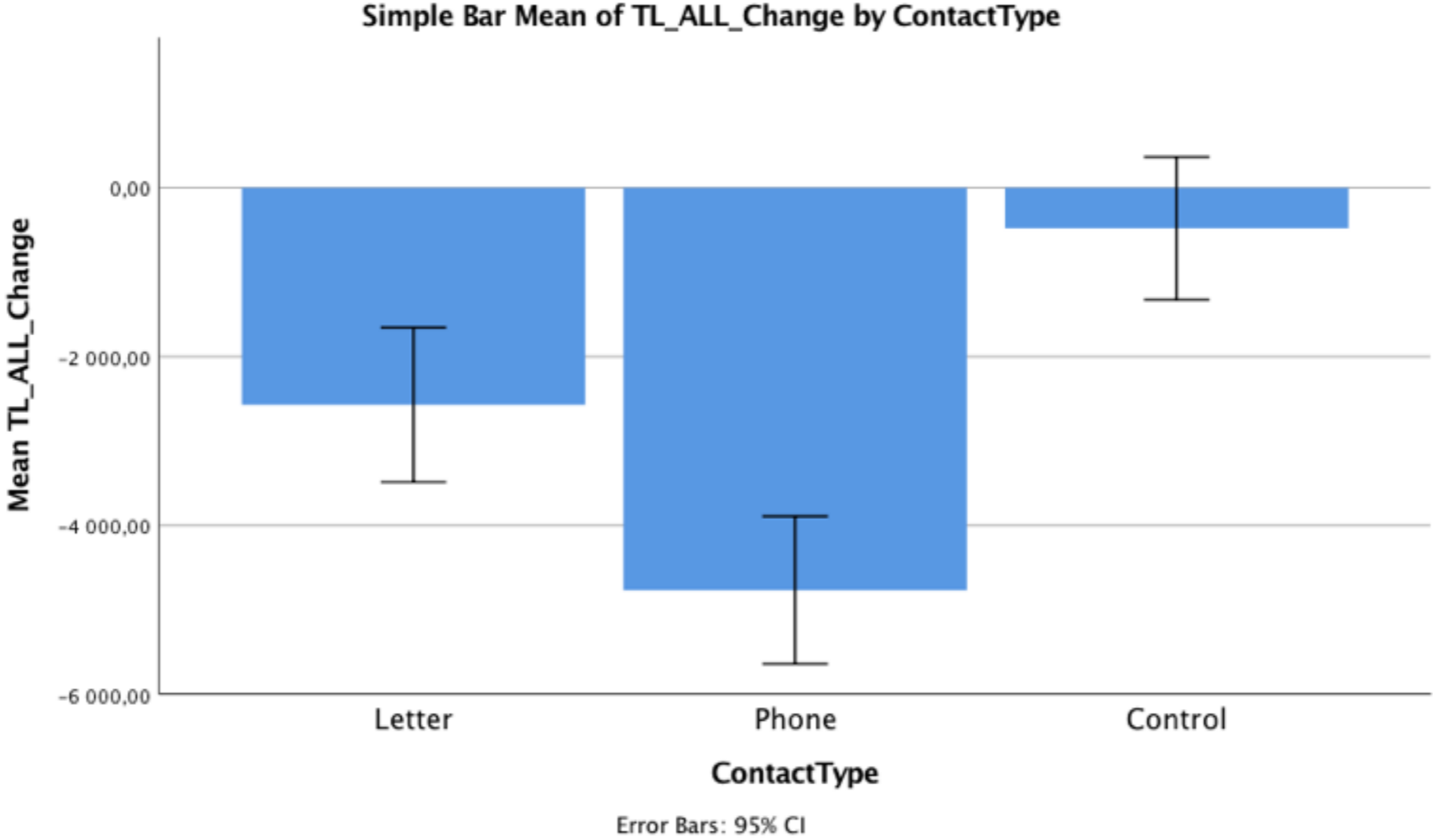
Customers and staffs ratings of calls

# Not so bad...

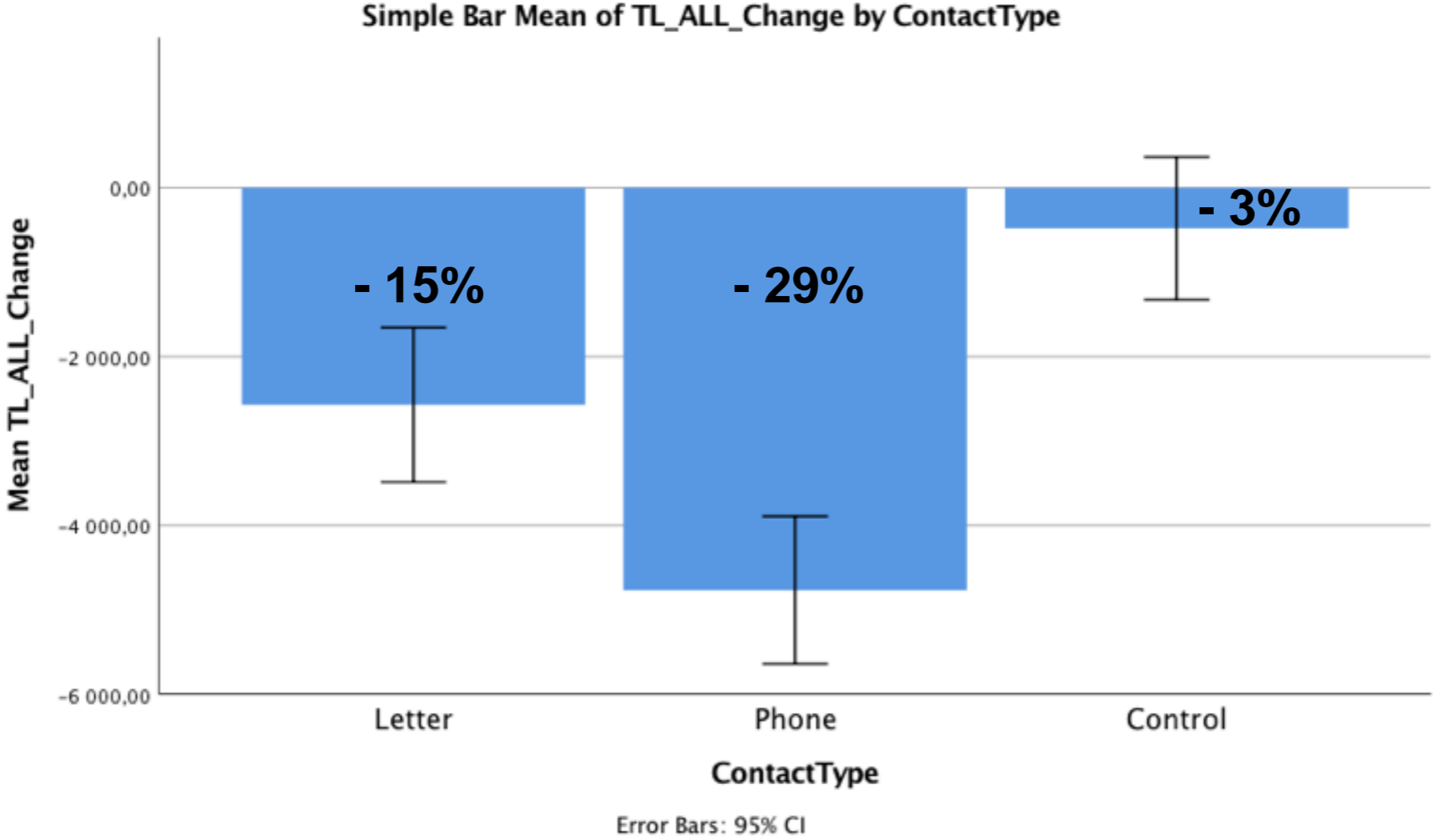


Effect on gambling behaviour

# Reduction in theoretic loss post intervention (12 weeks pre – 12 weeks post)



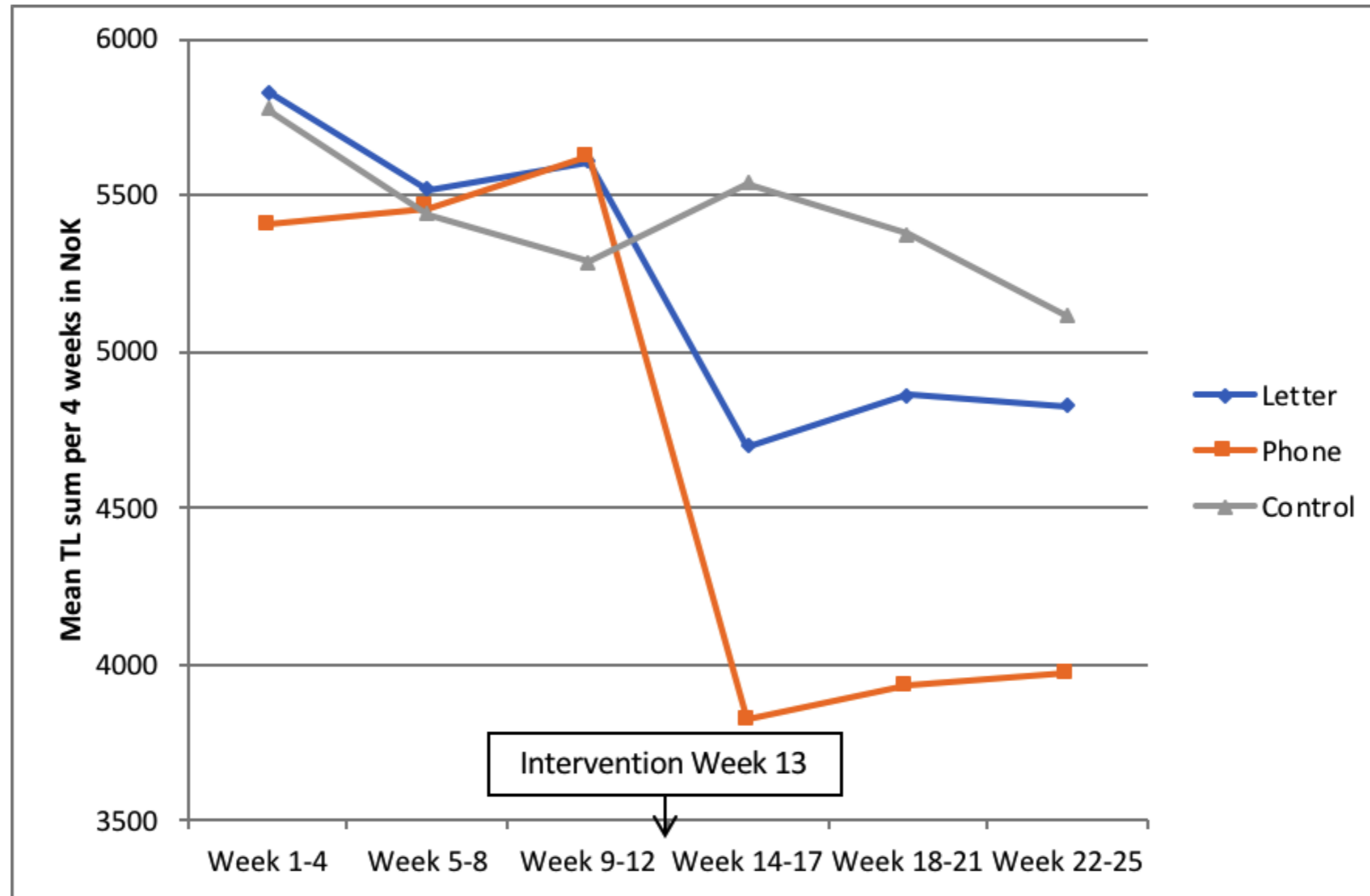
# Reduction in theoretic loss post intervention (12 weeks pre – 12 weeks post)



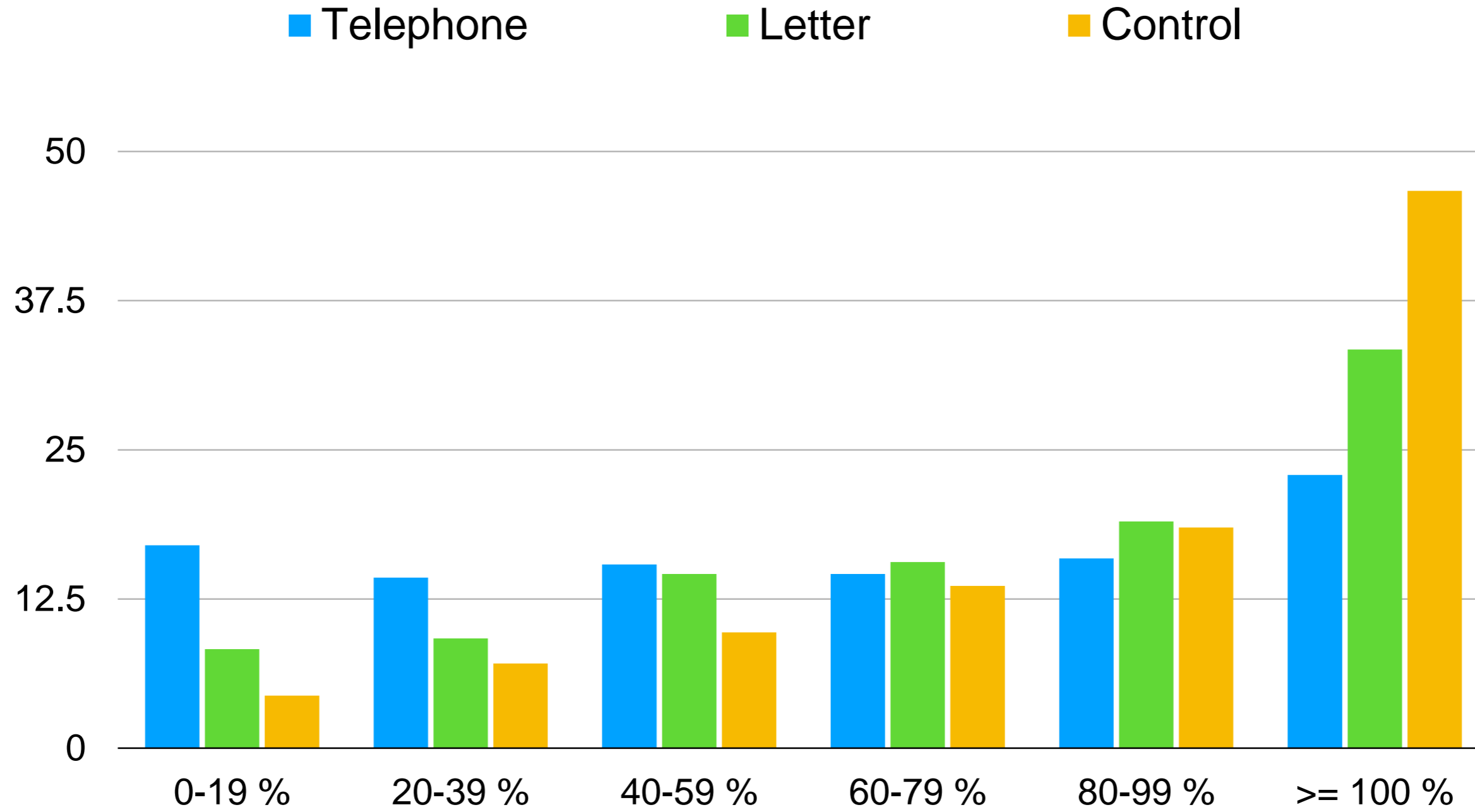


Post Time Period	Short-term Post Period 14 - 17 week			Overall Post Period 14 - 25 week		
Pair-wise Group T-test for Hypotheses H1-H3	Mean Change within Triplets per 4 weeks	t-value	Sign. 2-tailed p-value	Mean Change within Triplets per 4 weeks	t-value	Sign. 2-tailed p-value
Completer Pair N=596; df=595						
H1: Phone vs Control	-1713	-6.55	p< 0.000	-1429	-6.64	p< 0.000
H2: Letter vs Control	-993	-3.69	p< 0.000	-697	-3.15	p< 0.002
H3: Phone vs Letter	-720	-2.92	p< 0.004	-731	-3.47	p< 0.001
ITT Pair N=1003; df=1002						
H1: Phone vs Control	-1083	-5.39	p< 0.000	-1027	-6.25	p< 0.000
H2: Letter vs Control	-819	-3.83	p< 0.000	-789	.4.82	p< 0.000
H3: Phone vs Letter	-264	-1.26	p< 0.209	-229	-1.42	p< 0.157

## Theoretic loss in 4-weeks periods pre and post intervention

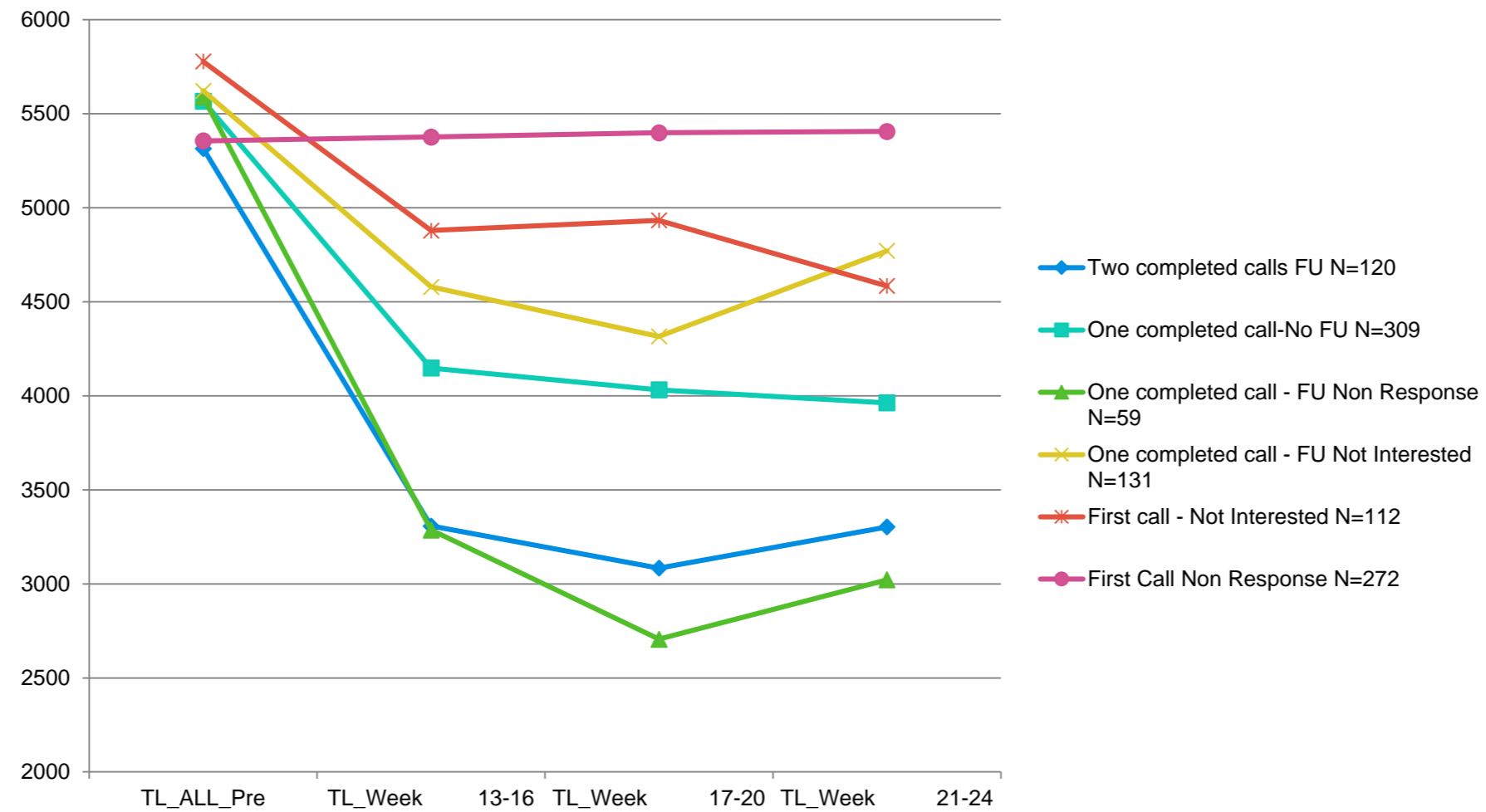


# Wager post vs pre



# Follow-up

No differences intention to follow up (Letter and Phone),  
But wanting to have a follow-up call is a positive predictor.



Effect on RG behaviour

# Use of RG tools

- ***During intervention week***
  - 23.7 % in Phone group lowered their limits (Letter 1.6 % Control 0.6 %)
  - 4.7 % i Phone group self-excluded on a single game (Letter & Control 0 %)
  - No significant differences in raising limits, self-exclusion on all games or pauses between the groups.
- ***Post intervention 12 weeks.***
  - 18 % in Phone group lowered their limits (Letter 9.2 % Control 6.6 %).
  - No differences between the groups post intervention regarding raising limits, self-exclusions and pauses on single games and on all games.

Focus on phone calls

# Focus on the phone calls

- Average length of phone call was 6 min.
- Themes:
  - Information on expenditure 99 % and limits 84 %
  - Pause and self exclusion on single games 7-8 %
  - Pause and self exclusion on all games 1-2 %
  - Helpline 2 % other referral 1 %



# Readiness to change

Readiness of Change	Phase of Phone Call	
	Beginning	End
NT Staff Estimation	%	%
Pre contemplation	85.6	22.9
Contemplation	6.5	16.8
Preparation	5.1	13.7
Action	2.7	46.6

# Readiness to change & theoretic loss reduction

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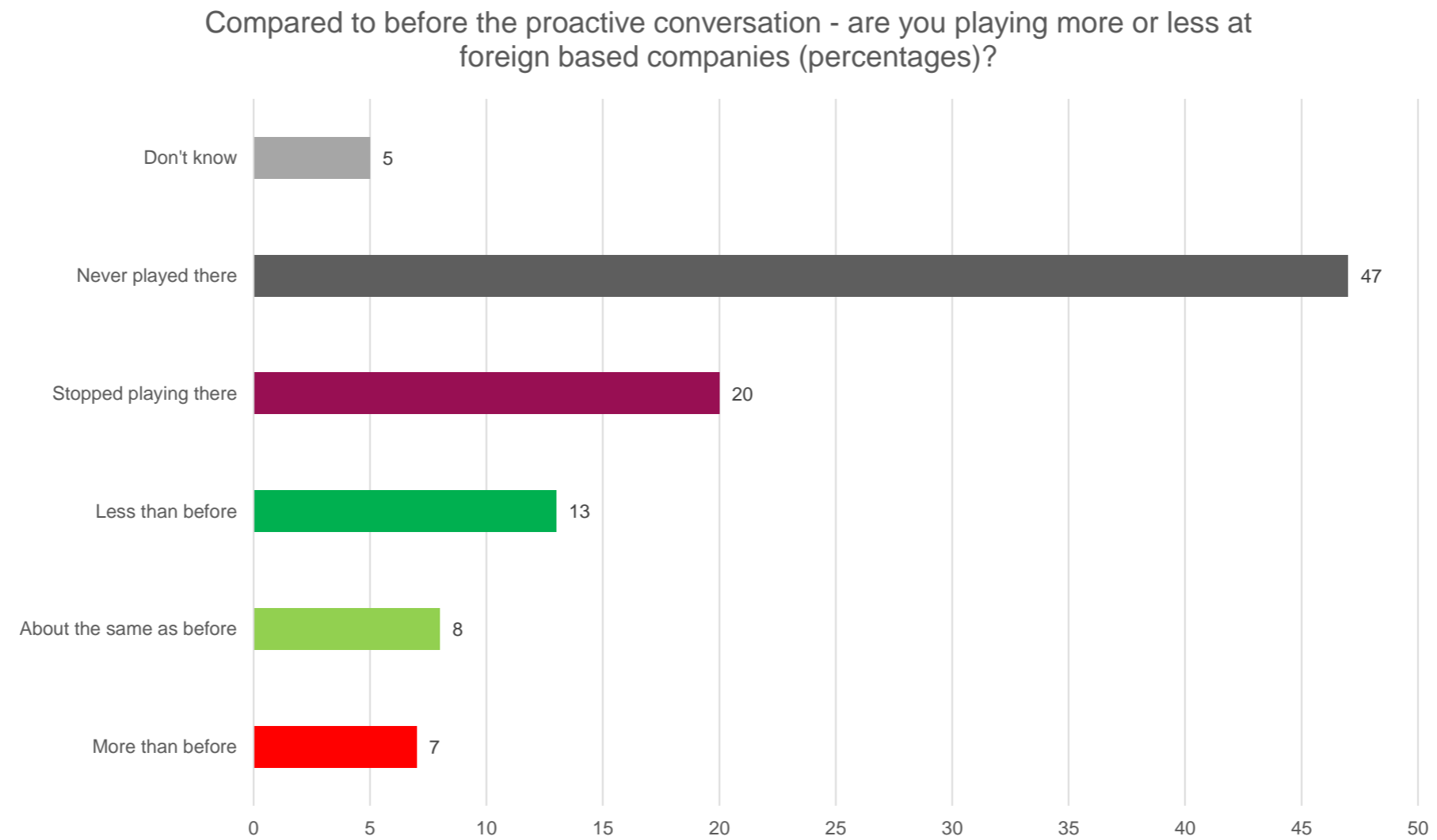
Readiness to Change Estimation of Number of Steps	Reduction in Theoretic Loss sum Pre All to Post All 12 weeks Periods		
	n	%	NoK
0	153	26.2	2316
1	131	22.4	3126
2	102	17.5	3393
3	198	33.9	8495

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# About agreeing on setting limits & change in gambling behaviour

Agreement	n	%	Change in TL 12 weeks post
None	330	55,3	2 702
"I'll do it myself"	50	8,4	2 317
By NT during call	216	36,2	8 490

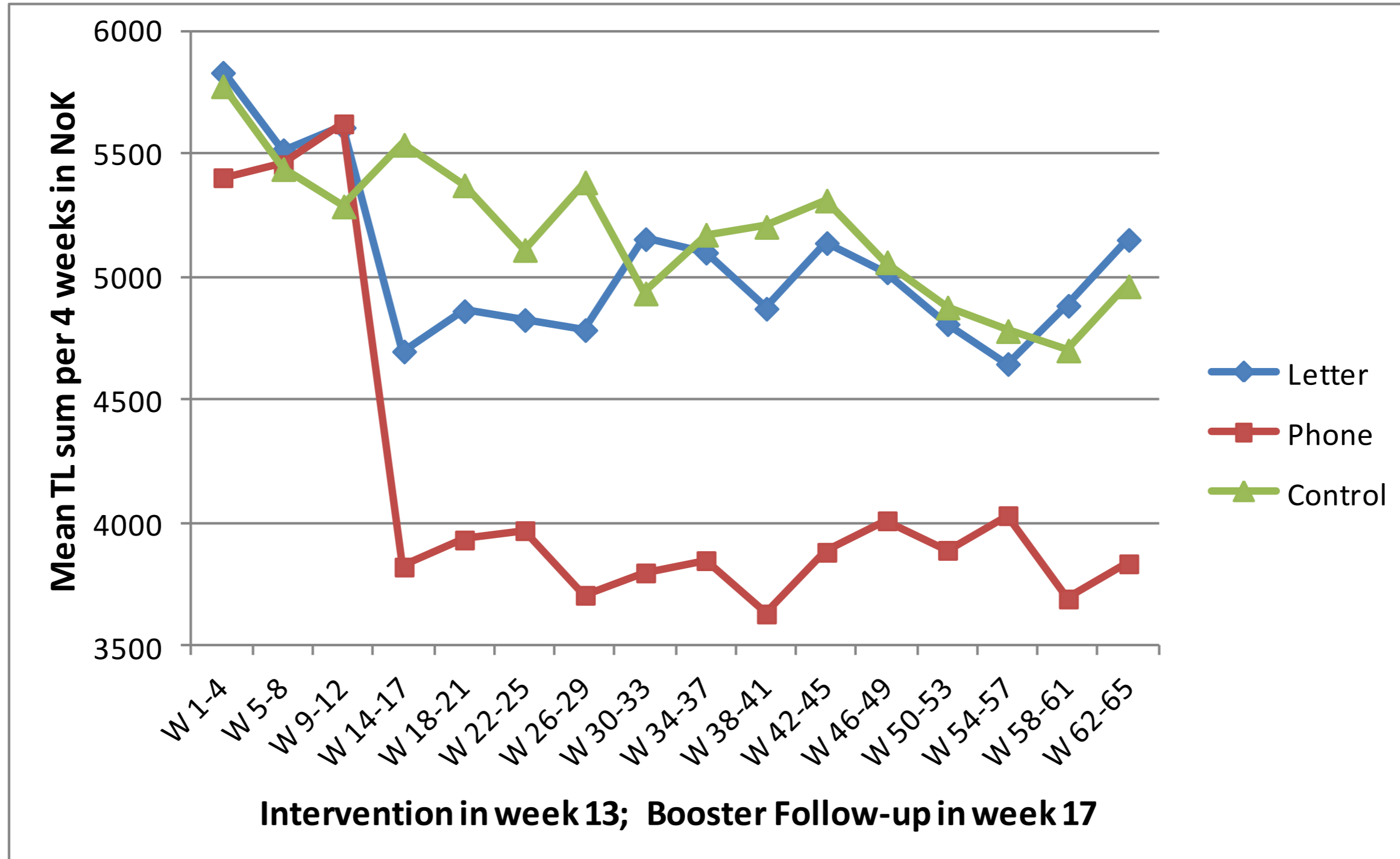
# What about their gambling elsewhere?



Data from separate questionnaire post pilot, n=100, response rate 25 %

12 month results

# 12 month theoretic loss



## Change in theoretic loss 12 month

- Phone -25 %
- Letter -13 %
- Control -7 %
- Significant pairwise differences completer analysis:
  - Phone vs Control, Phone vs Letter
- Intention to treat:
  - Phone vs Control, Phone vs Letter, Letter vs Control

# Are they still active at NT?

ContactType \* Active\_post\_dik  
Crosstabulation

Count		Active_post_dik		Total
		,00	1,00	
ContactType	Letter	9	994	1003
	Phone	9	994	1003
	Control	4	999	1003
Total		22	2987	3009

Very few without any activity over 12 month

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,289 <sup>a</sup>	2	,318
Likelihood Ratio	2,540	2	,281
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,717	1	,190
N of Valid Cases	3009		

a. 0 cells (0,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7,33.

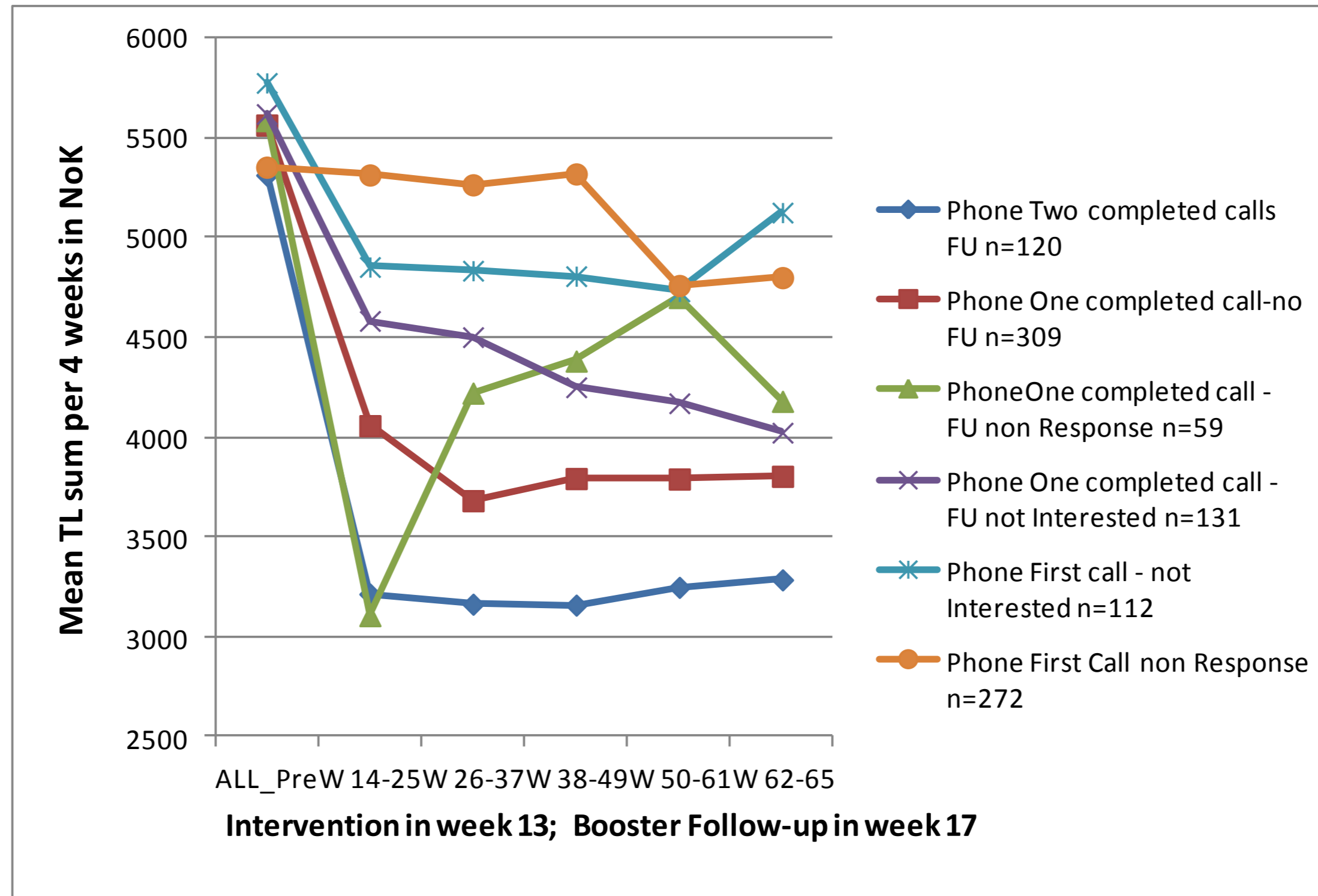
Report

Mean	active_post_score
ContactType	
Letter	12,3151
Phone	12,4417
Control	12,5145
Total	12,4237

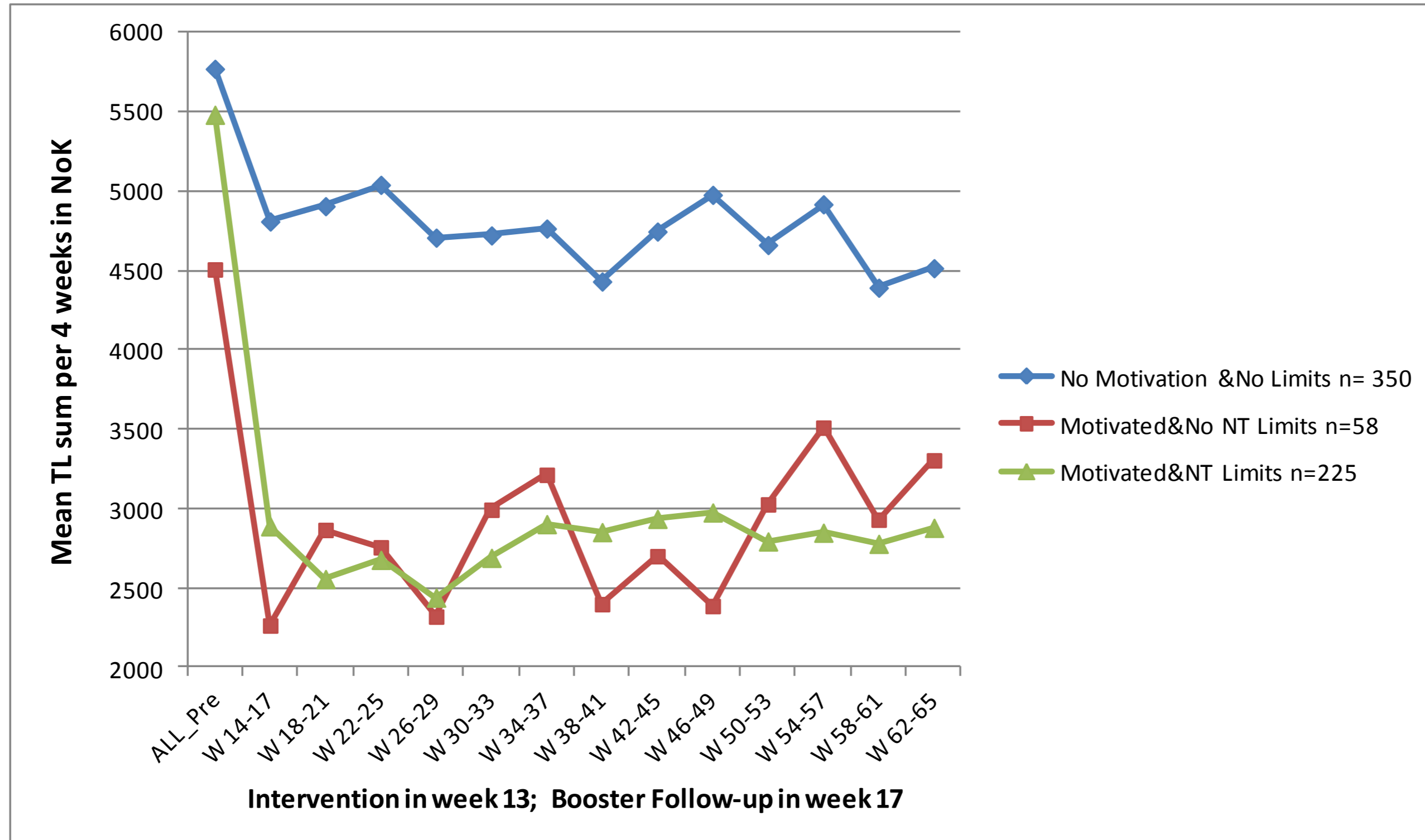
Number 4-weeks periods with gambling activity. Max=13



# Follow up 12 month (phone)



# Motivation and limit setting (phone)



# Conclusions

- Contacting high consumers have a clear effect on gambling and RG behaviour
- Telephone is better than Letter that is better than Control
- The customers appreciate being contacted, play less and they stay as customers
- An obvious relationship between motivation for change and behavioural change
- Great knowledge built internally at Norsk Tipping
- The results are stable over 12 month

# Thanks for your attention!

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