

## The True Colours of Gambling

By Anne-Elyse Deguire

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors launched the very first province-wide poster contest in Quebec aimed at the prevention of gambling problems amongst youth; one of the many prevention efforts undertaken by our center. The goal of this contest entitled "The True Colours of Gambling," was to raise awareness amongst youth and the population at large of the risks associated with gambling.

Several Francophone as well as Anglophone High Schools in Quebec participated in this contest. A total of 184 students coming from 21 different schools throughout Quebec participated. The



Natascia Tamburello (1<sup>st</sup> prizewinner for English poster)

Government du Québec; Mario Carrière, Vice President Production, CogniScience; Serge Chevalier; Sociologist, National Institute of Public Health; and Scott Conrad; Educational Consultant and Board member of the International Centre for Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, McGill University.

teachers were pleased with the knowledge their students gained.

Also, since the project fit so well into the existing curriculum, some teachers inquired if there would be another contest next year.

The five members of the jury met on April 25<sup>th</sup> to select the winners. The members of the jury included: Anne-Elyse Deguire, Prevention Specialist, International Centre

for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors, McGill University; Lynne Duguay, Research and planification agent, Ministry of Health and Social Services,



Kim Auclair (1<sup>st</sup> prizewinner for French poster)

efforts and artistic talents put forth by the students were quite remarkable. The students expressed having learned a lot about gambling while producing their posters, and

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Let's talk prevention®

## Prevention and Parents

By Anne-Elyse Deguire  
Prevention Specialist

Over the past 20 years, the gambling industry has grown dramatically, offering a diversity of new products and greater availability. Accordingly, since there are more venues, there are more people taking part in gambling activities and hence more people experiencing gambling related problems. In fact, the rates for pathological gambling have almost doubled in the past 10 years, going from 1,2% to 2,1% in the adult population.

The same phenomenon can be observed within the alcohol industry, but with one very important difference. In Quebec, regular alcohol consumption has increased by 17% over the past 10 years. However, this increase in consumption occurs in a population which readily acknowledges the risks associated to alcohol use due to the success of large and continuous awareness campaigns. It appears that for the most part, adults have developed an interest for the taste rather than the euphoria of alcohol, thus accounting for the increase in its use.

The same cannot be said for people's awareness of the risks associated with gambling participation, which raises two serious concerns. First, this results in a population at greater risk for the development of gambling related problems due to an inability to recognize inherent risks. Second, since initiation to gambling often occurs in the home and in the company of family members (Derevensky & Gupta, 1997; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998) youth are not only unaware of the risks involved but also perceive gambling to be a legitimate and harmless form of entertainment. And since risk-taking tendencies are typical of adolescence, these youth are highly

attracted to gambling while remaining largely vulnerable to the lure of riches and dreaming big, and unaware of the fact that this activity can result in a loss of control. In fact, the rates of pathological gambling among adolescents are 2 to 4 times higher than those found in the adult population.

### So, what can we do to prevent this?

It may be useful to learn from what has been done to educate individuals about the risks associated with alcohol use. Éduc'alcool is a non-profit organization developed in Quebec for the purpose of educating people about the importance of moderation when consuming alcohol. Their main objective is to inform individuals of the risks involved in abusing alcohol as well as the possible benefits that can arise from moderate use. Over the years, they have developed several programs to educate the general population and have successfully changed attitudes and behaviors.

However, their biggest challenge still remains teenagers whose first experiences with alcohol often involve binge drinking. It has been suggested that adolescents engage in binge drinking because they feel denied and subsequently overindulge to rebel socially. The solution put

forth by Éduc'alcool involves a late and gradual initiation to alcohol. Parents are encouraged to educate their teenagers by developing and introducing the concept of moderation and giving them all the information they would need to ultimately prevent them from developing problems. Although this solution might appear somewhat controversial (a recent survey shows that only 56% of the Quebec population would be in favor) it recognizes that teenagers would be less at-risk if they were to learn from their parents than from their peers, whether the education involves drinking or not.

My intentions here are not to address and resolve this controversy but rather to raise a similar question with regards to youth gambling. I am actually curious about one thing in particular.



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Considering all the media coverage addressing the downsides of gambling, how is it that very few parents are still unaware that gambling can result in serious problems? For some reason, individuals have a difficult time understanding the fact that frequent gambling can result in a loss of personal control, often with devastating consequences. Could this be because the gambling industry is owned and promoted by the government here in Canada, giving it a clean image and making it appear safe? In any case, this lack of awareness often results in parents inadvertently involving their children in gambling activities, without the possibility of educating them about the risks. The literature on other high-risk behaviors in adolescence widely recognizes that prevention programs which involve parental education and participation are most

efficient. Which raises the argument that prevention programs addressing youth gambling should really include a comprehensive parent component.

As shown successful by Éduc'alcool, our society would benefit greatly from large scale prevention and awareness efforts, such as publicity campaigns. These efforts need not only focus on the risks involved in gambling for the general public, but should also address youth gambling.

Parents would be much more willing to participate in our prevention programs if already sensitized to the fact that adolescents can and do experience gambling problems, by equipping them with facts on incidence, prevalence, precursors, etc. through a variety of mediums (radio, television, pamphlets).

In the case of gambling, the benefits of parental education and sensitization, as well as their eventual participation in administering prevention to their children are twofold since these efforts will also



result in a decrease of negative parental influences in the home, such as the glamorization of gambling, or the inappropriate involvement of children in their gambling practices. The communication of healthy attitudes towards gambling, from parents to children, would go a long way to minimizing the risks of adolescent problem gambling. Let's get those parents on board!

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poster are Nataschia Tamburello (1<sup>st</sup> prize, (first from the left on the picture)) and Tina Lippert (2<sup>nd</sup> prize, (first from the right on the picture)).

Posters will not only be posted on our website but will also be reproduced and distributed to secondary schools throughout Quebec as part of our comprehensive prevention campaign aimed at sensitizing youth about the possible dangers associated with gambling. Congratulations to the winners!

Two French posters as well as two English posters were selected as first and second place prizewinners. The first prize winners received a **Digital Camera** and the second prizewinners received an **MP3 Player** on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002 at the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors. The prize winners for the French poster are Kim Auclair (1<sup>st</sup> prize, (second from the right on the picture)) and Karen Quirion (2<sup>nd</sup> prize). The prizewinners for the English



**Tina Lippert (2<sup>nd</sup> prizewinner for English poster)**

# When *Bad Kids Gamble*

## Gambling and the Law<sup>®</sup>

**G**ambling law is strange. But the stories behind the law can be even stranger.

In late August, 1997, a federal Court of Appeals ruled that the mother of a 20-year-old could not get back the \$77,200 she alleged her son lost gambling on an Illinois riverboat casino.

A mother suing a casino is unusual. But, the rest of the story is really bizarre.

Elgin Vinson lost the money in the summer of 1994, playing blackjack on the Casino Queen, in East St. Louis. Nothing too unusual about that, since Illinois legalized riverboat casinos in 1990.

That Elgin was only 20 years old, at the time, makes the case a little more interesting, because the legal age for gambling on riverboat casinos is 21.

Of course, tens of thousands of minors try to get aboard anyway. In 1995 the Illinois Gaming Board stopped over 20,000 kids from gambling on the state's ten boats. There is no way of knowing how many made it past the guards to the gaming tables and slot machines.

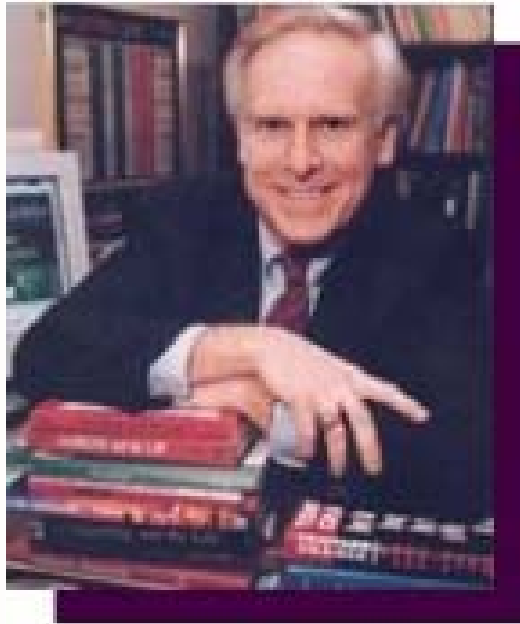
But how many 20-year-olds have \$77,200? Where did Elgin get the money? And why did his mother think she could sue and get it back?

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch broke the story in April, 1996 at the top of page one, with the headline: "Ex-college chief tells of Blackmail; former Webster University president describes 'nightmare.'"

The sordid saga began two years earlier, when the retired college president, 78-year-old Leigh

Gerdine, approached the 20-year-old Elgin in Forest Park. Elgin and Leigh dispute the details of what followed. But there can be no doubt that the homosexual encounter turned into a nightmare for all concerned.

Over the next few months Leigh gave Elgin more than \$112,000 in cash and cars. Elgin testified that he and Leigh had sex 20 times and that the older man gave him



"presents." Elgin's lawyer described the episode as, "a love affair gone bad."

Leigh painted a different picture.

Leigh testified, "We had a single disastrous sexual episode." He had fondled Elgin and, almost impulsively, gave the younger man \$20. Leigh testified that within a week Elgin demanded a new car. Leigh bought him a \$16,000 Ford Probe.

Elgin made new demands every week, threatening to tell Leigh's wife. As fast as Leigh paid him,

Elgin lost the money gambling.

Elgin was charged, among other crimes, with burglarizing Leigh's office and assaulting him by punching him in the mouth. At his trial, Elgin tried to raise the Race Card: "I was a poor black man," he testified, "I was excited" by the much-older man's attention.

The jury did not buy it. Elgin was convicted of extortion and sentenced to the maximum: 12 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch almost missed the story, because it did not have the resources to check every arrest record. Reporter Tim Bryant did not know who the victim was, when he heard about the upcoming trial. He decided to look into Elgin Vinson's case only because he recognized the name from a story about the Casino Queen being sued for gambling losses.

Did Elgin's mother, Lillian, know what her son was doing? She denied it. Yet, her credit union account grew from

\$3,000 to \$16,000 in the months Leigh was paying blackmail money to Elgin. Lillian testified that she was not trying to hide the money -- that the only reason she had some of her son's cash was to prevent him from gambling it away.

Another mother might wonder how come her son was able to deposit \$98,000 into their joint account when he was working the third shift at a Walgreen's drug store.

Lillian filed suit against the Casino Queen in October, 1995. She demanded \$231,600 three times

the \$77,200 she claimed her son lost gambling.

The Illinois Loss Recovery Act provides that anyone who loses \$50 or more can sue the winner and get his money back. If the loser fails to file suit within 6 months, anyone else can sue the winner and get *triple* the amount lost.

The State Legislature knew, when it decided to allow licensed riverboat casinos, that it could not permit losers to sue to get their money back. So it amended the Loss Recovery Act to exclude "gambling games conducted on riverboats when authorized by the Riverboat Gambling Act."

Lillian Vinson argued that Elgin's gambling was not "authorized," because he was underage.

The Casino Queen argued that Elgin had used a fake identification card and "the money was extorted and beaten from an elderly man."

The trial Court had ruled that it need not look at the facts of this case, because the Loss

Recovery Act simply did not apply. If there were a violation of the rules, the casino could be fined.

But "the fact that Elgin Vinson improperly participated in a game of twenty-one" does not mean the game itself was not authorized.

The Court of Appeal agreed and reasoned that it would be unjust and absurd to allow Elgin or his mother to recover. If this suit succeeded, then the State itself could be sued, for treble damages,

every time a minor bought a losing lottery ticket.

The Court was worried that minors would be encouraged to forge identification cards and gamble illegally. If the Loss Recovery Act applies to licensed riverboat casinos, underage players could never lose: If they made a bet and won, they would be paid; if they made a bet and lost, they could sue and get 'three times the amount they bet.

The law may appear strange, but it is not stupid.

[Professor Rose can be reached at his new web site:  
[www.gamblingandthelaw.com](http://www.gamblingandthelaw.com)]

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## News from the Centre

❖ Dr. Marc Potanza, Director of the Gambling Problem Program, Yale University, recently joined the Centre's international Advisory Board.

❖ Congratulations! to Dr. Ken Winters, a member of our International Advisory Board, for being named Associate Editor, Psychology of Addictive Behaviors.

❖ Dr. Jeff Derevensky returned from a whirlwind South Pacific trip having spent several weeks as a Visiting Professor at the Problem Gambling Center, University of Auckland in New Zealand. While there, he participated in a forum on gambling as a public health issue sponsored by the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand. He also flew to

Wellington, where he met with Laila Harre, Minister of Youth Affairs, several members of Parliament, and consulted with representatives and research staff from the Department of Health. As well, Jeff met with members of the industry to help emphasize the need for their continued support in helping minimize the problems associated with problem gambling. Jeff provided insights concerning our current state of knowledge of youth gambling problems and emphasized the need for a framework for programmatic research. Jeff also consulted with members of the Ministry of Health to help formulate some questions for a national youth study. Several collaborative projects with the Centre's staff

at the University of Auckland are being planned. Onto Australia, Jeff met with Alex Blaszczyński, a member of the International Advisory Board, who discussed several on-going projects in Sydney. Jeff was invited to make a presentation at the Australian National University and met with gambling regulators in Canberra. Along with Dr. Peter Grabosky, they helped plan for the establishment and development of a Center for Gambling Studies at ANU. Strong commitments from the Gambling Regulatory Body were received for the funding and establishment of a Center.

❖ The McGill team was well represented at the recent Responsible Gambling

Conference in Niagara Falls. Dr. Rina Gupta gave a presentation entitled Therapeutic approaches for adolescent problem gamblers and Chantale Ste-Marie, one of our doctoral students, presented a paper entitled, Anxiety and social stress related to adolescent gambling behavior.

❖ Members of the McGill Centre, Jeff Derevensky, Rina Gupta and Carolyn Hawley, will be conducting an open meeting at the National Council on Problem Gambling Conference in Dallas to follow up the McGill University- Harvard Medical School Youth Think Tank held at McGill University last May. Sponsorship for this meeting has been received from the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Center, and Harrah's Entertainment, and British Columbia lottery Corporation. All are invited to attend.

❖ Two recently completed projects supported by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long- Term Care, have recently been released.

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.

Complete copies of the reports are currently posted on the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Center website,

❖ The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors continues

to provide consultative services worldwide. Since the last newsletter, we have provided information and services in Australia, Canada, Greece, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States.

❖ The Centre staff will play an integral role at the National Council for Problem Gambling Conference in Dallas in June. In addition to the Think Tank Workshop on Youth Gambling Problems, the following papers and posters will be presented:

Dequire, A-E. Past, present and future initiatives for the prevention

Hardoon, K., Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. An examination of the influence of emotional and conduct problems upon adolescent gambling problems.

Hawley, C., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. Education in the information age: The use of the Internet in counsellor training.

Kaufman, F., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. The relationship between life stresses, coping styles and gambling behavior among adolescents.

Ste-Marie, C., Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. Anxiety, social stress, and substance use related to adolescent gambling behaviour: Clinical implications.

Thiffault, P., Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. ADHD and gambling: Toward an integrative model.

be posting our published work and presentations on our website in the near future.

❖ Watch for the upcoming European Association for the Study of Gambling Conference in Barcelona in October. Jeff and Rina have organized two symposiums on youth gambling problems.

On a recent trip to California Jeff Derevensky had a chance to meet with Dr. Jim

Wetsphal who continues to work in the area of addiction. Jim is currently located at the University of California, San Francisco and the San Francisco General Hospital. Both talked of future collaborative projects.

❖ Ralph Gerdelan, Executive Director, Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand; Dr. Lia Nower, University of Missouri-St. Louis; and Drs. Randy Stinchfield and Ken Winters, were recent visitors to our Center to continue work on several collaborative projects.



of youth gambling problems.

Derevensky, J. Debating youth gambling and problem gambling.

Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., & Winters, K. Prevalence rates of youth gambling problems: Are the current rates over inflated?

Dickson, L., Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. Harm reduction prevention for adolescent drinking and gambling.

Felsher, J., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. Lottery ticket purchases by adolescents and their gambling behaviors: A Quantitative and Qualitative Examination.

# Binge Drinking on College Campuses

By Carolyn Hawley

Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> binge drinking on college campuses seized the U.S. congressional spotlight as experts discussed the problem, a parent told the horrific story of his son's alcohol poisoning death, and Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, D-Connecticut, stated the problem is "far more destructive than most people realize." Recently, Connecticut alone had six college students die in separate alcohol-related traffic accidents and alcohol-poisoning incidents.

However, participants acknowledged that despite the media attention that has surrounded campus binge drinking, no one really knows how prevalent it is, how serious it is, or even just what it is.

When asked how many 18 to 24 year olds have died in recent years as a result of binge drinking, Raynard Kington, acting director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), said, "That we don't know." And, said Drew Hunter, executive director of a group of campus peer education programs, no one can even define what binge drinking really is. "When you think of going on a binge, being a binge drinker, what comes to mind is someone who really needs help, who is out of control," Hunter said.

According to the NIAAA, the current definition of a binge

drinker is five drinks for a man and four drinks for a woman, in one sitting, during the previous two week period. However, participants questioned the value of the definition, particularly asking what constitutes a "sitting."

Furthermore, a standard drink is considered 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer and 1.25 ounces of a distilled spirit. But the group noted that different people are affected in different ways. After 5 drinks over a fixed span of time, a man weighing 250 pounds is going to have a lower blood alcohol level than a man of 150 pounds.

Lieberman argued that the criteria for what is considered excessive alcohol use should be ones blood alcohol level and when describing an individuals problematic drinking, the term "excessive," not "binge" drinking should be used.

Harvard University's School of Public Health recently released a study including more than 10,000 students at 119 four-year colleges. The study reports that overall, 44 percent of college students are binge drinkers, about the same percentage as a previous study conducted in 1993.

Additionally, although one in five students abstains, about 70 percent of traditional college students who do drink, and who live away from home are binge drinkers. The study, reported in

the March issue of the Journal of American College Health, also found that underage students account for nearly half the consumption of alcohol among undergraduates and that women's colleges saw an increase in binge drinkers. The proportion of women's college students identified as binge drinkers rose from 24 percent in 1993 to 32 percent in 2001- a rate still well below that of co-ed colleges. The authors did not have an explanation for the increase.

However, in the end, the Senate hearing closed with the majority concluding that there was probably little Washington could do except call attention to the problem.

Lightman, D. (May 12, 2002). Senate Focuses on Binge Drinking; Lieberman Panel's Hearing Struggles to Find an Approach to the Problem. *Hartford Courant*.

Wechsler, H., Lee, J.E., Nelson, T.F., & Kuo, M. (2002). Underage college students' drinking behavior, assess to alcohol, and the influence of deterrence policies; findings from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study. *Journal of American College Health*. 50 (5), 223-237.

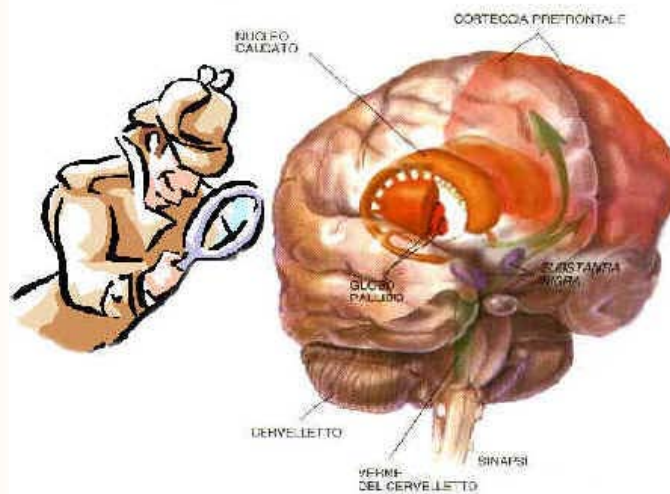
# Substance Abuse and Comorbidity in *Youth with ADHD*

By Pierre Thiffault, Ph. D.

It has been suggested that the presence of ADHD is an important risk factor for the development of substance use disorders (SUD). It was indeed observed that 50% of adults with ADHD exhibit SUD. ADHD would favor a rapid transition from substance use to dependence, and substance abuse problems have been shown to start earlier in the presence of this disorder. These individuals also likely take longer to recover from SUD. As such, ADHD may be viewed as an obstacle in the treatment of substance abuse problems. Several researchers have acknowledged that the link between ADHD and SUD is still not clear but likely involves complex interactions among biological and psychological factors. Comorbid conduct disorder (CD) as well as mood disorders such as depression and anxiety are seen as potential mediating variables. ADHD is by far the most common comorbid diagnosis in children with conduct disorder, with overlaps rates ranging from 65% - 90%. This overlap thus renders it often difficult to isolate ADHD's and CD's specific contribution in the development of substance abuse problems. Since the link between CD and substance abuse is clearly established, this

situation has led some to suggest that addiction problems seen in the ADHD population are explained by comorbid CD. Substance abuse in the framework of CD is mainly understood as a mean to act with disregard to societal norms. Thus, saying that comorbid CD explains substance abuse for

greater risk, ADHD still represents an independent risk factor for substance use disorder. It has been shown that ADHD is associated with a specific sequence for the development of SUD, where early alcohol use disorder increases the risk of drug use disorder and early substance dependence increases the risk for subsequent substance abuse. Accordingly, these results extend previous findings documenting important clinical, statistical and scientific associations between persistent ADHD and psychoactive substance use disorder, suggesting targeting ADHD for preventing and early intervention programs aimed at reducing substance abuse in youth. This recommendation is also present in studies that underscore the importance of CD as a mediator of the relation between ADHD and substance abuse. Since ADHD usually precedes CD, the treatment of ADHD could help to prevent CD and related addiction problems.



youth with ADHD implies that these problems would to some degree stem from a need to reject societal norms. Others underline that psychiatric comorbidity in ADHD is not limited to CD, implying mood and anxiety disorders, which may also increase the risk for SUD. In this case, SUD could be seen as self-medication in the presence of emotional regulation problems. Finally, some researchers believe that while comorbid CD and bipolar disorder confer a



# YOUTH GAMBLING AND YOUTH GAMBLING RELATED PROBLEMS: A PRE-CONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM

We are excited to announce that our Centre will be co-sponsoring a Pre-conference Symposium related to youth gambling issues with the National Council on Problem Gambling. This symposium will be held the morning of June 13<sup>th</sup>, launching the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual National Council on Problem Gambling conference in Dallas, Texas. **All are invited and there is no fee for attendance!!**

This pre-conference is serving as an extenuation to the priorities established at the Second International Think Tank on Youth Gambling Issues held in May of 2001, at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. McGill University's International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors co-sponsored the Think Tank with Harvard Medical School's, Division on

Addictions. If you did not attend, the purpose of that Think Tank was to develop an international public health agenda focused on minimizing the negative impact of gambling on youth. At the close of the Think Tank, participants identified the following six critical issues that needed to be addressed for the creation of a uniform policy:

- ❖ Definitions
- ❖ Funding
- ❖ Governance
- ❖ Research
- ❖ Youth Involvement
- ❖ Awareness

Committees were subsequently formed to concentrate on each issue. The objectives of this symposium will be to follow up on committee activities while increasing representation and information generation through the inclusion of other individuals interested in the

topic of youth gambling. More specifically the pre-conference will focus on the following objectives.

- To review the current level of knowledge and understanding of youth gambling issues, including strengths and limitations in the literature;
- To examine the critical issues and more specifically, present committee goals, accomplishments, and future directions towards the development of an international policy on youth gambling.

**Your attendance is encouraged and we hope to see you there!!**

For more information please visit one of the following **Websites:**

<http://www.youthgambling.com>

or

<http://www.ncpgambling.org/conference.htm>

## Upcoming Events

### 16<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety

August 4-9, 2002: Palais des Congrès de Montréal, Québec, Canada

### World Forum Montreal 2002

Drugs, Dependencies and Society: Impact and Responses  
September 22-27, 2002: Montreal, Quebec

### 5<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking

October 2-5, 2002: Barcelona, Spain

## YGI Newsletter

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