

Florida PTA Proposed Platform Item

Youth Gambling

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Youth Gambling

- Whereas, Gambling has been steadily rising as a popular activity among children and youth; and
- Whereas, Children are beginning to participate in gambling activities as early as in elementary and middle schools and continue this practice through their secondary and post secondary years; and
- Whereas, The increase in easy access to gambling opportunities, especially through the Internet, raises concerns that the number of gambling problems among children and youth will also rise; and
- Whereas, Research shows that adolescent prevalence rates of problem gamblers are much higher than that of adults; and
- Whereas, Serious gambling problems can lead to other high risk behaviors among children and youth; now therefore be it
- Resolved, That the Florida PTA provide information and education to its membership on the prevalence, access and dangers of gambling among children and youth; and be it further
- Resolved, That the Florida PTA urges its county councils and local units to work with their district school boards to include education on youth gambling as a high risk behavior in their curricula.

Whereas 1

Whereas, Gambling has been steadily rising as a popular activity among children and youth; and

References:

1. Youth Betting on Cards Rising, National Annenberg Risk Survey Shows, The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, Dan Romer, March 2005

http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/07_adolescent_risk/adolescent_risk.htm

Card playing for money has risen among male youth ages 14 to 22, according to the National Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth (NARSY) conducted in 2003 and again in 2004. The increase is primarily among those young people who attend high school or post-secondary schools. In 2004, 11.4% of in-school male youth reported betting on cards at least once a week. In 2003, only 6.2% reported the same activity. This 84% increase in weekly card playing represents a statistically significant change in this behavior over a one-year period.

Increases in card playing were observed for male high-school youth (5.7% to 10.8%) as well as for those in college or other post-secondary programs (7.3% to 12.5%) (see Table 1). There was actually a drop in the proportion of male youth ages 14 to 22 who played cards weekly and were out of school, going from 20.0% in 2003 to 6.6% in 2004.

2. Drs. Derevensky and Gupta, International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, a McGill University Research Centre, 2004, <http://www.education.mcgill.ca/gambling/en/problemgambling.htm#knowledge>

Although problem gambling has been primarily thought of as an adult behaviour, recent research has suggested that it remains a very popular activity amongst both children and adolescents. An alarmingly high percentage of children and adolescents worldwide have been found to engage in gambling activities.

Studies conducted over the past decade suggest that gambling activities remain particularly attractive to today's youth and that its popularity is on the rise amongst both children and adolescents. Prevalence studies conducted in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Europe, and in Australia all confirm the rising prevalence rates of youth involvement in both legal and illegal forms of gambling. While approximately 80% of High School students report having

gambled for money during the past year, 4-8% of adolescents presently have a serious gambling problem with another 10-14% of adolescents at-risk for developing a serious gambling problem (Jacobs, 2000; National Research Council, 1999; Shaffer & Hall, 1996). Yet, for most parents and teens, gambling is viewed as an innocuous behaviour with few negative consequences. Our Centre at McGill University is actively involved in research, treatment, prevention, training, public health and social policy issues.

3. Youth gamblers on the rise, Alexandra Marks, Christian Science Monitor, March 25, 2005, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0325/p02s02-ussc.html>

For the first time, experts and treatment centers that deal with problem gamblers across the country are seeing an increasing number of adolescents who have developed serious gambling problems.

4. Beyond The Odds, Dr. Randy Stinchfield, University of Minnesota Medical School, December 2000, <http://www.miph.org/gambling/bto/dec00/classof98.html>

Figures 2 and 3 show the rates of frequent gambling for the class of '98 as they progressed from 6th to 9th grades and became the 12th grade class of '98. In Figure 2, we see that the percent of boys gambling frequently increased for all games from 6th to 12th grades and the lottery showed a significant increase from 9th to 12th grade. In Figure 3, we find that the percent of girls gambling frequently remained steady for most games except that girls also showed a significant increase in frequent lottery play from 9th to 12th grade. On the one hand, this is good news that few 6th and 9th grade students are involved in frequent underage gambling with the lottery. On the other hand, this increase in frequent lottery play in the 12th grade is of concern.

THE ANNENBERG
PUBLIC POLICY CENTER
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Youth Betting on Cards Rising, National Annenberg Risk Survey Shows
Dan Romer

Increase Highest Among Young Men in School
Card Players Also Likely to Gamble on Internet
Greater Risks for Gambling Problems Seen if Trend Persists
March 14, 2005

{Card playing for money has risen among male youth ages 14 to 22, according to the National Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth (NARSY) conducted in 2003 and again in 2004. The increase is primarily among those young people who attend high school or post-secondary schools. In 2004, 11.4% of in-school male youth reported betting on cards at least once a week. In 2003, only 6.2% reported the same activity. This 84% increase in weekly card playing represents a statistically significant change in this behavior over a one-year period. }

Increases in card playing were observed for male high-school youth (5.7% to 10.8%) as well as for those in college or other post-secondary programs (7.3% to 12.5%) (see Table 1). There was actually a drop in the proportion of male youth ages 14 to 22 who played cards weekly and were out of school, going from 20.0% in 2003 to 6.6% in 2004. }

Across both years of the survey, weekly card players accounted for 44% of all weekly gamblers identified in the NARSY. The influx of high-school youth into the card-playing routine has also lowered the average age of the card playing population in this age range. In 2003, 25.9% of youth who bet on cards weekly were under 18, while in 2004, this went up to 43.2% (see Table 2).

“The rise in weekly card playing among young persons is worrisome.” said Dan Romer, Director of the Adolescent Risk Communication Institute. “These latest results suggest that the fad among teens is real and raise concerns that more young people will experience gambling problems as they age.”

-More

1

Drs. Derevensky and Gupta, International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, a McGill University Research Centre, 2004,

<http://www.education.mcgill.ca/gambling/en/problemgambling.htm#knowledge>

Since 1992, Drs. Derevensky and Gupta and their graduate students at McGill University have endeavoured to understand the underlying determinants and critical factors related to youth gambling problems. The Centre was initially established as the McGill Youth Gambling Research and Treatment Clinic and served as the focal point for research, the treatment of youth with gambling problems, as well as the training of researchers, clinicians and educators concerned with youth gambling. During this period the mandate and role of the Centre expanded, and research began to focus on multiple high-risk adolescent behaviors. In 2001, McGill University's Senate officially approved the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors as a McGill University Research Centre. The Centre has expanded its work and now has several full time staff, and postdoctoral, doctoral and master's level students. The Centre is housed in Duggan House, a historic building on McGill University's campus in Montreal, Quebec and maintains a prominent presence in the development and coordination of an international research agenda.

Youth Problem Gambling

{Although problem gambling has been primarily thought of as an adult behaviour, recent research has suggested that it remains a very popular activity amongst both children and adolescents. An alarmingly high percentage of children and adolescents worldwide have been found to engage in gambling activities.}

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serious gambling problem with another 10-14% of adolescents at-risk for developing a serious gambling problem (Jacobs, 2000; National Research Council, 1999; Shaffer & Hall, 1996). Yet, for most parents and teens, gambling is viewed as an innocuous behaviour with few negative consequences. Our Centre at McGill University is actively involved in research, treatment, prevention, training, public health and social policy issues. }

Youth gamblers on the rise

The popularity of poker and presence of online gambling have contributed to more problems among adolescents.

By [Alexandra Marks](#) | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

NEW YORK - _____ {For the first time, experts and treatment centers that deal with problem gamblers across the country are seeing an increasing number of adolescents who have developed serious gambling problems.}

In Connecticut, for instance, it was rare for any treatment center to have clients younger than 18. That's until this year. Now, 11 youngsters are in formal programs getting help.

In Minnesota, a pioneering youth gambling-education group is seeing "a tremendous increase" in schools and youth organizations looking for tools to help kids deal with problem gambling.

And in Washington, experts are calling on Congress to hold hearings on the issue - in part because more than a dozen gambling shows air on prime-time television in an average week, and none routinely carries warning messages or public-service announcements on "responsible" gambling, according to the National Council on Problem Gambling.

"It is a major, growing issue," says Barbara Raimundo, a mother of a recovering gambling addict who now counsels other parents in Connecticut. "Our youth need major help, and someone has to be willing to step up to the plate before they start getting really devastated."

A key reason for the increase in youth gambling is that it's now seen as "cool." In fact, the once disreputable pastime that was confined to a handful of shady destinations a quarter century ago is now legal in all but two states, and is touted as glamorous entertainment.

Casinos heavily advertise their lavish, exciting amenities. Celebrities play poker on TV, and poker players become celebrities winning millions of dollars. At the same time, gambling is heavily advertised on the Internet and is easy to access, no matter how old one is.

Research shows that more than 70 percent of kids between 10 and 17 have gambled in the past year, according to the National Council. That's up from 45 percent in 1988. Experts also say they're gambling younger and playing for more money.

And, just as a percentage of adults who gamble are likely to develop a gambling addiction, so, too, are young people. Research shows that as many as 4 to 5 percent of adult gamblers will develop a serious gambling problem. Kids are at three times the risk of adults for developing a problem.

"We know that the earlier you start gambling, the more likely you will be to have a gambling problem. The National Academy of Sciences found that in 1999," says Keith Whyte, executive of the National Council on Problem Gambling in Washington.

Beyond The Odds

December 2000

Class of '98 -- Gambling Among Minnesota's Youth

by Dr. Randy Stinchfield
University of Minnesota Medical School

Legalized gambling in Minnesota has expanded dramatically over the past decade with the introduction of the state lottery and the development of a number of casinos. This is the first generation of Minnesota youth to be exposed to widespread legalized gambling and advertising of gambling. One cannot listen to the radio, watch TV, read a newspaper, or attend a professional sporting event, without being exposed to the advertisement of gambling. The graduating class of 1998 was in the 4th grade when the state lottery was introduced and many casinos were opening around the state. The Minnesota Department of Education started collecting gambling information on 6th, 9th, and 12th grade public school students in 1992 and has collected subsequent gambling data on 9th and 12th grade students in 1995 and 1998. At this point in time, we have gambling data on 122,700 6th, 9th, and 12th grade public school students in 1992; 75,900 9th and 12th grade students in 1995; and 78,000 9th and 12th grade students in 1998. These are the largest youth gambling databases in the country.

Students completed a paper-and-pencil questionnaire in class and were asked how often in the past 12 months they: (a) played cards for money; (b) bet money on games of personal skill like pool, golf, or bowling; (c) bet money on sports teams; (d) bought lottery tickets or scratch offs; and (e) gambled in a casino. The casino item was asked only in 1998, so we do not have any data comparison data for 1992 and 1995. Because data was collected every three years on 6th, 9th, and 12th grade students, it is possible to follow a class of students because the 6th graders in 1992 were asked the gambling questions as 9th graders in 1995 and again as 12th graders in 1998.

The survey shows that the majority of students gambled at least once during the past year, however, most did not gamble on a frequent basis (i.e., weekly/daily rate) and most did not report any problems associated with their gambling. Figure 1 shows the percent of 12th grade girls and 12th grade boys who played each game on a weekly or more frequent basis. More boys than girls gamble frequently. For both boys and girls in the class of '98, the lottery was the form of gambling played most frequently. Many of these 12th grade students were under 18 years of age for the past 12 months, so there appears to be some degree of underage gambling.

{Figures 2 and 3 show the rates of frequent gambling for the class of '98 as they progressed from 6th to 9th grades and became the 12th grade class of '98. In Figure 2, we see that the percent of boys gambling frequently increased for all games from 6th to 12th grades and the lottery showed a significant increase from 9th to 12th grade. In Figure 3, we find that the percent of girls gambling frequently remained steady for most games except that girls also showed a significant increase in frequent lottery play from 9th to 12th grade.} On the one hand, this is good news that few 6th and 9th grade students are involved in frequent underage gambling with the lottery. **{On the other hand, this increase in frequent lottery play in the 12th grade is of concern.}** Legalized gambling is an adult behavior and adolescents are on their way to becoming adults and want to experiment with adult behaviors. However, we need to teach adolescents and young adults about their choices regarding gambling and that if they choose to gamble, they will most likely lose their money and they need to follow rules to avoid losing more money than they can afford to lose. We also need to watch for signs of problem gambling among those adolescents who are frequent gamblers and who appear to become over-involved with gambling.

With the rapid expansion of gambling has also come concerns about underage gambling and youth problem gambling. This is the first generation of youth to be exposed to such widespread and easy access to a variety of gambling opportunities, gambling advertising, and a general social approval for inherently risky activity that was once prohibited. Of course, gambling advertisements do not show the masses of people who lose their money gambling. Youth may not understand the inherent risks of gambling and the low probability of winning, and therefore may be susceptible to this type of promotion. In some circles of youth, gambling may be considered a new "rite of passage" into adulthood. It will be important to monitor gambling among youth, develop and evaluate prevention programs for youth showing early signs of over-involvement in gambling, and develop and evaluate interventions for youth with gambling problems.

Whereas 2

Whereas, Children are beginning to participate in gambling activities as early as in elementary and middle schools and continue this practice through their secondary and post secondary years; and

References

1. Childhood and Adolescent Gambling, by Chad Hills, November 2003

<http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/gambling/facts/a0028804.cfm>

Research indicates that adolescents are about three times more likely than adults to become problem gamblers.¹⁰ Studies also show adolescents are up to five times more likely to develop gambling-related problems than adults.¹¹

In 2002, the University of Florida conducted research on 13-17-year-old adolescent gambling in Florida. They found the mean age for gambling initiation was 12.5 years, and 80,608 Florida adolescents (8.2%) are at-risk gamblers, while 37,355 Florida adolescents (3.8%) are problem or pathological gamblers.²¹

2. An Examination of the Differential Coping Styles of Adolescents with Gambling Problems, Report to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario, Report to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario, Rina Gupta Ph.D., Jeffrey L. Derevensky Ph.D., August 2001

Despite the fact that most gambling is illegal for individuals under the age of 18 in the Province of Ontario, 63% of underage adolescents in grades 7 through 12 reported gambling on one or more activities in the past year. Of those adolescents reporting gambling, 23% reported gambling on a regular, weekly basis.

In the current sample, 2.7% of adolescents were classified as probable pathological gamblers, 6.6% were classified as gamblers at-risk for developing severe gambling problems, 54.0% were classified as social gamblers, and 36.7% were classified as non gamblers according to their frequency of play and the DSM-IV-MR-J criterion. Males comprised a significant proportion of both the at-risk and the probable pathological groups in comparison to females (9% vs. 4% of at risk gamblers; 4% vs. 1.4% of probable pathological gamblers).

The average age of onset of gambling was 11 years. Female probable pathological gamblers reported an average age of onset of 10 years while the age of onset for male probable pathological gamblers was 10.5 years. The mean age of onset of gambling was lowest amongst the probable pathological gamblers in comparison to the at-risk and social gamblers.

3. Youth Gambling: A Clinical and Research Perspective, By Jeffrey L. Derevensky, PhD* & Rina Gupta, PhD*, June 2002

While problem gambling has been primarily thought of as an adult problem, there is a growing body of empirical evidence to support examining problem gambling during adolescence (Derevensky, Gupta & Della Cioppa, 1996; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a, 1998b; Jacobs, in press; Ladouceur & Dubé, 1994; Ladouceur, Dubé & Bujold, 1994; National Gambling Impact Study Commission, 1999; National Opinion Research Center, 1999; National Research Council, 1999; Stinchfield, in press; Volberg, 1998; Wiebe, 1999; Wynne, Smith & Jacobs, 1996).

There is little doubt that gambling and wagering remains a popular activity amongst both children and adolescents. Research conducted over the past decade suggests that gambling activities remain particularly attractive to today's youth. Moreover, its popularity is on the rise amongst both children and adolescents. Large-scale prevalence studies and reviews all confirm the high prevalence rates of youth gambling. In particular, it is estimated that between 4% and 8% of adolescents presently exhibit a serious gambling problem with another 10% to 14% of adolescents at risk for developing or returning to a serious gambling problem (Shaffer & Hall, 1996).

An alarmingly high percentage of children and adolescents have reported engaging in gambling activities. In one of our recent studies, we found 80.2% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 reported having gambled (defined as wagering money) during the past 12 months, with 35.1% admitting gambling at least once per week. The data further revealed that while 55% of adolescents were casual or recreational gamblers, 13% reported having some gambling related problems and 4% to 6% had a serious problem (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a).

Childhood and Adolescent Gambling November 10, 2003

by Chad Hills

<http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/gambling/facts/a0028804.cfm>

Adolescents are the largest and most vulnerable population addicted to gambling

The next generation is the first in modern American history to grow up in an era when gambling is legally sanctioned and culturally approved. Tragically, adolescents have proven extremely susceptible to the enticements of gambling, and are becoming hooked at rates even greater than their adult counterparts. Past research on youth gambling, focusing on prevalence rates, found that pathological gambling rates for adolescents appear to range anywhere between two to four times that of adults.¹ Researchers believe we are seeing just a tip of the iceberg.

"If this [gambling] were a children's toy, it would be pulled off the market immediately. We would not tolerate it." — Earl Grinols, University of Illinois economics professor

Parents, Protectors

A number of studies have shown that many youths will be exposed to gambling through parents' participation, such as buying lottery tickets, playing cards for money, visiting casinos and making wagers.² It's not unusual for parents to give their children lottery tickets for their birthdays or Christmas. Many fathers attend sports events with their children, placing wagers on the team, horse or dog favored to win.³

Studies consistently confirm that parental disapproval (or approval) of specific behaviors is one of the strongest protective factors in a child's life against risky behavior. Conversely, parental dismissal or advocacy of certain destructive behaviors can be profoundly detrimental to children.⁴

Many gamblers with problem and pathological addictions began gambling between 10 to 13 years of age.⁵

Eugene F., a recovering addict who asks to be identified only by his Gamblers Anonymous name, who remembers going to the track with his father at age 14. "He would place \$ 2 bets for me. It was win-win. If I won, I got to keep the money. If I lost, it was his money." Eventually, Eugene's parents "lost" \$ 20,000, paying off their son's bookies before he got help from Gamblers Anonymous.⁶

Children and Adolescents: Most Vulnerable

A child or adolescent's brain is still under construction. Their brains differ from adults, in that children's brains operate primarily from the limbic system or the seat of emotion. They function on gut reactions and appeal. They do not have a fully developed prefrontal cortex, which allows rational thinking, risk assessment and discernment. The prefrontal cortex has been dubbed "the area of sober second thought."⁷

An estimated 7,900,000 American adolescents are already addicted to gambling. They represent over half of all people in the United States with problem or pathological gambling addictions.⁸ You could fill most any NFL football stadium over 100 times to capacity with American youth that are addicted to gambling.

Howard Shaffer, director of the Center for Addiction Studies at Harvard Medical School, conducted a meta-analysis of youth gambling studies in North America. He found the rate of problem gambling among youths ranged between 9.9 to 14.2 percent, while 4.4 to 7.4 percent were already exhibiting compulsive gambling behaviors.⁹

{Research indicates that adolescents are about three times more likely than adults to become problem gamblers.¹⁰ Studies also show adolescents are up to five times more likely to develop gambling-related problems than adults.¹¹}

Adolescents are especially susceptible to video gambling because of their familiarity with video games, vivid graphics, action, speed, anonymity, accessibility and availability. No adult need be present for an underage adolescent to play a video gambling machine and adult supervision is often lacking when convenience gambling is available.¹²

Video lotteries, video poker and video slots have earned their reputation as the "crack cocaine" of the gambling industry, because of their highly addictive nature.¹³ In the summer of 2000, South Carolina removed between 34,000 to 36,000 video poker games from their state, because of the dramatic increase in pathological gambling addiction.¹⁴

Kids Are Gambling

A gambling prevalence study found over 80 percent of adolescents (12 to 17 years old) have gambled in the past year.¹⁵ In the age of video gambling, machines don't ask your age.

Henry Lesieur, of Illinois State University, estimates that 6% to 8% of youngsters aged 13 to 17 nationally are problem gamblers. Other social science experts who, like Lesieur, base their estimates on an evaluation of the accumulated state studies and their own research on addiction echo that rate.¹⁶

The Massachusetts Attorney General's office conducted a sting operation in which 66 percent of minors were able to place bets on Keno games. The sting tested compliance at 90 different locations and involved adolescents as young as 14. The minimum legal age to gamble on Keno in Massachusetts is 18.¹⁷ An earlier survey by the Massachusetts Attorney General's office found that 80 percent of minors in Massachusetts were able to purchase lottery tickets.¹⁸

Nearly six percent of the high school Seniors surveyed by the Louisiana State University Medical School researchers met the criteria for pathological gambling, while 16 percent could be classified as problem gamblers.¹⁹

New Jersey casinos reported ejecting nearly 26,000 underage persons some time after they had managed to enter the casinos. Another 136,000 juveniles attempted to enter the casinos but were prevented from doing so. "Juvenile Suspected Underage Report: January to December 1995," New Jersey Casino Control Commission.²⁰

{In 2002, the University of Florida conducted research on 13-17-year-old adolescent gambling in Florida. They found the mean age for gambling initiation was 12.5 years, and 80,608 Florida adolescents (8.2%) are at-risk gamblers, while 37,355 Florida adolescents (3.8%) are problem or pathological gamblers.²¹}

An Examination of the Differential Coping Styles of Adolescents with Gambling Problems, Rina Gupta Ph.D., Jeffrey L. Derevensky Ph.D. August 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a study examining the relationship between gambling, life stress, and coping behaviors amongst adolescents. A secondary purpose of the study was to identify several risk factors that may be associated with youth gambling problems. A large sample of adolescents from Ontario, aged 11 - 20 (N = 2156), completed a questionnaire concerning their participation in gambling activities, high risk behaviours (e.g., substance and alcohol use, cigarette smoking), life stressors, coping strategies, and depressive symptomatology. The results from this study are intended to help provide valuable information that will be used to develop effective prevention programs and to inform clinical practice for adolescents with severe gambling-related problems.

Findings

{Despite the fact that most gambling is illegal for individuals under the age of 18 in the Province of Ontario, 63% of underage adolescents in grades 7 through 12 reported gambling on one or more activities in the past year. Of those adolescents reporting gambling, 23% reported gambling on a regular, weekly basis.}

Females were found to be less likely than males to gamble both on a regular and occasional basis. Within the current sample, 47% of females compared to 27% of males reported not gambling during the past year.

The favorite gambling activities were reported to be the lottery, wagering on cards, games of skill, and sport betting. Male regular gamblers, those gambling weekly, most often bet on sporting events, cards, games of skill and the lottery, while regular female gamblers preferred playing cards and the lottery.

Adolescents primarily reported gambling at their home (76%) or the homes of their friends (52%). Moreover, 40% of males and 19% of females reported gambling for money in school.

Adolescent gamblers prefer to gamble with their friends (75%), siblings (47%), and parents (44%). It is interesting to note that despite the fact that juvenile gambling is illegal, many youth are participating in these activities with other family members. Developmentally, this pattern remains relatively constant, except for older males who express a stronger preference to gamble with their friends (91%) as well as report being more likely to gamble alone (22%).

vi

The predominant reasons cited for gambling was for enjoyment (74%), to win money (72%), and for excitement (63%). These reasons were similar for both males and females and across all the grades.

{In the current sample, 2.7% of adolescents were classified as probable pathological gamblers, 6.6% were classified as gamblers at-risk for developing severe gambling problems, 54.0% were classified as social gamblers, and 36.7% were classified as nongamblers according to their frequency of play and the DSM-IV-MR-J criterion. Males comprised a significant proportion of both the at-risk and the probable pathological groups in comparison to females (9% vs. 4% of at risk gamblers; 4% vs. 1.4% of probable pathological gamblers).}

{The average age of onset of gambling was 11 years. Female probable pathological gamblers reported an average age of onset of 10 years while the age of onset for male probable pathological gamblers was 10.5 years. The mean age of onset of gambling was lowest amongst the probable pathological gamblers in comparison to the at-risk and social gamblers.}

vii

Youth Gambling: A Clinical and Research Perspective

By Jeffrey L. Derevensky, PhD* in04@musica.mcgill.ca &

Rina Gupta, PhD* czga@musica.mcgill.ca

**Co-directors of the Youth Gambling Research & Treatment Clinic, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec*

6-23-2002

Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the current state of knowledge of youth gambling problems. The goals and contributions of the McGill University Youth Gambling Research & Treatment Clinic are highlighted. The authors integrate their clinical and research program findings within the context of the necessity of identifying risk factors associated with problem gambling amongst adolescents. Specific recommendations are made as well as a call for collaborative effort between the public, industry, legislators, clinicians and researchers to help resolve this growing problem.

With the proliferation of gambling venues worldwide, there has been a renewed interest in the social, economic and psychological costs associated with problem gamblers. **{While problem gambling has been primarily thought of as an adult problem, there is a growing body of empirical evidence to support examining problem gambling during adolescence}** (Derevensky, Gupta & Della Cioppa, 1996; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a, 1998b; Jacobs, in press; Ladouceur & Dubé, 1994; Ladouceur, Dubé & Bujold, 1994; National Gambling Impact Study Commission, 1999; National Opinion Research Center, 1999; National Research Council, 1999; Stinchfield, in press; Volberg, 1998; Wiebe, 1999; Wynne, Smith & Jacobs, 1996).

{There is little doubt that gambling and wagering remains a popular activity amongst both children and adolescents. Research conducted over the past decade suggests that gambling activities remain particularly attractive to today's youth. Moreover, its popularity is on the rise amongst both children and adolescents. Large-scale prevalence studies and reviews all confirm the high prevalence rates of youth gambling. In particular, it is estimated that between 4% and 8% of adolescents presently exhibit a serious gambling problem with another 10% to 14% of adolescents at risk for developing or returning to a serious gambling problem (Shaffer & Hall, 1996).

An alarmingly high percentage of children and adolescents have reported engaging in gambling activities. In one of our recent studies, we found 80.2% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 reported having gambled (defined as wagering money) during the past 12 months, with 35.1% admitting gambling at least once per week. The data further revealed that while 55% of adolescents were casual or recreational gamblers, 13% reported having some gambling related problems and 4%to 6% had a serious problem (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998a).}

Whereas 3

Whereas, The increase in easy access to gambling opportunities, especially through the Internet, raises concerns that the number of gambling problems among children and youth will also rise; and

References

1. **PractitionerNet, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto, TeenNet Gambling Project- 2002-2003, David Korn, Martha Murray, Sherry Biscope, Department of Public Health Science, University of Toronto**

http://www.responsiblegambling.org/articles/Adolescent_gambling_perceptions_and_behaviour.pdf

With the increase of gambling opportunities, including Internet gambling, there is concern that the number of gambling problems will also increase. While youth problem gambling prevalence rates have remained stable, they are still 2-4 times higher than those of the adult population.

2. **Kids Gambling And Losing, CBS News, July 14, 2003**

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/07/14/health/printable563015.shtml>

"This is the first generation of kids growing up when gambling is legal and available virtually nationwide," said George Meldrum of the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems. "Casinos, racetracks - they take it for granted."

While most casinos try to keep underage gamblers off their premises, enforcement is a challenge. Ed Looney of the New Jersey Council on Problem Gambling said Atlantic City's casinos evict about 34,000 young people annually.

Looney and his colleagues visit dozens of New Jersey schools each year, discussing compulsive gambling and learning about the latest trends. A current fad at inner-city schools is see-low, a dice game played for money even by preteens, Looney said.

Looney said betting on sports is epidemic at colleges, and he estimated that 40 percent of New Jersey adolescents play the lottery, which is meant to be off-limits to anyone under 18.

"You see lottery ticket vending machines which say, 'Don't use if you're not 18' but who's patrolling them?" said Whyte of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

The recent survey in Delaware found that 9 percent of eighth-graders had gambled on Internet sites offering electronic forms of slot machines and card games. Many experts believe this type of gambling will become increasingly tempting to young people.

"The Internet provides the holy trinity of risk factors - immediate access, anonymity and, with use of a credit card, the ability to gamble with money you don't really have," Whyte said.

McGill's Dervensky is worried by Internet gambling sites that incorporate video-game technology.

"They give you an illusion of control, a sense that the more you play, the better you get," he said. "It's training a whole new generation of kids. Once they get their credit cards, they're off and running."

3. Youth Betting on Cards Rising, National Annenberg Risk Survey Shows, The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, Dan Romer, March 2005

http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/07_adolescent_risk/adolescent_risk.htm

Card Playing and Internet Gambling

Young weekly card players in the survey were also more likely to gamble frequently on the Internet. Across both years, 11.4% of weekly card players also gamble weekly on the Internet compared to only 3.1% of other weekly gamblers, a statistically reliable difference. The higher use of Internet gambling among card players suggests that they are visiting the many websites that provide opportunities to bet on cards. Although our surveys do not permit a detailed analysis of age in weekly Internet gambling among card players, the data suggest that the practice is about as strong among those under age 18 as those between 18 and 22

Role of Schools and the Internet

The finding that card playing has caught on more strongly in school settings suggests that young people are better able to talk about and organize card games in schools even if the activity occurs outside of regular school hours. The popularity of poker and other card games on cable television shows, such as The World Series of Poker, is not likely to be solely responsible for the jump in the card playing, since access to these shows does not depend on school attendance. Indeed, those out of school watch just as much television as those still in schools. According to NARSY results, 17.1% of those not in school watch 5 or more hours of TV, somewhat more than those in school (11.1%)

The finding that larger proportions of card players also use the Internet for gambling, even if they are under the age of 18, suggests the need for greater monitoring of this gambling venue by parents and schools. Several bills have been proposed in Congress to outlaw or severely limit Internet gambling. Some have suggested that it may already be banned by existing statutes. No successful resolution has been found however for dealing with this apparently growing site for youth gambling.

TeenNet Gambling Project- 2002-2003

David Korn
Martha Murray
Sherry Biscope

Department of Public Health Science, University of Toronto

PractitionerNet

The TeenNet Research Project based in the Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto, has been a pioneer in combining 'high tech' Website development, community mobilization, and action research.

Our goal is to increase the number of teens engaged in positive lifestyle behaviors and community health promotion.

Since 1995, the TeenNet Research Project based in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto (*led by Dr. Harvey Skinner*) has worked with a network of over 20 collaborating partners directly involved in education and health promotion with youth.

TeenNet underscores individual choice by teens and the exploration of options regarding health behaviour. TeenNet takes a 'teens in action /youth driven' approach that involves young people from diverse backgrounds in all stages of program development and dissemination. To achieve it's goal of increasing the number of teens engaged in positive lifestyle behaviours, TeenNet has been a pioneer in combining 'high tech' Website development, community mobilization, and action research.

PractitionerNet

The PractitionerNet Website was developed in collaboration with Dr. Eudice Goldberg, MD, Hospital for Sick Children. The PractitionerNet Website is currently being used to support TeenNet's Building Capacity Project.

Gambling

{With the increase of gambling opportunities, including Internet gambling, there is concern that the number of gambling problems will also increase. While youth problem gambling prevalence rates have remained stable, they are still 2-4 times higher than those of the adult population.}

Why Youth Gamble

Youth do not gamble only with money. Youth also gamble with other items that they deem of value, which could include running shoes, CDs, Discmans, etc. As well, youth do not gamble for financial rewards alone, they also do it for a whole range of reasons, including the 'rush' of it and the self-esteem of proving they can be 'winners'.

Youth gamble for enjoyment, to win money, excitement, to make friends, and for relaxation. According to recent research, youth problem gamblers are more

Kids Gambling- And Losing

NEW YORK, July 14, 2003

Whether with their friends at parties, at school or in solitude on the Internet, millions of American teens are taking up an ever-more-accessible national pastime - gambling.

Much of the action is small-time - underage purchases of lottery tickets, playing cards or dice games for spare change. But experts say the long-term stakes are high because gamblers who start young are the most likely to develop addiction problems.

["This is the first generation of kids growing up when gambling is legal and available virtually nationwide," said George Meldrum of the Delaware Council on Gambling Problems. "Casinos, racetracks - they take it for granted."]

Nationwide statistics on youth gambling are scarce, but regional surveys suggest more than 30 percent of all high school students gamble periodically.

Middle-schoolers are following suit, as evidenced by the uncovering of a sports-betting ring at a Glenview, Ill., middle school last year. In Delaware, Meldrum's agency recently conducted one of the largest-ever surveys of student gambling; nearly one-third of 6,753 participating eighth-graders said they had gambled in 2002.

Those who gambled were much more likely than other students to smoke, drink alcohol, use illegal drugs and commit petty crimes, the survey found.

Such trends are the focus of research at the International Center for Youth Gambling Problems, based at McGill University in Montreal. The center's co-director, Jeffrey Dervensky, said studies indicate that compulsive gambling problems afflict up to 8 percent of young gamblers, compared with up to 3 percent of adult gamblers.

Adult gambling addicts may seek help when they realize their job or marriage is imperiled, but young people are less likely to do so, Dervensky said.

"These kids still live at home, and nobody's dragging them in, saying, 'If you don't go for help, I'm leaving you,'" Dervensky said. "These kids steal money, usually from their family. If you get caught, your parents are not going to turn you in."

Keith Whyte, executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling, said more than 80 percent of American adults now gamble at least occasionally - a possible reason for what he sees as a worrisome tolerance of youth gambling.

"We've had a number of parents say, 'Thank God, it's just gambling,'" Whyte said.

Sometimes, a parent's passion for gambling is passed on to an adolescent. That happened in the case of Sarah, now a 31-year-old executive in New York City who accompanied her parents to Atlantic City casinos as a teenager, became hooked, and now attends regular sessions of Gamblers Anonymous to shake an addiction that plunged her into a six-figure debt.

"From the first time I actually sat down at a blackjack table and played, when I was 18 or 19, it was pretty obvious I wasn't normal," said Sarah, who asked that her last name be withheld. "I wouldn't want to get up even to go to the bathroom. I was a little crazy. It was all I wanted to do."

Sarah predicted that gambling will spread among young people because of the omnipresence of betting options and the availability of credit cards.

{While most casinos try to keep underage gamblers off their premises, enforcement is a challenge. Ed Looney of the New Jersey Council on Problem Gambling said Atlantic City's casinos evict about 34,000 young people annually.

Looney and his colleagues visit dozens of New Jersey schools each year, discussing compulsive gambling and learning about the latest trends. A current fad at inner-city schools is see-low, a dice game played for money even by preteens, Looney said.

Looney said betting on sports is epidemic at colleges, and he estimated that 40 percent of New Jersey adolescents play the lottery, which is meant to be off-limits to anyone under 18.}

Others complain that enforcement in many states is lax, and not enough public money is spent to help young gambling addicts.

{"You see lottery ticket vending machines which say, 'Don't use if you're not 18' but who's patrolling them?" said Whyte of the National Council on Problem Gambling.

The recent survey in Delaware found that 9 percent of eighth-graders had gambled on Internet sites offering electronic forms of slot machines and card games. Many experts believe this type of gambling will become increasingly tempting to young people.

"The Internet provides the holy trinity of risk factors - immediate access, anonymity and, with use of a credit card, the ability to gamble with money you don't really have," Whyte said.

McGill's Dervensky is worried by Internet gambling sites that incorporate video-game technology.

"They give you an illusion of control, a sense that the more you play, the better you get," he said. "It's training a whole new generation of kids. Once they get their credit cards, they're off and running."}

THE ANNENBERG
PUBLIC POLICY CENTER
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Youth Betting on Cards Rising, National Annenberg Risk Survey Shows
Increase Highest Among Young Men in School
Card Players Also Likely to Gamble on Internet
Greater Risks for Gambling Problems Seen if Trend Persists

Card playing for money has risen among male youth ages 14 to 22, according to the National Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth (NARSY) conducted in 2003 and again in 2004. The increase is primarily among those young people who attend high school or post-secondary schools. In 2004, 11.4% of in-school male youth reported betting on cards at least once a week. In 2003, only 6.2% reported the same activity. This 84% increase in weekly card playing represents a statistically significant change in this behavior over a one-year period.

Increases in card playing were observed for male high-school youth (5.7% to 10.8%) as well as for those in college or other post-secondary programs (7.3% to 12.5%) (see Table 1). There was actually a drop in the proportion of male youth ages 14 to 22 who played cards weekly and were out of school, going from 20.0% in 2003 to 6.6% in 2004. Across both years of the survey, weekly card players accounted for 44% of all weekly gamblers identified in the NARSY. The influx of high-school youth into the card-playing routine has also lowered the average age of the card playing population in this age range. In 2003, 25.9% of youth who bet on cards weekly were under 18, while in 2004, this went up to 43.2% (see Table 2).

“The rise in weekly card playing among young persons is worrisome.” said Dan Romer, Director of the Adolescent Risk Communication Institute. “These latest results suggest that the fad among teens is real and raise concerns that more young people will experience gambling problems as they age.”

Problem Gambling Symptoms and Card Playing

Research indicates that adult problem gamblers started gambling at an early age. We were interested to see if young weekly card players are beginning to show signs of problem gambling and if their symptoms are stronger than those of other weekly gamblers.

In looking at other types of gambling including betting on sports with non-family members, playing the lottery, playing slot machines, betting on horse races, and gambling on the Internet, we were surprised to see a simultaneous drop in these activities among young men. For these forms of gambling combined, the rate of weekly involvement went from 12.1% in 2003 to 6.9% in 2004 for those still in school and from 15.7% to 10.8% among those out of school.

Despite the decline in other forms of weekly gambling, it does not appear that card playing has totally displaced these forms of gambling. Card players tend to engage in other forms of gambling as well. It remains to be seen whether the downward trend in other forms of weekly gambling will continue or whether this was a one-year phenomenon.

Even though other forms of regular gambling declined, weekly card players report more symptoms of problem gambling than other gamblers. Card players report more preoccupation with gambling (53.3% vs. 32.5%), and greater tendencies to spend more than they had planned on gambling (34.2% vs. 16.8%). Card players report similar levels of tolerance to gambling (10.7% vs. 9.4%) and of withdrawal (16.1% vs. 12.6%) compared to other weekly gamblers.

Because of the small change in the total population of young weekly gamblers, there was little change in the NARSY index of risk for gambling problems. This measure is based on answers to four questions about gambling cited above (preoccupation, over-spending, tolerance and withdrawal). In 2003, 8.2% of young people gambled weekly and answered affirmatively to at least one of the problem symptoms. In 2004, the percentage remained about the same at 7.5%.

Nevertheless, card players tend to have more symptoms. As a result, if the trend toward card playing among young people continues, the overall severity of symptoms may also increase.

There were no changes in the rates of card playing among young women whether they were in school or not. However, in aggregate, other forms of weekly gambling did rise among young women going from 5.8% in 2003 to 8.0% in 2004, a small but statistically reliable increase.

{Card Playing and Internet Gambling

Young weekly card players in the survey were also more likely to gamble frequently on the Internet. Across both years, 11.4% of weekly card players also gamble weekly on the Internet compared to only 3.1% of other weekly gamblers, a statistically reliable difference. The higher use of Internet gambling among card players suggests that they are visiting the many websites that provide opportunities to bet on cards. Although our surveys do not permit a detailed analysis of age in weekly Internet gambling among card players, the data suggest that the practice is about as strong among those under age 18 as those between 18 and 22.

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The finding that card playing has caught on more strongly in school settings suggests that young people are better able to talk about and organize card games in schools even if the activity occurs outside of regular school hours. The popularity of poker and other card games on cable television shows, such as The World Series of Poker, is not likely to be solely responsible for the jump in the card playing, since access to these shows does not depend on school attendance.

Indeed, those out of school watch just as much television as those still in schools. According to NARSY results, 17.1% of those not in school watch 5 or more hours of TV, somewhat more than those in school (11.1%).

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Whereas 4

Whereas, Research shows that adolescent prevalence rates of problem gamblers are much higher than that of adults; and

References

1. **Commercial Gambling Advertising: Possible Impact On Youth Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs And Behavioural Intentions, Submitted to the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, Principal Investigator: David Korn, MD, CAS 2001-2004, Page 8**

<http://www.gamblingresearch.org/download.sz/125%20Final%20Report%20-%2012APR05.pdf?docid=6481>

Research indicates that anywhere from 60-90% of youth engage in gambling, and that youth problem gambling prevalence rates are 2-4 times higher than those in the adult population (Shaffer & Hall, 2001).

2. **Understanding the school culture: Guidelines for conducting gambling research in secondary schools, By Jennifer L. McPhee, MSc, Brock University, Robert S. Canham, Bed, Brock University, December 2002**

http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue7/research/school_culture.html

Prevalence studies continue to indicate that between 52% to 89% of youth gamble (National Research Council, 1999),

Moreover, youth problem gambling is two to four times higher than adult problem gambling (Shaffer, Hall & Vander Bilt, 1999).

COMMERCIAL GAMBLING ADVERTISING:
POSSIBLE IMPACT ON YOUTH KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES,
BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS

Submitted to the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre

Principal Investigator:
David Korn, MD, CAS
Marketing Consultant:
Tim Hurson
Project Coordinator:
Jennifer Reynolds, M.Ed.

Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto, the Responsible Gambling Council, and the YMCA. Further, the results may also assist in the development of counter-force and media literacy strategies for youth.

Research Project

Literature Review

Today's youth is the first generation in Canada to be exposed to wide-scale, legalized gambling. **{Research indicates that anywhere from 60-90% of youth engage in gambling, and that youth problem gambling prevalence rates are 2-4 times higher than those in the adult population (Shaffer & Hall, 2001).}** The range of gambling activities that youth report participating in is quite varied, including: dice; betting with peers; cards; sports betting; lottery tickets; and other games of chance (Gupta & Derevensky, 2004). Skinner et al., (2004) report that dares, betting, and gambling were identified by youth as social activities frequently used to relieve boredom, as well as to establish roles in their social networks. Gupta and Derevensky (2004) found that youth reported betting on the outcome of a sporting event makes their adrenaline flow and their excitement intensify. With increased participation and exposure to gambling opportunities, there is concern that gambling problems among youth will increase (Ladouceur, Boisvert & Dumont, 1994).

With the increased availability of legal gambling in Ontario comes an increase in gambling advertising by gaming providers. The prevalence of gambling ads – on radio, television, in print, and on the Internet – ensures that youth will be exposed to them. Statistics indicate that the average youth currently spends one-third of each day exposed to media (Roberts, 2000).

Research shows that television, radio, and print advertising have the ability to persuade people to buy. As well, movies and television entertainment programs exert significant influence over ideas, values, and behaviours (DeJong, 2002; Earle, 2000; Kilbourne, 1999; McLuhan, 1967). Strasburger (2002) notes that a number of studies have examined the impact of advertising on youth, and that nearly all of them have shown advertising to be effective in increasing awareness, emotional response, recognition, and desire to own or use the products being promoted.

Little empirical research exists on the effects of commercial gambling advertising (Griffiths, 2003). In 2001, Amey found that in a gambling advertising survey of 1,500 individuals in New Zealand, 89% could remember seeing or hearing some form of gambling advertising in the past year. Further, the number of people who recalled advertisements for lottery games was identical to the number who actually played the games. Results found no significant difference between females' (88%) and males' (90%) ability to remember the advertisements. It was found that the younger the person was, the more likely they were to remember some form of gambling advertising. Over 93% of individuals under the age of 25 recalled gambling advertising. Amey (2001) noted an association between gambling advertisement recall and participation in gaming activities.

Notwithstanding the lack of research available on advertising, youth, and gambling, there have been a number of studies examining the effects and influence of tobacco and alcohol advertising on youth behaviour (Altman et al, 1996; Atkin, 1993; Centre for Disease Control, 1994; Evans et al., 1995; Grube & Wallack, 1994; Institute of Medicine, 1994). Studies on tobacco indicate that marketing efforts promote a favourable attitude towards smoking, and that the rate of smoking increases with greater exposure to this marketing (Biener & Siegel, 2000; Pierce et al., 1998). Images portrayed in smoking advertisements were rated positive for appeal of smoking by youth (Arnett, JJ. Terhanian, G.,

Understanding the school culture: Guidelines for conducting gambling research in secondary schools

By Jennifer L. McPhee, MSc
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St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

Robert S. Canham, BEd
Brock University
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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the importance of youth gambling research, the methodological issues faced when conducting research in secondary schools, and recommendations for conducting effective youth gambling research that benefits academia, the community, staff, students and parents within the school systems. Based on our recent experience, we advocate a research approach that integrates the findings of youth gambling research into school curriculum, community youth agencies and the development, evaluation and enhancement of program and policy interventions. By doing so, we find that we are able to foster strong, respectful relationships with the community and encourage collaboration, co-operation and multidisciplinary alliances. If researchers follow these guidelines, they can ensure that youth gambling research goes beyond scholarly publishing and is transferred and applied within the community to reduce youth gambling problems.

Introduction

This generation of youth is the first cohort to grow up in an era when gambling is easily accessible, socially acceptable and extensively promoted. **{Prevalence studies continue to indicate that between 52% to 89% of youth gamble (National Research Council, 1999)}** 4% to 8% of adolescents have gambling problems (Gupta & Derevensky, 1996; Fisher, 1992; Jacobs, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 1996, 2001; Wynne, Smith & Jacobs, 1996), while another 10% to 15% of adolescents are at risk of developing a gambling problem (Gupta & Derevensky, 1998; Shaffer & Hall, 1996, 2001; Wynne et al., 1996).

{Moreover, youth problem gambling is two to four times higher than adult problem gambling} (Shaffer, Hall & Vander Bilt, 1999). Although recently these prevalence rates have been challenged as being inflated (Derevensky & Gupta, 2000; Shaffer & Hall, 2001), it is clear that gambling behaviours of adolescents should be of interest to parents, educators, researchers, social workers and others concerned about young people.

Whereas 5

Whereas, Serious gambling problems can lead to other high risk behaviors among children and youth; now therefore be it

References

1. Childhood and Adolescent Gambling, by Chad Hills, November 10, 2003

In studies of gambling behaviors among high school students, one in 10 report committing illegal acts to obtain gambling money or to pay gambling debts.²²

A survey of high school students in Massachusetts found that 5 percent had been arrested for a gambling-related offense. The survey further found that 10 percent of students reported experiencing family problems because of their gambling, 8 percent had gotten in trouble at work or school due to their gambling activities, and 13 percent reported being unable to stop gambling when they wanted.²³

Bill Eastbrooks, a former school principal, said he saw children coming to school without lunches because their parents were addicted to VLTs. He knew of several people who killed themselves over gambling.²⁴

An investigation by The Canadian Press found more than 10 percent of suicides in Alberta and more than six per cent in Nova Scotia were linked to gambling in 2001.²⁵ In the United States, one in five pathologically addicted gamblers will attempt suicide.²⁶

2. TeenNet Gambling Project- 2002-2003, David Korn, Martha Murray, Sherry Biscope, Department of Public Health Science, University of Toronto, P.2

http://www.responsiblegambling.org/articles/Adolescent_gambling_perceptions_and_behaviour.pdf

According to recent research, youth problem gamblers are more likely to gamble to escape problems, unhappiness or loneliness than social or recreational youth gamblers. Certain risk factors such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency and problems at school also have been associated with problem gambling among youth.

Gambling problems among youth can have an impact on families and communities. Youth gambling problems can be associated with substance abuse, depression, suicide and crime. They can cause relationship difficulties and problems at school.

3. Gambling attitudinal and behavioral patterns and criminality in a sample of Las Vegas area detained youth, Randy Brown, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Las Vegas, Nevada, U.S.A., Journal of Gambling Issues, March 13, 2005

http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue13/jgi_13_brown.html

In addition, we explored the link between gambling behavior and property crimes, sociodemographic variables, and gang membership. Results reveal a robust relationship between reported property crimes and the frequency of gambling behavior, as well as between gambling and gang involvement.

Childhood and Adolescent Gambling (P.2)

November 10, 2003

by Chad Hills

<http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/gambling/facts/a0028804.cfm>

Adolescents are the largest and most vulnerable population addicted to gambling

Adolescents are especially susceptible to video gambling because of their familiarity with video games, vivid graphics, action, speed, anonymity, accessibility and availability. No adult need be present for an underage adolescent to play a video gambling machine and adult supervision is often lacking when convenience gambling is available.¹²

Video lotteries, video poker and video slots have earned their reputation as the "crack cocaine" of the gambling industry, because of their highly addictive nature.¹³ In the summer of 2000, South Carolina removed between 34,000 to 36,000 video poker games from their state, because of the dramatic increase in pathological gambling addiction.¹⁴

Kids Are Gambling

A gambling prevalence study found over 80 percent of adolescents (12 to 17 years old) have gambled in the past year.¹⁵ In the age of video gambling, machines don't ask your age.

Henry Lesieur, of Illinois State University, estimates that 6% to 8% of youngsters aged 13 to 17 nationally are problem gamblers. Other social science experts who, like Lesieur, base their estimates on an evaluation of the accumulated state studies and their own research on addiction echo that rate.¹⁶

The Massachusetts Attorney General's office conducted a sting operation in which 66 percent of minors were able to place bets on Keno games. The sting tested compliance at 90 different locations and involved adolescents as young as 14. The minimum legal age to gamble on Keno in Massachusetts is 18.¹⁷ An earlier survey by the Massachusetts Attorney General's office found that 80 percent of minors in Massachusetts were able to purchase lottery tickets.¹⁸

Nearly six percent of the high school Seniors surveyed by the Louisiana State University Medical School researchers met the criteria for pathological gambling, while 16 percent could be classified as problem gamblers.¹⁹

New Jersey casinos reported ejecting nearly 26,000 underage persons some time after they had managed to enter the casinos. Another 136,000 juveniles attempted to enter the casinos but were prevented from doing so. "Juvenile Suspected Underage Report: January to December 1995," New Jersey Casino Control Commission.²⁰

In 2002, the University of Florida conducted research on 13-17-year-old adolescent gambling in Florida. They found the mean age for gambling initiation was 12.5 years, and 80,608 Florida adolescents (8.2%) are at-risk gamblers, while 37,355 Florida adolescents (3.8%) are problem or pathological gamblers.²¹

The Fallout from Adolescent Gambling

{In studies of gambling behaviors among high school students, one in 10 report committing illegal acts to obtain gambling money or to pay gambling debts.²²

A survey of high school students in Massachusetts found that 5 percent had been arrested for a gambling-related offense. The survey further found that 10 percent of students reported experiencing family problems because of their gambling, 8 percent had gotten in trouble at work or school due to their gambling activities, and 13 percent reported being unable to stop gambling when they wanted.²³

{Bill Eastbrooks, a former school principal, said he saw children coming to school without lunches because their parents were addicted to VLTs. He knew of several people who killed themselves over gambling.^{24}}}

{An investigation by The Canadian Press found more than 10 percent of suicides in Alberta and more than six per cent in Nova Scotia were linked to gambling in 2001.²⁵ In the United States, one in five pathologically addicted gamblers will attempt suicide.²⁶}

TeenNet Gambling Project- 2002-2003, David Korn, Martha Murray, Sherry Biscope, Department of Public Health Science, University of Toronto (P.2)

problem gambling prevalence rates have remained stable, they are still 2-4 times higher than those of the adult population.

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Youth do not gamble only with money. Youth also gamble with other items that they deem of value, which could include running shoes, CDs, Discmans, etc. As well, youth do not gamble for financial rewards alone, they also do it for a whole range of reasons, including the 'rush' of it and the self-esteem of proving they can be 'winners'.

{Youth gamble for enjoyment, to win money, excitement, to make friends, and for relaxation. According to recent research, youth problem gamblers are more likely to gamble to escape problems, unhappiness or loneliness than social or recreational youth gamblers. Certain risk factors such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency and problems at school also have been associated with problem gambling among youth. }

Signs & Symptoms of Problem Gambling

{Gambling problems among youth can have an impact on families and communities. Youth gambling problems can be associated with substance abuse, depression, suicide and crime. They can cause relationship difficulties and problems at school.} Some signs of gambling problems include:

- Spending large amounts of time gambling
- Placing larger and more frequent bets
- "Chasing" losses
- Emotional highs and lows
- Gambling over other activities
- Growing debts
- Preoccupation with gambling

Lack of awareness among health professionals, teachers, and the general public, as well as a lack of screening tools, has led to an under-appreciation of the problem of youth gambling.

Journal Of Gambling Issues

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Introduction

Over the past 20 years, as opportunities for legal adult gambling have increased, so have concerns regarding the prevalence of youth gambling behavior (National Research Council (NRC), 1999). While minimal or moderate gambling by youth might be part of typical exploration behavior in adolescence (Griffiths, 1990; Winters, Stinchfield, & Fulkerson, 1993), a proportion of youth Page 1 of 13 JGI:Issue 13, March 2005. 3/30/2005 http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue13/jgi_13_brown.html

Gambling attitudinal and behavioral patterns and criminality in a sample of Las Vegas area detained youth

Abstract

This exploratory study seeks to better understand gambling patterns in a sample of incarcerated youth from the Las Vegas area. The study uses data derived from surveys administered to 269 incarcerated youth from two southern Nevada detention facilities. Respondents reported attitudes about gambling, frequency, and location of their gambling. **{In addition, we explored the link between gambling behavior and property crimes, sociodemographic variables, and gang membership. Results reveal a robust relationship between reported property crimes and the frequency of gambling behavior, as well as between gambling and gang involvement.}** Implications for future research are discussed.

Key words: gambling frequency, youth, delinquency, ethnicity, gangs