

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

CAN WARNING SIGNS CHANGE GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR WITH ELECTRONIC GAMING MACHINES?

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Making wagers, buying lottery tickets or playing gaming machines are all popular recreational activities, but few people stop to consider the risks associated with gambling. While most individuals gamble within affordable limits, approximately 0.2-2.1% of the adult population meet criteria for pathological gambling and a higher proportion experience gambling-related problems (Productivity Commission, 1999; National Research Council; NRC, 1999). The numbers for young adults, however, are considerably higher. This demographic group has the highest rate of gambling-related problems of any age cohort, which is of particular

concern given that problem gambling amongst this age-group is associated with maladaptive behaviours such as substance abuse and criminality, mood disorders and poor educational outcomes (Derevensky & Gupta, 2004).

The type of gambling activity seems to play a big part in determining the level of risk for players. Electronic gaming machines (EGMs) have been labeled the 'crack cocaine' of gambling, as they are associated with the highest number of gambling problems and the capacity to induce impaired control (Dowling, Smith & Thomas, 2005). Given this association between EGMs and the development of gambling problems, legislation has been enacted in multiple international jurisdictions to warn players of the potential risks associated with gambling using signs placed on machines. However, there is no empirical evidence that these signs have an impact on gambling behaviour, suggesting that an evaluation of a more effective responsible gambling strategy is needed.

The effectiveness of warning signs may be limited by their failure to capture a player's attention in the context of competing stimuli of music and sounds associated with EGMs. Previous research found that static signs on EGMs were recalled by only 15.6% of players (Monaghan & Blaszczynski, 2007). However, research also shows that simply warning players of the risks involved

or providing information about the odds of winning and how outcomes are determined does not alter gambling behaviour (Engs, 1989; Steenbergh, et. al., 2004; Williams & Connolly, 2006). These findings question the widely accepted cognitive model of gambling, which holds that problem gambling is maintained by irrational and erroneous beliefs, signifying that the theoretical basis of current responsible gambling strategies should be re-examined.

One way to approach this is through an investigation of the effectiveness of pop-up messages in modifying EGM gambling and the relationship between gambling-related thoughts and behaviour. Our first study aimed to evaluate the impact of pop-up messages, appearing on EGM screens during a forced break in play, on regular young-adult gambler's thoughts and behaviours as well as the most effective content of warning signs.

University students (n=127) played simulated EGMs containing either pop-up or static signs that varied by message content. Questionnaires were used to measure the impact of warning signs on the player's thoughts and behaviours during the session of play, and in subsequent EGM sessions. Results showed that pop-up signs were recalled significantly more than static signs, both immediately after play and at the two-week follow-up, and had a significantly greater impact on thoughts and behaviours during

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play. Messages encouraging players to consider the length of time or amount of money they had spent and whether they needed a break were found to have a significantly greater impact than messages informing players of the chances of winning or how outcomes are determined or control (blank) messages. These self-appraisal messages significantly increased player's awareness of time and the likelihood of taking a break during the experimental session and in subsequent EGM sessions.

This research is highly significant as it clarifies that warning signs can impact gambling-related thoughts and behaviour. It suggests that pop-up signs encouraging players to be aware of and monitor their own behaviour may be effective in promoting responsible gambling. It is imperative that the effectiveness of legislated responsible gambling strategies be empirically evaluated to ensure that these measures are working to minimise gambling-related harm, particularly with young-adults, who are at the greatest risk of developing gambling problems. The next stage of this research will be to conduct a similar study within a normal gambling venue, to investigate the impact of the gambling environment on the effectiveness of pop-up messages.

In addition to providing key stakeholders and policy decision makers with valuable information regarding the efficacy of a strategy designed to protect players from gambling-related harm, this research provides important insights into the relationship between gambling-related thoughts and behaviours. By investigating the cognitions and behaviours of regular gamblers, it can be determined whether modification of irrational beliefs is necessary to enable behavioural change, which will add further insight into the theoretical conceptualization of problem gambling upon which treatment and preventative strategies are based.



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Facebook adds “virtual lottery” application

Users of Facebook, the online social networking site, might be surprised to learn they are invited to join an online lottery. The application, called Jackpot, is one of the many optional programs not developed by Facebook itself, but made accessible to its users.

Jackpot is a free lottery application where users can win money and prizes. You can pick new numbers everyday. The jackpot changes from week to week, and has been listed at amounts such as \$250 and \$500 cash or gift certificates (from Amazon or eBay) and growing. Developers explain on the site that it is supported by advertising so no purchase is necessary. To earn their chances at

winning, Facebook profile holders are asked to “do their part” and formally invite up to 20 of their friends, thereby delivering additional potential viewers to the paid ads on the site.

The site uses slot machine imagery to display winning numbers, and points viewers to the name, city and profile picture of previous winners are displayed in the same way, with the amount of their winnings listed as well. The danger lies in assuming there is no risk at all, as no money is wagered in this virtual lottery; however, gambling researchers emphasize that this is part of the normalization of gambling as harmless and entertaining.

“Normalization, and implied social acceptance, are considered, by many, to be a potential risk factor for excessive gambling involvement, particularly amongst young players,” explains Dr. Isabelle Martin, prevention specialist at the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours. Parents and educators need to be aware of the widespread cultural acceptance of gambling, and maintain an open dialogue with adolescents about its potential risks. This can be a difficult undertaking when gambling seems like nothing more than a harmless application on Facebook.

Online gambling: The new Solitaire?

Jessica McBride

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

Typically, when asked to state reasons one might choose to gamble, most people opt for “entertainment,” “excitement,” or “to win money.” However, recent research at the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors suggests a new and disturbing trend to these traditional responses. Many Internet gambling companies offer “practice” sessions where individuals may play gambling-type games without wagering real money, and therefore do not have to be of legal age to gamble. In a recent survey among university students, the most frequently endorsed reasons for playing these games were as expected: for fun (65.5%) and for entertainment (48.7%). In addition, 42.1% of students reported playing on practice sites to relieve boredom. While past research indicates youth gamble for fun and for excitement, the high endorsement of boredom relief is a new and disturbing finding.

There may be serious repercussions for choosing a potentially risky behaviour to relieve boredom.

Boredom has been positively correlated with depression, hopelessness, distractibility and loneliness. It has also been related to drug abuse, eating disorders, depression, problems in classrooms and work dissatisfaction. Although previous research had found a link between high scores on Zuckerman’s Boredom Susceptibility subscale and problem gambling (Gupta et al., 2006; Powell et al., 1999), there has been only one study directly examining the relationship between problem gambling and boredom. According to Blaszczynski and his colleagues’ (1990) research, pathological gamblers obtained

significantly higher scores than controls on a scale measuring boredom proneness.

The availability and accessibility of gambling on the Internet may provide a more ready escape for many students. Many classrooms have wireless connections and anecdotal evidence indicates students are gambling even during class lectures. Research has indicated that students report feeling bored in classes; while in the past they may have doodled on their notepads or stared out the window, the wireless age offers bored students the opportunity to gamble online with their laptops.

There may be serious repercussions for choosing a potentially risky behaviour to relieve boredom. A Pathways Model of gambling (Blaszczynski & Nower, 2002) proposes that there are three major pathways that culminate in pathological gambling. Pathway Two gamblers are “emotionally vulnerable” gamblers;

childhood disturbances, personality, mood disturbances, and poor coping skills contribute to a profile which, combined with ecological factors (such as increased accessibility), biological vulnerability, and classical and operant conditioning, culminates in pathological gambling. Boredom proneness could be one such emotional vulnerability, and therefore place students at risk for developing gambling problems. Moreover, the combination of bored problem gamblers and the accessibility of the Internet has explosive potential. In the Centre’s most recent study, significantly more Problem Gamblers

(47.4%) than Social Gamblers (23.1%) and Non Gamblers (7.6%) endorsed playing on practice sites to relieve boredom.

The use of Internet gambling to relieve boredom opens up several treatment options. Interventions include changing how stimulating the external situation is (which has wide-reaching implications for pedagogy, especially at the university level), encouraging the individual to become more involved with a wide range of activities and people, strengthening an individual’s internal ability to access adaptive resources and realise his or her competencies, increasing arousal level, decreasing dissatisfaction, and changing attributing factors for arousal and dissatisfaction (Farmer & Sundberg, 1986; Harris, 2000; Mikulas & Vodanovich, 1993).

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Les jeux sont faits: prévention du jeu excessif

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Depuis ses débuts, le Centre international d'étude sur le jeu et les comportements à risque chez les jeunes s'est donné plusieurs mandats, et ce dans le but de répondre le plus adéquatement possible aux besoins exprimés par les intervenants, les étudiants et chercheurs intéressés par la problématique de la participation des jeunes aux jeux d'argent. Aussi, au fil des ans, le Centre a développé des outils de prévention et il a participé à diverses activités et efforts de prévention, tant à l'échelle locale qu'internationale.

En mars 2006, le Centre a lancé la vidéo «Les jeux sont faits». Ce docu-drame, également disponible en anglais (*Clean Break*), est d'abord et avant tout un outil de sensibilisation des jeunes face aux risques associés à une participation excessive aux jeux d'argent. Il met en scène des jeunes aux prises avec divers problèmes

associés à leur participation au jeu. Le docu-drame contient également le témoignage d'un ex-joueur compulsif, M. Did Tafari-Bélizaire, qui relate ses expériences de vie en lien avec sa participation excessive. La présentation de la vidéo est suivie d'une période d'échanges avec les animateurs ou avec M. Bélizaire lui-même, lorsqu'il est invité par l'école ou le responsable du milieu. M. Bélizaire a la conviction de pouvoir faire bénéficier les jeunes de ses expériences. Il dit : «J'ai personnellement payé cher ma propre perte de contrôle sur mon comportement de jeu. Si mon expérience peut aider ou faire la différence pour un seul participant, mon objectif sera atteint ». Le témoignage de Did est efficace parce qu'il est sensible et honnête. «Mon approche est très humaine, il n'y a pas de comédie», explique Did.

Selon Mme Hélène St-Aubin, T.E.S, la personnalité de M. Bélizaire explique

pourquoi son témoignage est si bien reçu par les jeunes. «Did sait rendre son discours intéressant par sa franchise, son honnêteté et son grand sens de l'humour. Il a très certainement une âme d'éducateur car il a le don de la communication avec les jeunes. Ils sont à l'aise d'aller vers lui, de lui poser des questions et de passer leurs commentaires».

Toujours selon Mme St-Aubin, «...la conférence permet d'aborder un sujet de santé publique encore méconnu des jeunes... de voir l'envers de la médaille et les aider à comprendre le cercle vicieux que vivent parfois leurs proches. Cela les amène aussi à se questionner sur leurs propres attitudes et comportements face aux jeux d'argent». La rencontre entre Did et les élèves démontre finalement qu'il y a de l'espoir et favorise ainsi la demande d'aide de la part de nos jeunes, que se soit pour eux ou pour un membre de leur entourage.

U.S. teens as likely to drive drugged as they are to drive drunk

When it comes to letting their teenagers behind the wheel of a car, parents know to educate their kids about the dangers of drinking and driving. A recent study by the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) suggests mom and dad would do well to add a lecture about driving and drug consumption to their repertoire as well, with data revealing that teens are just as likely to drive under the influence of marijuana as alcohol. With as many as 9,000 16- and 17-year-old drivers getting behind the wheel of a car each day, the ONDCP is working with Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) to warn parents of the prevalence and dangers of drugged and drunk driving.

Driving-age teenagers have the highest overall crash rates of any age group, and traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds. Drug and alcohol use compound teens' crash risks. Research shows that 13 percent of high school seniors reported driving

while high on marijuana. That's nearly equivalent to those who reported driving drunk (14 percent), even though far more teens report using alcohol (17 percent) than marijuana (7 percent) in the last 30 days. Additionally, one-third of high school seniors said that in the last two weeks, they drove after drinking heavily or using drugs, or rode in a car whose driver had been drinking heavily or using drugs.

"Parents need to realize that drugged driving is nearly as common today among teens as drunk driving," said Scott Burns, Deputy Director, National Drug Control Policy. "Marijuana impairs many of the skills required for safe driving, such as concentration, coordination, perception, and reaction time, and these effects can last up to 24 hours after using. It is critical that parents know the dangers associated with drugged driving and are vigilant in monitoring their teen drivers."

Many teens underestimate the risks

associated with driving. For example, more than one in four teens believes that speeding, talking on a cell phone while driving, and not wearing a safety belt are safe, according to a SADD/Liberty Mutual survey.

"Research from SADD and Liberty Mutual Group reveals that, while teens say that text messaging is their biggest distraction while driving, more than one in five engages in this dangerous behavior," said Stephen Wallace, chairman and chief executive officer of SADD. "For teens, knowing about the risk is only the first step. Parents need to set clear rules about driving behaviors – and enforce them."

SADD's study confirms that parents can make a difference. Nearly 60 percent of teens who drive say their parents have the most influence on their driving, and teens whose parents enforce penalties for driving law infractions are less likely to practice risky driving behaviors than teens whose parents do not enforce penalties.

CENTRE'S HOLIDAY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN CONTINUES TO GROW

Alissa Sklar, Ph.D.

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

For the past few years, the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems has spearheaded a campaign to warn parents about the possible pitfalls of offering lottery tickets and scratch cards as holiday gifts to minors. We have invited lottery corporations to join us in this media campaign, and are pleased to announce that Loto-Québec has joined us for the fourth consecutive year, and the Atlantic Lottery Corporation (ALC) has joined us for the second consecutive year.

This December, we are pleased to announce that Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) has joined this initiative with their own press campaign.

Lottery products are popular gifts because they are affordable and easily obtainable. Results from a recent study in Quebec show that 31% of high school students have received one or several lottery products as a gift during the preceding 12 months.

“At Loto-Québec’s request, the Québec government passed a law in February 2000 forbidding retailers to sell lottery tickets to people under 18”, underlines the president of Loto-Québec, Mr. Alain Cousineau. “We regularly remind retailers to be vigilant in this regard; we also ask parents to use their judgment and find more suitable gifts to children and teenagers than lottery tickets,” adds Mr. Cousineau.

The 2007 Student Drug Use Survey prepared by Dalhousie University for all four provinces of Atlantic Canada reports that 35% of Atlantic Canadian minors who took part in the survey have played Scratch’nWin tickets.

“We see this as problematic. It’s not safe for minors to participate in any gambling activity and they shouldn’t be doing it,” says Mrs. Carinci, ALC’s President and CEO. “Parents need to remember that these tickets are not appropriate for children at any time of the year.”

Ontario’s Driver’s License through their lottery terminals. This technology makes it easier and simpler for retailers to verify a person’s age with respect to the sale of lottery products. The OLG also refuses to pay out any prizes to minors, in order to further discourage their purchase by those under 18.

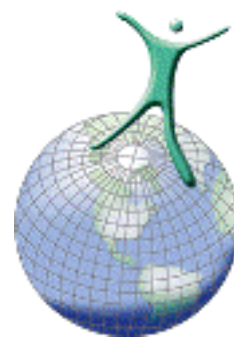
Research findings such as these, coupled with the growing concern of adolescent problem gambling in general, prompted the International Centre for Youth Gambling

We are pleased to announce that Loto-Québec, the Atlantic Lottery Corporation and Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation have joined us in this awareness campaign.

In Ontario, it is a provincial offence punishable with significant fines for a retailer to sell a ticket to a minor, and retailers should not sell a ticket to an adult if the retailer knows that the adult is purchasing the ticket for a minor. OLG’s long-standing commitment to sell lottery tickets only to adults is reinforced in the Responsible Gaming Code of Conduct.

Under the Code, OLG has worked with retailers to strengthen existing programs to verify the age of customers. Earlier this year, OLG launched the Electronic Age Verification program to its on-line lottery retailers, enabling lottery retailers to electronically verify a customer’s age by ‘swiping’ an

Problems and High-Risk Behaviors to partner with lottery corporations to raise public awareness on the issue of underage gambling. The Youth Gambling Centre has shared this information with lottery corporations around the world and is pleased that Loto-Québec, the Atlantic Lottery Corporation and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation have joined us in publicizing this message.



Energy drinks with alcohol content can mislead teens

When school administrators at a San Diego high school recently found nine students consuming alcoholic energy drinks during lunchtime, they might have considered this an isolated incident. Think again. Loading energy drinks with significant amounts of alcohol appears to be the latest craze for manufacturers.

These seemingly harmless drinks sit upon your local grocery and convenience store shelves waiting for naïve prey. With catchy brand names such as Rockstar 21, Sparks and Liquid Core, the drinks attract many children and adolescents. While they are camouflaged as everyday energy drinks, in reality they contain a potent combination of caffeine and alcohol.

The alcoholic energy drinks are marketed to children and young adults and yet can harbour up to 9.9 percent alcohol. One of the drinks,

called Joose, contains the equivalent of three beers and eight cups of coffee in a single can. Drinking these products can also dangerously affect driving and other activities. Teens enjoy the mixed drinks because the caffeine counters the sluggish effects of the alcohol. What they do not realize is that the blend of stimulant and lethargy is hazardous to their health, and even potentially lethal in large quantities.

What is even more alarming is the confusion caused by the similarity of non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages. While it is illegal for these harmful drinks to be purchased by minors, cashiers tend to be misled due to packaging similarity and unclear labels. One clerk arrested for selling an alcoholic malt beverage to minors denied knowing that the drinks contained alcohol. These energy drinks often come in alcoholic and non-alcoholic versions but retailers are supposed to separate each type. Some stores have started

using their checkout systems to detect alcoholic beverages which alert cashiers to request identification. Although older managers know the difference, younger ones do not always have enough knowledge about the products they are selling. Therefore, there have been recent efforts to modify legislation to force manufacturers to improve labelling.

These alcoholic energy drinks can fool store clerks, school administrators, parents and potentially even the youth themselves into thinking they are risk-free. By ignoring the effects of these powerful beverages, we are potentially condoning the open consumption of alcohol by minors during their daily activities, at school and at home. Retailers should place more of an effort to educate their clerks and school officials and parents need to take this issue seriously and carefully monitor the kinds of beverages children are consuming.

Caught in a Champagne Supernova:

1 in 3 hit songs refers to alcohol and drugs

Nowadays one cannot walk the streets without passing by teenagers avidly tuned in to their favourite music, but exactly what messages are they receiving from the lyrics they sing along? In a study conducted at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, researchers found that one out of every three Billboard chart-topping songs from 2005 contained references to alcohol and drug use.

The study, headed by assistant professor Dr. Brian Primack, was presented at the American Public Health Association's Annual Meeting in Washington this fall. While the findings may not surprise many, they do create a cause for concern given that adolescents are exposed to an average of two and a half hours of music per day. It is important to examine just what type of values our

popular culture is instilling in today's impressionable youth.

In order for a song to be included in the statistics, explicit references to drug and alcohol use made in the lyrics were required. The songs also named specific substances including alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, prescription drugs, inhalants, hallucinogens, and substances of unknown origin. Out of the 279 songs in the sample, a breakdown of the lyrical content based on genre shows that the most references were found in rap music, with a rate of nearly 80 percent of the songs referring to substance abuse. A distant second is country music with 37 percent of its songs and then R&B/hip hop at 20 percent. Lastly, alcohol or drug use was mentioned in 14 percent of rock songs and only 9 percent of pop songs.

Even more disconcerting than the number of specific alcohol and drug references are the associations made by the lyrical content. Alcohol and drug use are often linked to sex and partying in these songs. Connections to violence and humor are also commonplace. The bottom line is that parents should be wary of what their children are listening to on the radio and downloading on their mp3 players. It is well established that media can have a profound impact upon many different health behaviors, with the recently documented connection between popular movies and smoking in *The Lancet* as one prominent example. The ramifications of music's alcohol and drug content can not be assumed to be an exception; there is a compelling need for more research into this connection between lyrical content and behavior.

Gambling theme a new trend in reality TV

Kelly Walsh

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

How much are you willing to risk losing? Gamblers across the globe are placing huge bets, willing to risk almost everything for the thrill of the game and national television is capturing it all for viewers at home.

A new trend in popular television gives viewers the chance to watch high-profile gamblers bet unduly large amounts of money. The fad in American television follows the hype created by a British program *Double or Nothing*, which first aired in 2004. The documentary filmed one man's decision to cash in all of his assets and risk his entire network on one spin of a roulette wheel. Professional gambler, Ashley Revell, bet the equivalent of nearly \$150,000 in hopes of doubling his pot. Whether he walked away with double or nothing depended on his 50/50 chance of correctly predicting whether the roulette wheel would stop on the colour red or the colour black.

Many high-profile gambling spin-offs have since aired here in North America. In 2005, *Man vs Vegas* featured the story of a high roller gambler who sought to even his score in Vegas after losing \$3 million there in the 1990's. The loss is said to have cost him most of his assets as well as his marriage, and yet Daren returned to the tables, determined to prevail.

The *Ultimate Blackjack Tour* debuted in 2006 and hosts a tour of professional and amateur poker and blackjack players competing for the title of Elimination Blackjack Champion. The show's website invites the public to play an online version of the game where

one can learn "tips from the pros" as well as receive information about upcoming tournaments.

This year, we were introduced to Phil and Antonio – best friends and high profile gamblers – on *I Bet You*. The pair wanders the streets of America while betting each other outrageous amounts on everything from their paintball/marksmanship skills to guessing the number of sex partners a friend has had, or trying to get two girls to kiss. Also new this year, *High Stakes Entertainment* features some of the "greatest hustlers in the world" gambling one million dollars each on a hole of golf. The wager seems rather extreme, but as player Butch Holmes contests, "if there is no pain to it then you're not really gambling – you're just talking about gambling." This show was rated #1 in its time slot among male viewers aged 18-34.

North America has been lured into a craze of watching large amounts of money being wagered on various games of chance.

So it seems North America has been lured into a craze of watching large amounts of money being wagered on various games of chance. What does this mean for viewers? Is vicariously experiencing another's huge gamble all in good fun? Or does it have adverse repercussions for those watching at home? With so many gambling related shows surfacing, it might now be a good time to start asking such questions.

What may also be worth investigating is what about these shows is so intrinsically appealing to so many viewers. According to

Kahneman & Tversky (1979), prospect theory states that most people are risk averse where potential wins must be double potential losses in order to gamble when faced with 50/50 odds. The gambling shows recently sweeping the nation have certainly not produced such favourable probabilities, yet people seem to remain hooked nonetheless. Tom, Foxx, Trepel, and Poldrack (2007) recently showed that our brains assign greater importance to loss than to gain. Are viewers at home merely fascinated by others' susceptibility to loss and pain? Perhaps more importantly, are these shows in fact desensitizing viewers to the impact of loss, perhaps shaping their inclination to engage in risky gambling behaviour? One thing is for certain - there is certainly no shortage of high stakes programs on television for further research into these questions.

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Centre for the Study of Gambling



University of Salford
A Greater Manchester University

The Centre for the Study of Gambling at the UK's University of Salford has set out to become one of the world's leading centres of academic expertise in all matters relating to the study of gambling. To this end, the Centre employs experts from a variety of disciplines, such as economics, public policy statistics, psychology, history, with interests in variety of industry sectors, including casinos, gaming machines, betting and lottery.

Under the direction of Dr. Peter Collins, the Centre provides teaching for people interested in developing a career within the industry, as well as increasing understanding of the industry by the wider public.

The Centre, founded in 1994, teaches in the area of gambling studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It is currently developing, in partnership with industry and with government, a variety of courses designed to meet the needs of industry professionals. With a goal of teaching excellence, the Centre offers a diversity of options for students seeking under-graduate, post-graduate or professional development courses, including gambling industry management, public policy, and addiction and counselling.

They recently completed a distance learning short course on "Gambling and Public Policy" which is intended as a pilot for the suite of short courses which we will be developing over the next two years and will eventually enable students to earn qualifications up to Master's level by distance learning. These courses are being developed in close collaboration with industry professionals to ensure that they meet, as effectively as possible, the employment and training needs

of those working in the industry. Another short course for GamCare second-level counsellors and other health professionals is currently in development.

The Centre undertakes research in a variety of areas relevant to the study of gambling, and is active in promoting gambling studies by supporting the delivery of papers at national and international conferences. Academics associated with the Centre also make a variety of contributions to thinking about gambling matters within both the public and private sectors. In addition to these activities, the Centre believes that it is especially important to undertake research which focuses on projects of interest and practical use to all those involved in the work of the gambling industry. This includes policy-makers, regulators and other public officials as well as business professionals in companies which provide gambling services to the general public.

One aspect of this work entails gathering relevant statistical, regulatory and other data relevant to all aspects of gambling both in the UK and internationally. The Centre hopes to become a place where not only is such information collected and stored in easily accessible form, but also to offer a service in seeking out information of this kind as requested by interested individuals and parties. Furthermore, the Centre will be specifically involved in the analysis of this information with special reference to its implications both for the profitability of the industry and for good public policy.

Centre Personnel

Director Dr. Peter Collins focuses his own research interests on gambling and public policy with special

reference to ethics and gambling, problem gambling and Internet gambling. His is also particularly interested in the future of the worldwide gambling industry.

His work in progress includes an account of the lessons to be learned from the passing and implementation of the UK Gambling Act 2005 and a consideration of the implications of the UK Prevalence Study 2007. He continues to lead a team of very distinguished researchers, clustered around Professor Don Ross in the US and South Africa who are examining the neuroscience of gambling and addictive gambling and its implications for treatment, prevention, regulation and public policy. He remains interested in the problem of the uses and abuses of allegedly academic research, especially in the area of gambling studies.

Dr. David Forrest is currently working on projects focused on modelling lotto sales using new time series techniques, betting and the integrity of sport (commissioned for a conference in Spain in 2008) and work on smoking bans and gaming employing data from Canada and Australian casino sectors.

Dr Jonathan Parke, in collaboration with R. Wood and M. Griffiths from Nottingham Trent University and some of the top experts around the world (R. Ladouceur, A. Blaszcznski, H. Lesieur and J. Derevensky) has developed a measure that identifies risk in game design and which can potentially contribute to development and modification of games to improve consumer appeal and minimise harm. His work in progress includes continued focus on the impact of design and environment on normal, problem and social gambling behaviour.



NY study finds 1 in 5 teens have a gambling problem

Sheri Stock

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

Just how problematic is problem gambling? The Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services reports that one out of every five teenagers has a gambling problem, according to recent findings from a New York State study.

The severity of problem gambling, especially among youth, is often underestimated and its pervasiveness is disregarded. If studies had found that 20 percent of youth have cancer, a learning disability or even a drinking problem the results would have generated more concern, the executive director of the New York Council on Problem Gambling, James Maney, explained to the *Albany Times Union*.

Most adolescents do not even try to conceal their gambling behaviour because it is deemed a source of pride. Unlike other addictive activities, betting is widely accepted. It is, however, essential to acknowledge that gambling may not be a harmless form of entertainment, says Commissioner Karen Carpenter-Palumbo in the same article. Parents should be on the lookout for signs of a potential gambling compulsion, such as lying about gambling or stealing

money for gambling purposes.

Out of the 5,800 students surveyed, 10.1 percent were considered pathological. A breakdown of the pathological gamblers' activities shows that the highest proportion, 33 percent, played cards and 28 percent were found to have bet on their own games of skill. Although all the youth surveyed were minors ranging from grades seven through twelve, 19 percent of those considered problem gamblers reported playing lottery games. This finding implicates a substantial proportion of pathological gamblers who are engaging in underage gambling activities. In order to address this issue, the New York Lottery Division has contributed \$500,000 to help the OASAS pay for advertisements intended to deter underage gambling.

The current problem gambling rates among youth need to be taken seriously and properly addressed. Maney asserts that twenty percent is significant enough to be classified as an epidemic. The study's results highlight the necessity for a greater allocation of resources towards the prevention of youth gambling problems. The OASAS is therefore

planning to expand its problem gambling prevention programs and strengthen its gambling helpline. Awareness initiatives aimed at adolescents, entitled "Not Just a Game of Chance," are also being developed. Additionally, there will be an increase in funding towards research pertaining to how and why people gamble.

While problem gambling has yet to be viewed as an equally serious addiction as alcohol or drugs, the results of this survey and other similar studies should aid in the necessary dissemination of information. Greater awareness will lead to an increased number of prevention programs in the hopes of reducing gambling's widespread influence upon today's youth.

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Odato, J. M. (2007). Allure of gambling hooks 1 youth in 5. Retrieved November 1, 2007, from http://www.problem-gambling.info/newsletter/oct_07_newsletter/Allure_of_gambling.htm.

Durand Jacobs Award: Call for Papers

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University is pleased to offer the 2007-2008 **Durand Jacobs Award** to the graduate student who submits an outstanding paper related to the psychology of addictive behaviors. This annual award is dedicated to Dr. Durand Jacobs' lifelong efforts

to help mentor students. Published and/or publishable papers will be considered by the selection committee, comprised of an international panel of experts in the field. The recipient will receive an award plaque and their work will be featured in the Youth Gambling International Newsletter. Graduate students from all related

disciplines are encouraged to submit their papers by Feb 28th, 2008.

Please submit all entries electronically to alissa.sklar@mcgill.ca. If you have any questions, please direct them to Dr. Alissa Sklar by email, or telephone: (514) 398-2470.

Recent Publications and Presentations

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

Magoon, M., Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. (in press). Gambling among youth in detention centers. *Journal for Juvenile Justice and Detention Services*.

van Hamel, A., Derevensky, J., Dickson, L., & Gupta, R. (2007). Adolescent gambling and coping within a generalized high-risk behaviour framework. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 23(4), 377-393.

Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (2007). Internet gambling amongst adolescents: A growing concern.

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Huang, J-H., Jacobs, D., Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., Paskus, T., & Petr, T. (2007). Pathological gambling amongst college athletes. *Journal of American College Health*, 56(2), 93-99.

Lussier, I., Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., Bergevin, T., & Ellenbogen, S. (2007). Youth gambling behaviors: An examination of the role of resilience. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 21, 165-173.

Ellenbogen, S., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (2007). Gender differences among adolescents with Gambling related problems. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 23, 133-143.

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BOOK CHAPTERS

Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. (in press). Gambling practices among youth: Etiology, prevention and treatment. In C. A. Essau (Ed.),

Adolescent addiction: Epidemiology, assessment and treatment. London, UK: Elsevier.

Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. (in press). A treatment approach for adolescents with gambling problems. In M. Zangeneh, A. Blaszczynski & N. Turner (Eds.), *Problem gambling theory, research and treatment*. New York: Springer Books.

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Sakloske, D., Schwean, V., Bartell, R., Mureika, J., Andrews, J., Derevensky, J., & Janzen, H. (2007). School psychology in Canada: Past, present, and future perspectives. In T. Fagan & P. Sachs-Wise (Eds.), *School psychology: Past, present, and future*, 3rd ed. Washington: National Association of School Psychology, 297-338.

C U R R I C U L U M DEVELOPMENT

Turchi, R., & Derevensky, J. (2007). *Children and Gambling-Overcoming the Odds*. Hot topic course, PediaLink. American Academy of Pediatrics, Washington, D.C. course ID #174.

CONFERENCES

Derevensky, J., Sklar, A., & Taylor, A. (2007). Pathological gambling: Impulse control disorder or addiction? Paper presented at the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine's 19th annual scientific conference, Ottawa, October.

Sklar, A., Derevensky, J., & Taylor, A. (2007). High risk youth and marketing of gambling: Lessons learned from the regulation of advertising for alcohol and tobacco. Paper presented at the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine's 19th annual scientific conference, Ottawa, October.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Youth prevention strategies. Paper presented at the Nova Scotia Responsible Gambling Conference, Halifax, October.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS & ADDRESSES

Derevensky, J. (2007). Youth gambling: Should we be concerned? Invited keynote address presented at the annual British Columbia Responsible Gambling Forum, Kelowna, British Columbia, November.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Treating youth with gambling problems: From research to practice. Invited address presented at the New York Council on Problem Gambling annual conference, Hauppauge, New York, November.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Youth Internet gambling: Some problems and possible solutions. Invited address presented at the Inaugural International Responsible Gaming Organization conference, Stockholm, Sweden, October.

News from the Centre ...

New media projects in development

The Youth gambling Centre has a couple of new media projects in the works, to follow up on the success of our award-winning docudrama DVD *Clean Break* and multimedia products *The Amazing Chateau* and *Hooked City*. We are working on a media toolkit series about youth gambling problems, with the first one targeted at paediatricians and allied health professionals, and the second one designated for justice system professionals. Also in the works is a 30-second public service announcement for television and Internet use. We will keep you posted on their estimated release dates.

Centre Activities

Dr. Jeffrey Derevensky, representing the Centre, joined an international panel of experts in Singapore earlier this month to meet with representatives from the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) as well as representatives from the Singapore National Council on Problem Gambling. Also in attendance were Drs. Lori Rugle, Rachel Volberg, Dwayne Simpson (United States), John Strang (U.K.), Samson Tse (New Zealand), Alex Blaszcynski (Australia) and Gracemary Leung (Hong Kong).

In preparation of the opening of two large-scale international gambling resorts in Singapore, the government has made a significant commitment to reducing problem gambling. The International Advisory Panel worked with the local representatives in articulating some important clinical and research issues surrounding problem gambling and provided advice for the development of the National Addictions Management Center. A wide variety of issues were discussed and the government of Singapore remains highly committed to minimizing gambling and other addictions.

Engagements

Recent months at the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors have brought a spate of engagements. We extend our congratulations to Dr. Rina Gupta and Richard Louie, engaged to be married in 2008, Amy Taylor and Jonathan Morton, engaged to be married in January 2009, Lei Chen and Huan Li, engaged to be married in 2008, and graduate student Renée St-Pierre and Roberto Turchetta, engaged to be married in 2009.

Happy Holidays!

We wish all our readers a wonderful holiday season and happy new year!

Upcoming Events

2008 International Gambling Conference: CBT and PH Workshops

February 20, 2008 - Auckland, New Zealand

2008 International Gambling Conference

February 21 - 23, 2008 - Auckland, New Zealand

Tenth Annual Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Statewide Conference

March 13 - 14, 2008 - Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA

Responsible Gambling Council Discovery 2008 Conference

April 13 - 16, 2008 - Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

2nd Asian Pacific Problem Gambling and Addictions Conference

May 22 - 24, 2008 - Kowloon, Hong Kong

7th European Conference on Gambling Studies and Policy Issues

July 1 - 4, 2008 - Nova Gorica, Slovenia

YGI Newsletter

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