



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

Internet Gambling Among Youth: A Preliminary Examination



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Youth today have widespread and inexpensive access to the Internet. Computers are readily available for use in many high school, college, and university libraries, and the cost of personal computers has been drastically reduced. The Internet is both convenient and anonymous. It has many functions; the Internet is used to gather information, to meet new friends, to chat with current friends, and as a source of entertainment.

Research on gambling on the Internet is still in its infancy. In a 1999 survey of 2,202 Canadians, 0.5% reported trying Internet gambling in past year, and only 1 respondent indicated he regularly gambled on the Internet (Azmir, 2000). In a U.K. survey, 1% of respondents reported they

occasionally gambled on Internet at least weekly (Griffiths, 2001). However, these two studies were conducted when Internet access, especially in the U.K., was more restricted than it is today. In a U.S. study, 8% of respondents (patients at a free health clinic) reported having gambled on the Internet in their lifetime; and 4% reported gambling weekly on Internet (Ladd & Petry, 2002). What is of concern is that in this particular group, three-quarters of individuals with Internet gambling experiences were problem gamblers, as determined by the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS). A recent study of a sample of on-line gamblers may provide some insight into gambling on the Internet, where two-thirds of the respondents were found likely to have problems (Wood & Williams, in press).

In order to examine Internet gambling among youth, The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors has undertaken a new study. The preliminary information reported here is based on the responses of 1,113 Montreal high-school students, 1,273 Canadian and U.S. college and university students, and 546 on-line respondents. These early results indicate that 9% of high school students, 6% of College and University students, and 42% of on-line respondents have gambled for money on the Internet. When asked how often they gamble, 70% report gambling on the Internet at least

weekly. Of the weekly Internet gamblers, 85% are male, 23% are 18-24, and 28% are problem gamblers.

From the on-line sample of young people aged 18-24, 93% have gambled for money on the Internet, 95% of males have gambled for money on the Internet, and 33% of 18-24-year-olds are problem gamblers. Of the problem gamblers, 95% of those individuals have gambled for money on the Internet.

Does the Internet contribute to problem gambling? There is good news and bad news.

The good news is that fewer youth than adults gamble on the Internet. The bad news is that, although youth are not yet gambling for money, they are playing gambling games on the "practice" sites. Over half of all high school students, close to half of college and university students, and over three-quarters of on-line players report playing on "practice" sites.

Does "practice make perfect"? In a study of "practice" versus money sites, Ladouceur (2005) found that the "practice" sites, relative to the money sites, have an over-inflated pay-out rate. Advertisements for "free sites" are now appearing on television, which may serve to further attract youth to gamble on the Internet. The concern is that youth, accustomed to winning on "practice" sites, will gamble for money when they have credit cards of their own, where they will not experience the same success.

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It can't be addictive...it's a sport

Rina Gupta, Ph.D.

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems & High-Risk Behaviors

I often look forward to speaking with a group of teens. I find them to be insightful, straightforward, and very informative. Last week, I spoke with a group of 10th graders. I learned that playing poker is the norm for their age group, that it was viewed as a “sport”, not gambling, and learned that because it is a sport, it cannot result in problems if engaged in frequently. Interesting!

It's not difficult to understand why teens perceive poker this way. It is part of regular programming on most sports networks. Televised tournaments include commentators as do other sport broadcasts. And the players become famous, just like athletes.

The appeal of this “sport” is also not difficult to comprehend. Unlike basketball, football, or hockey; sports where players spend many many years training with few ever making professional or college teams, it does not require such discipline to play in a world poker tour. This sport is quickly becoming known for “nobodies” who go on to win millions.

So, terminology is everything. *Gambling* is a vice. *Gaming* is social and fun. *Sports* promote health and wellbeing. I ask myself “what next?”

My young informants further explained to me that poker is skill based and therefore “safe,” unlike blackjack, slots, and sports betting. I played devils advocate and argued that poker and blackjack involve similar degrees of skill, and that the difference between the two is the “bluff factor.” The group was silent as they pondered this suggestion. I then asked, “If blackjack tournaments were to be televised on the sports

networks, would you then consider it to be a sport as well?” I was hoping that my little game of logic would allow them to see that poker has been misrepresented as a sport and that it is no different from blackjack. Instead, they agreed that it would be a sport in their eyes if promoted in that way.

I left this discussion with the grade 10 teens concerned, to say the least, and knowing that we all have a lot of work ahead of us.



Studies Identify Factors Surrounding Rise in Abuse of Prescription Drugs by College Students

Lori Whitten, NIDA NOTES Staff Writer

Prescription drug abuse among students in U.S. colleges and universities has been rising for several years. The 2004 Monitoring the Future (MTF) Survey of College Students and Adults – the most recent data available – estimated that 7.4% of college students used the painkiller hydrocodone (Vicodin) without a prescription in that year, up from 6.9% in 2002, with similar increases for other opioid medications, stimulants and sedatives. Three new NIDA-funded studies reveal which students and campuses have the highest rates of abuse and connect such abuse to other unhealthy behaviors. According to the research, rates of collegiate prescription stimulant abuse are highest among men, Caucasians, fraternity/sorority members, and at schools in the Northeast.

Stimulant Abuse Nationwide

Dr. Sean Esteban McCabe and colleagues at the University of Michigan and Harvard University analyzed the answers from the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol Study, which in 2001 surveyed 10 904 randomly selected students enrolled at 119 colleges across the United States. Overall, 4% of the respondents reported having taken a stimulant medication without a prescription at least once during the previous year. Men were twice as likely as women (5.8% versus 2.9%) to have abused methylphenidate (Ritalin), dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine), and amphetamine/ dextroamphetamine (Adderall). Stimulant medication abuse was also more prevalent among students who were:

- Caucasians (4.9% versus 1.6% for African-Americans and 1.3% for Asians);
- Members of fraternities or sororities

(8.6% versus 3.5% for nonmembers); and

- Earning lower grades (5.2% for grade point average of B or lower versus 3.3% for B+ or higher).

Students who abused prescription stimulants reported higher levels of cigarette smoking; heavy drinking; risky driving; and abuse of marijuana, MDMA (Ecstasy), and cocaine.

Compared with other survey respondents, for example, they were 20 times as likely to report past-year cocaine abuse and 5 times as likely to report driving after heavy drinking.

The campus prevalence of past-year stimulant abuse ranged from 0 to 20% at colleges – including the three historically African-American institutions included in the survey – to 25%. The prevalence was 10% or higher at 12 colleges. Students attending colleges in the Northeast, schools with more competitive admission standards, and non-commuter schools reported higher rates of abuse.

“Students abuse prescription drugs to get high, to self-medicate for pain episodes, to help concentrate during exam time, and to try to relieve stress.

Regardless of the motivation, people need to know the risks of abuse and the dangers of mixing drugs,” says Dr. Lynda Erinoff, formerly of NIDA’s Division of Epidemiology, Services and Prevention Research.

Membership Matters

Based on responses from more than 5000 young people who participated in the MTF when they were high school seniors in 1988 to 1997, and also when they were in college, Dr. McCabe and his Michigan colleagues reported that active members of college fraternities or sororities engage in more heavy episodic, or “binge”, drinking, cigarette smoking,

and marijuana abuse than nonmembers.

The students who joined fraternities or sororities in college were the same ones who reported the highest levels of substance abuse in high school. Moreover, cigarette smoking, binge drinking and drug abuse increased for all survey participants as they progressed through college. Fraternity and sorority members showed greater elevations in binge drinking and marijuana abuse over time compared with nonmembers. The picture that emerges is of students who are already heavy drinkers when they come to college selecting fraternities and sororities with a reputation for “partying” and then, as members, further increasing their drinking in an environment that supports the behavior.

Sources

McCabe, S.E., et al. Non-medical use of prescription stimulants among US college students: Prevalence and correlates from a national survey. *Addiction* 100(1):96-106, 2005.

McCabe, S.E., et al. Selection and socialization effects of fraternities and sororities on US college student substance use: A multi-cohort national longitudinal study. *Addiction* 100(4):512-524, 2005.

McCabe, S.E.; Teter, C.J.; and Boyd, C.J. Illicit use of prescription pain medication among college students. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 77(1):37-47, 2005.

For the full article go to:

National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA Notes Vol. 20, No. 4, pg 1, 6-7.



The University of Sydney Gambling Research Unit

Objectives and structure

The University of Sydney Gambling Research Unit, although in existence for some time, was formally established within the School of Psychology in 2001 to conduct and promote high quality research into gambling behaviour. The focus of the unit is on improving our understanding of the psychological factors explaining gambling behaviour in general, biopsychosocial elements contributing to the transition from recreational to excessive gambling, and the persistence of gambling despite accumulating significant negative consequences. The primary objective is to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework of gambling and problem gambling, describe relevant characteristics of human-gaming-machine interactions, and to foster evidence-informed strategies to guide treatment interventions and the promotion of effective responsible initiatives and policies.

The Unit is lead by three co-directors and internationally recognised gambling researchers: Drs. Michael Walker, Louise Sharpe, and Professor Alex Blaszczynski. The centre is located within the University's School of Psychology. Dr. Walker heads the Gambling Treatment Centre.

Members of the Unit have established collaborative links with the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High Risk-Behaviours, McGill University; Ecole de Psychologie, Université

Laval, Québec; the School of Social Welfare and Center for International Studies, University of Missouri-St. Louis; and the Division on Addictions, Cambridge Health Alliance and Harvard Medical School.

Funding

The Unit does not receive specific funding from the University but sources funding for research projects from State Governments agencies (NSW Casino Community Benefit Trust Fund; Queensland Government Treasury) and from industry sources.

Research activities

Specific areas of research into gambling behaviour include:

- *Responsible gambling*
In a collaborative venture with the New South Wales regulatory Liquor Administration Board, the Gaming Industry Operators Group and the University, a series of proposed structural changes to the design of electronic gaming machine was evaluated. This study represented one of the world's first in-vivo evaluation of the impact of modified gaming devices on gambling behaviour with findings contributing to advancing knowledge on the concept of *safe gaming machines*. Current research is focusing on the effectiveness of responsible gaming messages in changing cognitions and duration/intensity of gaming sessions.

- *Personality & co-morbid conditions*

The role of attention deficit and impulsivity as risk-factors for

problem gambling in adolescents.

- *Learning theory and gambling*
Near win phenomenon to determine if players reliably identify near wins and if these affects actual play.

- *Conceptual models*
Refining the Pathways model and investigating withdrawal and tolerance phenomenon postulated by the addiction model of gambling.

Other projects:

- *Exploring gambler's attitudes and values toward money.*

- *Mapping the impact of problem gambling on the mental and physical health of partners and children.*

- *Developmental aspects of gambling.*

- *Cognitive processes associated with gambling.*

- *Treatment outcome.*

- *Psychophysiology and arousal in gambling.*

More information on the University of Sydney Gambling Research Unit can be obtained from the co-directors: michaelw@psych.usyd.edu.au; louisess@psych.usyd.edu.au; or alexb@psych.usyd.edu.au.



The University of Sydney



Dr. Mark Griffiths Receives Centre's Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Mark Griffiths Wins Centre's Lifetime Achievement Award

Mark Griffiths has been the recipient of numerous awards including the John Rosecrance Research Prize, the CELEJ Prize for the best academic paper on gambling (awarded by the Spanish Centre for Legal Studies on Gaming), the International Excellence Award for gambling research by the Responsible Gambling Council of Canada, the Joseph Lister Award by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Excellence in Teaching of Psychology Award by the British Psychological Society, and the Fellowship award for exceptional contributions in psychology by the British Psychological Society.

Mark received his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Exeter in 1991. After brief stays at the University of Exeter and University of Plymouth he relocated to his current home at Nottingham Trent University where he currently resides as a chartered psychologist, researcher, and Professor of Psychology. Having been named Professor of Gambling Studies in 1992, Mark has played, and continues to play, an important role in the British Psychological Society, Gamcare, International Congress on Alcohol, Drugs and Other Dependencies, The National Council for Social Concern, amongst other organizations and sits on a number of Boards including the European Association for the Study of Gambling, International Institute of Health Studies, and the International Centre for Youth

Gambling and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill. He has provided expert testimony on several continents, and has been on the Editorial Board of several journals including all the major journals in the field of gambling studies.

Mark's early attempt at helping us understand the adolescent problem gambler marked the beginning of an ambitious research and clinical program. In 1995, Mark published his first book, *Adolescent Gambling* and subsequently published several other books devoted to understanding adolescent gambling behaviours and addictions. Dr. Griffiths clearly is amongst the most prolific academics in the field today. In the past 17 years, he has published 167 refereed papers in prestigious journals, 6 books, and presented hundreds of papers at national and International conferences.

Dr. Griffiths has provided numerous keynote addresses and workshops throughout the world for researchers, clinicians, treatment providers, educators and mental health providers. He has testified before government commissions including the last Presidential Commission in the U.S, the British House of Commons committee examining gambling, and for the Government of Norway.

During the past seventeen years, Dr. Griffiths's continued research and writing in the field has fostered a better understanding of adolescent gambling behaviours. The scientific and clinical community has been greatly influenced by his large body of work and continued research and dissemination efforts. Much of the current adolescent research has in some way been influenced by his work.

It is with great pleasure that Dr. Rina Gupta presented Dr. Mark Damion Griffiths the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behavior's Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Conference on Gambling and Risk-Taking held recently in Lake Tahoe.



Dr. Mark Griffiths and Dr. Rina Gupta

Current Publications of Interest

New Addictions Journal

The Haworth Press, Inc., is pleased to announce the publication of the first peer-reviewed group therapy journal to address both the addiction and the mental health needs of clients. *The Journal of Groups in Addiction & Recovery* is an important forum for treatment providers, clinicians, educators, and researchers who serve addictions groups, presenting up-to-date clinical, research, and training articles that examine a broad range of addictions and compulsive behaviours. *The Journal of Groups in Addiction & Recovery* examines the vital issues facing treatment providers, including alcoholism, chemical dependence, eating disorders, and sexual and money compulsivity, and looks at inpatient and outpatient treatment, therapeutic communities, interpersonal and cognitive-behavioral therapy, mutual help groups, and dual diagnosis groups.

The Journal will be published in print format and electronically, Spring 2006.
<http://www.HaworthPress.com/store/product.asp?sku=J384>.

New Study in Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine and CASA

- Underage drinkers, alcoholics and alcohol abusers consume between 37.5 and 48.8% of alcohol sold
- More than 25% of underage drinkers meet clinical criteria for alcohol abuse or dependence
- Former U.S. Surgeons General call for federal regulation of alcohol industry's advertising and marketing practices

More News

Underage drinkers and adult pathological drinkers (those that meet the clinical DSM-IV criteria for alcohol abuse or addiction) consume between 37.5% and 48.8% of the value of all alcohol sold in the United States, according to an article in the May 1 issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* (APAM).

The groundbreaking study, *The Commercial Value of Underage Drinking and Adult Abusive and Dependent Drinking to the Alcohol Industry*, conducted by researchers at The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, finds that underage drinkers and adults

pathological drinkers account for at least \$48.3 billion and as much as \$62.9 billion in alcohol sales in 2001, the last year for which the necessary data were available.

CASA's related White Paper, *The Commercial Value of Underage and Pathological Drinking to the Alcohol Industry*, reveals that in 2001 at least \$22.5 billion of consumer spending on alcohol came from underage drinking and \$25.8 billion came from adult pathological drinking.

To read *The Commercial Value of Underage Drinking and Adult Abusive and Dependent Drinking to the Alcohol Industry* in The Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, use the following link:
<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/160/5/473>



Some Interesting Facts ...

- Young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin drinking at 21.
- Every day, on average 11,318 American youth (12 - 20 years of age) try alcohol for the first time, compared with 6,488 for marijuana; 2,786 for cocaine; and 386 for heroin.
- Children and teens who have frequent family dinners are at half the risk for substance abuse compared to teens who dine with their families infrequently and are less likely to try marijuana or have friends who use marijuana.



News from the Centre ...

Centre's Upcoming Presentations

Jacobs, D., Derevensky, J., Paskus, T., Petr, T., & Gupta, R. (2006). Prevalence rates of problem and pathological gambling amongst college athletes: A national study. Paper to be presented at the National Council on Problem Gambling annual conference. St. Paul, Minnesota, June.

Gillespie, M., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (2006). Adolescent problem gambling: Evaluating the role of outcome expectancies. Poster to be presented at the National Council on Problem Gambling annual conference. St. Paul, Minnesota, June.

Dagher, A., Aulakh, H., Gupta, R., Sescousse, G., Aw, A., & Derevensky, J. (2006). Brain activity during gambling: A functional MRI study comparing pathological gamblers to normal controls. Poster to be presented at the Human Brain Mapping 2006 annual conference, Florence, Italy, June.

Mansour, S., Derevensky, J. & Gupta, R. (2006). A qualitative examination of adolescent perceptions on the effects of advertising on youth gambling behaviour. Poster to be presented at the Canadian Psychological Association annual conference, Calgary, June.

Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., & McBride, J. (2006). Internet gambling among youth: A

cause for concern. Invited paper to be presented at the Global Remote and E-Gambling Research Institute Conference, Amsterdam, August.

Derevensky, J. (2006). What we know about youth problem gambling after two decades of research: Myths, realities, and future public policy challenges. Invited keynote address to be presented at the National Council on Problem Gambling annual conference. St. Paul, Minnesota, June.

Announcements

The Centre is pleased to announce that Meredith Gillespie, M.A., is the recipient of a Graduate Student Award from the Responsible Gambling Council of Ontario for her Masters research on

“Adolescent problem gambling: Evaluating the role of outcome expectancies.” Meredith was awarded the Tibor Barsony Award at the Discovery 2006 Conference, held in Toronto, Ontario this past April.

Meredith is also the recipient of the National Council on Problem Gambling (Washington, DC) award for outstanding Master's Thesis (to be awarded in June, 2006).

Congratulations also to Jennifer Felsher who successfully defended her doctoral dissertation entitled “Etiological factors related to gambling problems: The impact of childhood maltreatment and subsequent psychological stressors” and who just recently gave birth to a healthy baby girl.



Upcoming Events

The Canadian Psychological Association
annual conference

June, 2006
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

National Council on Problem Gambling
annual conference.

June, 2006
St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

The Human Brain Mapping 2006 annual
conference

June, 2006
Florence, Italy

The Global Remote and E-Gambling
Research Institute Conference

August, 2006
Amsterdam, Netherlands



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