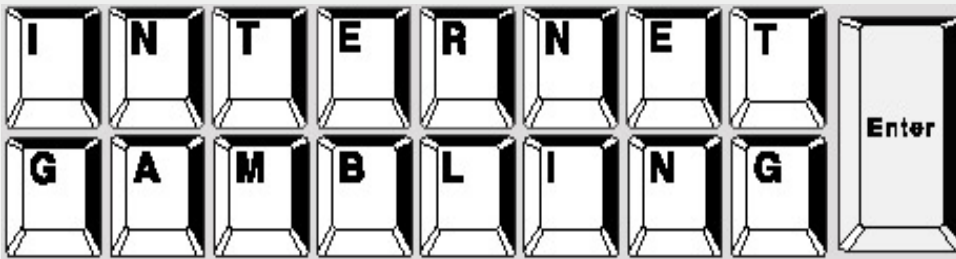




Youth Gambling International

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors
Centre International d'étude sur le jeu et les comportements à risque chez les jeunes



FEATURE ARTICLE

By Natalie Schmekel Ph.D.

On-line gambling and its legislation are developing, branching out in different countries and slowly reaching and potentially expanding in the United States as well in Canada. The lucrative outcomes are without a doubt alluring and the potential social costs are alarming.

A great number of internet gambling and on-line casinos continue to flourish where legislation fails to prohibit such wagering. More recently, the Virgin Islands Internet Gaming and Internet Gambling Act was signed, legalizing on-line gambling. The Act names two specific master franchisers, both of which have the right to contract with an *unlimited* number of licensees. These licensees could accept wagers from those jurisdictions where Internet gambling is not prohibited. It would also provide self-exclusion by individuals with compulsive gambling problems and prohibit players under 21 years of age. As for the United Kingdom, with the ever-expanding market for telephone and Internet betting, the new Gross Profits Tax, replacing the General Betting Duty, will allow the consumer to avoid paying taxes and the largest bookmakers to compete from an onshore base with other international and national businesses. The only difference remaining is that online casinos and bookmakers operating from offshore low-tax jurisdictions will be able to avoid gross and net profits tax and gaming duty. According to the Gam-

bling Review Committee, regulatory processes affecting the operators as well as the players would better control and legitimate the business. By avoiding the problems related to offshore locations (weather, staff availability), this would ultimately render this activity more appealing and credible for a wider pool of customers. As for the United States, recent legislation was passed authorizing the Nevada Gaming Commission to license interactive gaming in Nevada. This Commission has been working and developing on-line gambling. It affirms that it will allow gamblers to place wagers on a site and trust it's fairness, and prohibit minors as well as people trying to place wagers from jurisdictions where it is an illegal activity. If the gambling Mecca of the world is engaging in Internet gambling are other jurisdictions not considering this?

Certain populations may become particularly vulnerable to Internet gambling, because of its high appeal. Today's youth are the most computer-literate and savvy group. Their level of familiarity and accessibility to computers has become part of their daily lives and holds a particular place at homes as well as in school. Since certain regulations relating to Internet gambling aim at prohibiting players under the age of 18 or 21 from wagering "real" money, how can they assure that adolescents do not have access to Internet gambling by using, for example, a parent's credit card? By allowing underage individuals access to gambling "for fun"(without money), does it minimize the potential

effects and problems related to gambling or reinforce future gambling behaviors as well as pathological gambling? As on-line sites multiply and are readily accessible to every one, especially adolescents, the awareness of the potential repercussions and the development of fail-safe measures and regulations for at-risk populations should be on the forefront.

PULL THE ARM ! or CLICK HERE ! On-line gambling with its easy and rapid accessibility as well as its relative anonymity is rising and reaching a growing population at national and international levels. A recent article suggested that the number of Canadian adults who have gambled on the Internet has increased tenfold in just one year (Casinowire, 2001). It's entrance into our homes on different websites, whether related to gambling or not, can for certain at-risk populations infringe or test personal limits and control. The regulations concerning minors and compulsive players is a crucial matter that requires special attention.

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Legal Issues in *Gaming's New World*

Gambling and the Law[®]

The world of legal gaming is changing so quickly that it is sometimes difficult for casino executives to spot a danger before it develops into a law suit.

The major factors driving this brave new world are the acceptance of gambling as a legitimate form of entertainment and the unpredictable advances in technology.

Family-friendly amusement park-casinos raise issues never faced by the sawdust joints of the 1930s. Gambling was the one and only business of those small, stark casinos in downtown Las Vegas. Sometimes women were not welcome, let alone children.

Technology is also changing the face of gambling. Sixty years ago the games were craps and blackjack and three-reel slot machines; there might not be an electric outlet in the joint. Casino executives today have to decide whether they should lobby to have debit and credit card readers attached to their video gaming devices.

Legal issues affecting casinos can be divided into three categories: 1) Events within the casino's control, mainly business decisions. 2) Events over which the casino has some control. The problem here is that the law and customers are often free to make exceptionally stupid decisions. For example, casinos, by themselves, cannot eliminate the problem of children being

left in cars by their parents. 3) Events that are completely outside the casino's control. The most dramatic example is gambling on the Internet.

Among events that are within a casino's control are the standard issues present with every form of legal gambling: prevention of cheating by players and dealers; prevention of skimming by insiders; and keeping out organized criminals and other undesirables. The proliferation of gaming has led to some unusual partnerships. A casino executive's main responsibility is to make sure that he has done his due diligence background checks on his new partners before he signs any papers.

Technology is constantly giving cheats new weapons. The most interesting questions are whether players can be barred or even arrested if they use miniature computers to clock roulette wheels or count cards in blackjack.

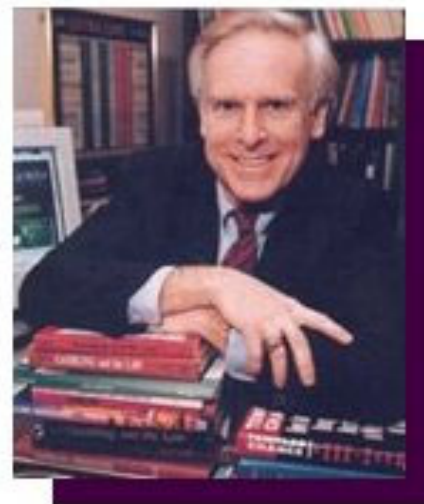
On the flip side, technology now allows casinos to keep track of every card dealt and every bet made. The systems can be used to find card-counters and take counter-measures. Is that legal? Can a casino count cards and shuffle up every time the deck turns positive, even when no card counters are playing?

Issues like barring and preferential shuffling should be researched and thought out in advance, rather than have a pit boss make a snap judgment that

might expose the casino to punitive damages.

Advertising is only partially within a casino's control. The important legal issue is whether casinos may legally advertise their gaming rather than just show pretty pictures of their coffee shops.

As gambling has become more accepted, legal barriers have begun to fall. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act specifically allows tribes to advertise their legal gaming. But a 100-year-old federal anti-lottery law is still on the books, and is being used by the Federal Communications



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Kiddie Fun in Atlantic City

By Rina Gupta

I remember being 16 years old on a family trip to Atlantic City. It was in the fall, chilly, and I was clueless as to why we would be going close to the water when we could not even dip our feet in. My mom told me that it would be really fun...that we would see once we got there, but I still, 'till today, do not know why that vacation spot was chosen. My mother was never a gambler, nor were the others that accompanied us on this trip.

I have to start by saying that the most exciting part of my trip consisted of sitting at a booth in a seaside restaurant, and seeing my name (remember my name is not all that common, and it is usually spelled differently) carved into the wooden wall, exactly where I was sitting. Compared to the rest of my experiences there, that was the highlight.

Well, what did the “kids” do while our parents were at the casino? We were dropped off at “kiddie casinos” that were so conveniently located. Our parents thought that these places were wonderful because they allowed for everyone to have fun, and hopefully go home a winner. At first glance, I have to admit, these kiddie casinos seemed really fascinating. They had video games, which are always fun, but they had rows and rows of slot machines, which appeared to me to look just like the ones our parents were playing. These games were all based on chance, but we were feeling lucky, so that was ok with us. Displayed on the wall were super nice bicycles, video game systems and great toys. We were told that we could win them if we won enough tickets. I always wanted a bike like that. My little brother’s eyes grew enormous, and he was incredibly motivated to win everything. We were each given \$20 dollars by our parents, and my brother and I were also carrying some of our own hard-earned

money. At the end of the two hours, I was incredibly discouraged. I only ended up with enough tickets to trade in for a stiff, unattractive, stuffed cat. Yes, the kind you win at amusement parks when you play those games. I remember thinking that for the \$25 dollars I had “wasted”, I could have bought a really nice stuffed animal of my choice. The *play value* of the time spent there was unimportant to me, and I left feeling quite frustrated. My brother, however, was a different story. He too did not end up with too many tickets, but he decided to keep them in his pocket and add them to the tickets he would win at his next time in there. He was already planning a return trip back to that spot, whereas I was hoping to never have to step foot in there again.

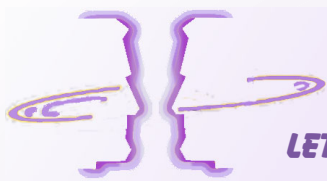


Let me fast-forward 16 years for you. I really do not enjoy playing at the casino, and really only go from time to time to please those I am with. My brother, on the other hand, lives in the US, about an hour’s drive from Atlantic City, and spends many weekends trying his luck. And to think we both had the same exposure as children. My brother still thinks back to that trip, and feels as though that experience had a lot to do with why he loves to gamble so much. While I can not say for sure, I tend to disagree, at least to a certain extent. I think my brother was predisposed to liking such activities, whereas I was not. Even before we started playing those refurbished slot machines, I could tell that he and I were approaching them

differently. I truly think that he would have latched onto them even if he were exposed at a later age...but maybe not to the same extent. He used to tell me, back then, that he kept dreaming about playing those machines and that one day he would move near there and play every day. And while I doubt his decision to move close to Atlantic City was motivated by this dream and experience in early adolescence, I wonder if it has influenced how he chooses to spend many of his weekends.

A press release by the South Jersey Publishing company, in October 2001, highlighted the case of the Trump Taj Mahal Casino in Atlantic City being fined for allowing underage gambling to take place on its premises. In this instance, a 12 year old boy and a 13 year old boy were found playing slot machines. The casino had paid \$155,000 in underage-gambling fines that year, and \$221,000 since 1996. The Casino’s vice president of legal affairs was outraged, explaining that underage gambling would not be discouraged by continually fining the casinos, but rather the actions need to be taken by the local police to punish children and their parents who gain access to the casino floors. She also expressed a need to educate parents before underage gambling can be properly addressed.

While I agree that education of parents, and of the law enforcement is important, I feel as though the casinos themselves need to find ways to ensure that underage children and adolescents do not play these machines. Maybe the fines paid by casinos for underage-gambling can go toward developing educational programs for everyone involved...even the industry, oh yeah...and those people who run those kiddie casinos too.



LET'S TALK PREVENTION®

Prevention and the Law

By Anne-Elyse Deguire
Prevention Specialist

Many approaches may be used in an attempt to prevent undesirable behaviors and outcomes. Once a potential problematic behavior is identified, we usually react by developing and implementing regulations that are designed to prevent the onset of that behavior altogether.

Once it was realized that gambling participation could result in excessive play, financial distress, and even addictive behavior, it became evident that children and adolescents should not have access to these venues. Even more compelling is the knowledge that most adult pathological gamblers indicate starting their play at early ages of adolescence. For these reasons, health professionals and social policy makers lobbied in favor of a law which would prohibit youth from participating in legalized gambling venues, such as casinos, race tracks, etc....

That is likely how it became illegal to offer legal forms of gambling activities to people less than 18 years of age across all Canadian provinces and in most states within the US, not to mention all European countries offering such activities. Moreover, several states, faced with the fact that a number of underage youth were able to elude casino security, increased the legal age to access gaming areas of casinos to 21.

These initiatives, although desirable and noteworthy, have important limitations. First, while each State having a lottery prohibits youth from purchasing a lottery

ticket, there seems to be a paradox involved with this rule, since many states permit that underage people receive lottery tickets as gifts. Although minors may not redeem their winnings, this permissiveness voids the underlying premise, which is to prevent youth from participating in gambling activities.

Second, there is ample research indicating that in spite of those legal restrictions, underage youth take part in virtually all forms of legalized gambling activities. And finally, in a society where the risks associated with gambling have not been abundantly put forth, unlike alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption, and where gambling is promoted as an acceptable form of entertainment, the prohibition of this activity might be viewed as a double-standard from a teenager's viewpoint, thus stimulating an interest and an increased desire to gamble.

In sum, with the best intentions at heart and with a desire to minimize the impact of an early age of onset (one of the most important risk factors), laws have been created.

However, the efficacy of this particular measure has yet to be demonstrated. While most would agree with their necessity, not too many are concerned with the rigor and applications of the existing laws. Policy makers should also clarify the objectives of such measures and then adopt a uniform approach that would be sure to reach their goals. Besides establishing clear objectives, the way these laws are implemented needs to be examined and modified where

necessary. For example, should the law be reinforced with fines or could it be preferable to educate retailers instead? And, most importantly, we need to ask ourselves if legal restrictions make indeed a difference, and if so, do they really protect youth or rather do they incite them to gamble?

Just like with any other preventive effort, it is imperative that we evaluate the impact of our actions. Why should the creation of legislation be exempt from that premise? It is my belief that it would be more than appropriate to instill measures, which will evaluate the outcome of existing laws so that they eventually achieve their objective goals in preventing our youth from developing gambling problems.

Chat Board: Prevention Issues

What do you think? You are cordially invited to share your opinions on the above questions and to put forth any suggestions on how to evaluate legislative measures in our new prevention chat board...

EMAIL US AT
PREVENTIONTALK@YOUTHGAMBLING.COM

Centre News

New member of Centre's advisory board.

We are delighted to announce that Marc N. Potenza, M.D., Ph.D., has agreed to be a member of the Centre's International Advisory Board. Marc is currently Director, Problem Gambling Clinic and Director, Women and Addictive Disorders Core, Women's Health Research at Yale University. He is also an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Yale University School of Medicine, Connecticut Mental Health Center and Substance Abuse Center. Marc is well known for his many contributions in the field of neuropsychology and gambling. Along with members of the Centre and Drs. Alain Dagher and Tomas Paus, Montreal Neurological Institute, we are embarking on a neuropsychological study of youth gambling problems, funded by the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services.

Prevention talk in Switzerland.

Dr. Rina Gupta just returned from Geneva this past November where she was invited to present information concerning the current state of knowledge on youth gambling and prevention efforts known to date. It turns out that there is

no gambling research conducted on youth in Switzerland, and there is no legal minimum age for the purchasing of lottery products or use of lottery gambling machines. We look forward to working collaboratively with them in the near future.

Establishing guidelines for model gambling treatment and prevention programs.

Dr. Jeff Derevensky was invited to participate in a meeting sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), National Repository for Effective Prevention Programs (NREPP), Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) in Rockville, Maryland, concerning establishing guidelines for model gambling treatment and prevention programs.

Working weekend in Montreal focus- ing you

Dr. Ken Winters and Dr. Randy Stinchfield, both from the Department of Psychiatry, University of Minnesota and members of the Centre's International Advisory Board, spent a working week-

end at the Centre examining a number of methodological issues focused on youth gambling problems. Several collaborative projects have been planned.

Collaborative efforts with the U.K.

Along with Dr. Mark Griffiths and Dr. Richard Woods, Nottingham Trent University, we are embarking on a collaborative study examining Internet gambling.

Think Tank follow-up!

A follow-up to the 2nd International Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues, which was cosponsored by McGill University's International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and HighRisk Behaviors and Harvard Medical School, Division on Addictions, will take place on June 13th in Dallas in collaboration with the annual conference of the National Council on Problem Gambling. Further details will be forthcoming from the NCPG and will be available on our website.

Congratulations!to Dr. Pierre Thiffault (Post-Doctoral Fellow) and Dr. Natalie Schmekel (Clinical Psychologist) on successfully defending their dissertations.

Recent and forthcoming publications from the Centre.....

- Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., Hardoon, K., Dickson, L., & Deguire, A.-E. (in press). Youth gambling: Some social policy issues. In G. Reith (Ed.), *For fun or profit? The controversies of the expansion of gambling*. New York: Prometheus Books.
- Hardoon, K., & Derevensky, J. (in press). Child and adolescent gambling behavior: Our current knowledge. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*.
- Dickson, L., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (in press). *The prevention of youth gambling problems: A conceptual model. Journal of Gambling Studies*.
- Gupta, R., & Deceveusky, J. L. (in press). Personality characteristics and risk-taking tendencies among adolescent gamblers. *Journal of Social Psychology*.
- Hardoon, K., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (in press). Empirical vs. perceived measures of gambling severity: Why adolescents don't present themselves for treatment. *Addictive Behaviors*.
- Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (2001). Le problème de jeu touché aussi les jeunes. *Psychologie Québec, 18(6)*. 23-27.
- Hardoon, K., & Derevensky, J. (2001). Social influences involved in children's gambling behavior. *Journal of Gambling Studies, 7(3)*, 191-215.

Special Reports..... these will be posted on our website soon!

- Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. (2001). *An Examination of the Differential Coping Styles of Adolescents with Gambling Problems*. Report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Toronto, Ontario, 89 pp.
- Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (2001). *Lottery Ticket Purchases by Adolescents: A Qualitative and Quantitative Examination*. Report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Toronto, Ontario, 152 pp.
- Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., Dickson, L., & Deguire, A.-E. (2001). *Prevention Efforts Toward Minimizing Gambling Problems*. Report prepared for the National Council for Problem Gambling, Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMUSA), Washington, D.C., 104 pp.
- Rugle, L., Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., Winters, K., & Stinchfield, R. (2001). *The Treatment of Problem and Pathological Gamblers*. Report prepared for the National Council for Problem Gambling, Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Washington, D.C., 105 pp.

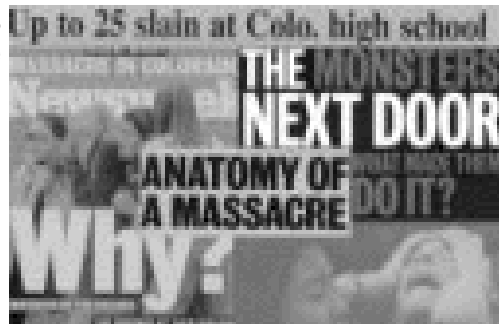
SCHOOL VIOLENCE: CAUSE FOR CONCERN

By Carolyn Hawley

In recent years, a great deal of U.S and Canadian media attention has focused on school violence, particularly upon the spread of mass school shootings. The most prolific of these incidents occurring in April, 1999, when two Columbine High School students opened fired, killing a teacher and 12 students before taking their own lives. Such shootings at schools around the country have resulted in widespread fear among students and parents alike; however, empirical data suggests that school violence is lower today than several years ago.

In the early 1990s violence among youth in the US, particularly gun related violence, reached epidemic proportions. In 1990, firearm injuries accounted for one out of every eight deaths of children aged 10-14, and one out of every four deaths among adolescents aged 15-19 (Fingerhut, 1993). Compared to 1984, gun homicides among adolescents aged 12-17 nearly tripled from less than 600 victims in 1984, to a peak of over 1,700 in 1993.

Yet following 1993, the remainder of the decade experienced a consistent and steep decline in youth violence. From 1993 to 1998, the juvenile arrest rate for murder dropped by nearly 50%. Overall, arrests in the US in 1998 for murder, robbery, rape and aggravated assaults were 394 per 100,000 youth ages 10-17, the lowest rate in over a



decade (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).


How is youth violence affecting our schools?

While school associated violent deaths captures the majority of the media attention, school violence comprises a range of activities, including assaults with or without weapons, physical fights, threats or destructive acts, bullying, hostile or threatening remarks between students, and gang violence (National, 2000). Recent data about these violent behaviors

present a mixed picture of school safety in the U.S.

School-associated violent deaths, while tragic, are a rare event. Less than 1% of all homicides among school-age children occur in or near school grounds or on the way to and from school. Between 1994-1999, there were 220 incidents of school-associated violent deaths, the majority being firearms-related homicides. During this period, the number of total shootings in schools decreased steadily, however the number of multiple victim events grew. From the August 1995, through June 1999, there was on average four multiple victim shooting events per year. This is compared to an average of one multiple victim event per year from August 1992 through July 1995 (DOJ, 2000).

Regarding nonfatal crimes, the rate of serious school-related violent offenses, (i.e., rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault) remained fairly consistent throughout the 1990s. According to a Department of Justice



report (2000) in 1998, 9 out of every 1000 students were victims of serious violent crimes while at school or going to and from school.

The percentage of high school students who were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property has not changed significantly in recent years (DOJ, 2000). Research suggests that fewer students are carrying weapons to school (in 1993, 12% reported having brought a weapon to school during the previous month, compared to 6.9% in 1999). Student involvement in physical fights on school property has also slowly declined from 16% in 1993 to 14% in 1999.

School violence is not isolated to students. Teachers also face threats of violence and intimidation. In the 1993-94 school years, 12 percent of all teachers were threatened with injury and 4 percent were physically attacked by a student.

Yet some schools are safer than others. In 1996-97, 43% of public schools reported no violent crimes, and only 10% of public schools reported one or more serious violent crimes. Elementary schools are

much less likely than middle schools and high schools to report violent crimes, and schools in urban areas report more violent crime than those in suburban or rural areas. Additionally, larger schools are more likely than smaller schools to report criminal incidents (National, 2002).

It is important to note that as the levels of violence in our schools have declined or remained constant in recent years, many students report feeling safer. Between 1995-99, the percentage of students 12 to 18 who avoided one or more places at school out of fear for their safety decreased from 9 to 5% (DOJ, 2000). Students were also less likely to fear being attacked or harmed while at school (a decrease from 9% in 1995 to 5% in 1999) or while traveling to and from school (a decrease from 7% in 1995 to 4% in 1999). Reported street gang participation, a major source of intimidation and violence, decreased from 29% in 1995 to 17% in 1999 (National, 2002).

Recognition of the problems of violence in our schools has increased, and attempts to address these issues

are being made on the Federal, State, and local levels. However, school violence continues to remain a problem in some schools. Through further research we can begin to understand the risk factors associated with youth violence and other harmful behaviors, and develop supports and prevention programs to make our schools safer.

Fingerhut, L.A. (1983). *Situational factors in disputes leading to criminal violence*.

In D.S. Ellion, B.A. Hamburg & K. Williams (Eds.), *Violence in American schools*. London: Cambridge University Press.

National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center. *School violence*.

Snyder, H.N. & Sickmund, M. (1999). *Juvenile offenders and victims: 1999. National Report*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. U.S. Department of Justice.

U.S. Department of Justice. (2000). *Indicators of school crime and safety*. Washington, DC: NCJ-184176.

Driving with ADHD: What is the real problem?

By Pierre Thiffault (Ph.D.)

Highway safety represents a major problem for youth. It is well known that young drivers have more accidents and commit more violations. Many reasons have been put forward in the literature in order to explain this phenomenon. It has been recently suggested that Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is related to road accidents. Data indeed shows that individuals with ADHD have more accidents - up to four times - more violations, more drinking and driving, illegal/unsafe driving and more injuries than the rest of the population.

However, while significant correlations between risky driving and ADHD have been reported, the process by which these associations occur remains to be clarified. The fact that ADHD interferes with driving is not surprising since attention deficit, activity regulation, persistence, motor control, reaction time and rule following behaviors problems are primary features of that disorder.

Here are some major findings

- Most studies suggest a direct link between attentional problems and impulsivity of ADHD and risky driving outcomes;
- Individuals with ADHD don't have any problem with driving knowledge;
- It has been related to a deficit at the motor control level;
- Ritalin has been shown to have a positive impact on subject's driving performance on a driving simulator;
- Females with attentional difficulties are at higher risk of being involved in a traffic accident;
- Risk taking has been shown to be associated with vigilance impairment in youth with ADHD;

- Drivers with ADHD have more violations, especially for speeding behavior. The author of this study suggests *Ritalin* and driving courses, but does not mention the possible risk-taking and sensation seeking tendencies in this population.

Available research has established a link between ADHD, road accidents, violations and risky driving but there is no consensus as to the processes by which these associations occur. It is acknowledged that impulsivity, attentional difficulties, as well as problematic motor control, might play a role, but these observations are quite general and no direct relationships with specific driving behaviors, or errors, are specified. Researchers have suggested the use of pharmacology (*Ritalin*), driving courses and more expensive insurances for ADHD drivers in order to remediate the situation but these proposed countermeasures do not rely on a strong theoretical basis. A better understanding of the problem is necessary before the formulation of sound recommendations.

Studies have shown that drivers with ADHD do not have any problems regarding driving knowledge. Data from a driving simulator study suggest that motor control might be a cause for road accidents for these drivers. It is however known that only a part of the hyperactive population have these psychomotor problems. Moreover, the fact that drivers with ADHD have more driving violations,



and particularly regarding speeding behavior, suggests that motivational aspects might be of greater importance. Driving is an activity in which one is able to manage the level of difficulty. This is mainly done through the selected driving speed. If ADHD drivers have more speeding violations than the rest of the population, this implies that they take more risk while driving.

Speeding behavior is in fact an excellent measure of sensation seeking and risk taking tendencies. Hence, the presence of speeding violations indicates that ADHD drivers might expose themselves to a higher level of risk because of personality and motivational factors, independently of attentional difficulties, impulsivity and poor motor control. These factors are certainly also part of the explanation but sensation seeking and risk taking have to be incorporated, which is currently not done in this research literature. Co-morbid defiant, anti-social behaviors and conduct disorders are also likely part of the explanation.

Upcoming Events

March 21-23, 2002 World
Psychiatric Association
Psychological and Psychiatric
Consequences of Violence.
Budapest, Hungary

20th Annual "Protecting Our
Children" National American
Indian Conference on Child
Abuse and Neglect. Duluth,
MN, April 14, 2002

Responsible Gambling
Council-Discovery
Conference 2002 Niagara
Falls, Sheraton Fallsview
April 21-24, 2002

3rd International Conference
on Drugs and Young People.
13th-15th May: AJC
Convention Centre,
Randwick, Sydney, NSW,
Australia

The 16th Annual National
Council on Problem Gambling
Conference. Dallas, Texas
June 13-15, 2002

Editor: Kathy D'Ovidio

Chat Board: Youth Issues

Send us your comments, questions & anything else of interest

Question and Answer

Q: Why is it that some places have a legal age of 18 whereas others have implemented a minimum age of 21 for engaging in legalized gambling?

A: For the most part, the legal age to enter a casino is 21 in the US and 18 in Canada. Internationally, the trend has been to follow the set minimum legal age for the sale of alcohol. This is mainly due to the fact that alcohol is offered in casinos. In places where the legal age is 18, it appears as though there are more underage gamblers who gain access to casinos, simply due to the fact that it is easier to pass for 18 than for 21 when an individual is 16 or 17 years of age. We would much prefer to see an *international standard* of 21 for access to legalized gambling venues. The laws pertaining to lottery play are variable, from one jurisdiction to the next. Some countries, such as Switzerland, do not even have a minimum legal age for lottery play. When trying to ascertain what these different legal ages are based on, there are no clear answers to be found. They are for the most part arbitrary. Online gambling is an up and coming concern when it comes to the establishment of minimum legal ages as well as the enforcement of these laws.

Q: Why is it that boys are more likely to become problem gamblers? Is it nature or nurture?

A: Boys in general are more attracted to gambling type games, than are girls. Both Nature and nurture probably both play a hand in that. There may be a physiological predisposition amongst boys that causes them to seek highly stimulating risk-type activities. Boys are also more socialized to engage in risky behaviors than are girls. In any case, our research and the research of others clearly indicate that boys are engaging in gambling at a greater frequency than are girls. So it follows, logically that they would be more prone to develop a gambling problem due to the increased exposure. There are likely many other variables involved. We know that those who gamble in a disordered way usually do so to benefit from the escape it provides from daily hassles and problems. Boys, in general, are more likely to suppress their problems whereas girls are socialized to express their issues and deal with them. Therefore, girls would probably be less likely to play for reasons of escape. New venues of physiological and psychological research will surely provide even more detailed explanations to this question in the near future.

**EMAIL US AT
YGI@YOUTHGAMBLING.COM**