



eSports and NextGen Betting

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What if the next generation of casino gambling is actually found in gaming—competitive video gaming, that is? The red-hot popularity of eSports, and its potential for monetization across multiple platforms, is rapidly gaining the attention of the gambling industry in North America. While eSports may look like ordinary video games to Baby Boomers and Generation X’ers, for many Millennials and Generation Z’ers, eSports is a logical extension of their online, social, live-streaming, and sharing culture. eSports have rapidly developed into a global industry, with an audience of some 225 million and revenue of nearly \$325 million in 2015—and predictions of exponential growth in the short term. Will eSports find a home in casinos, and if so, will a new generation of gamblers follow?

NextGen Business

eSports are competitive gaming—among enthusiasts, the “video” is implicit—often in the form of international tournaments. The most popular competition games are real-time strategy (RTS), in which the object is to gain advantages over other players in the forms of resources and territory—often a kind of war game, such as StarCraft; multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), a version of RTS that allows teams of players to engage in strategy, including League of Legends and Defense of the Ancients; first-person shooter (FPS) games such as Call of Duty and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive; and fighting



Photo Source: CalvinAyre.com

games, in which players engage in hand-to-hand combat, such as the Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter series. While these games are popular with players—some 93 million Americans play video games in some form—eSports draws an audience of spectators who watch people playing video games in person or online. Twitch, the live-streaming video platform for gamers, was purchased by Amazon for nearly \$1 billion in 2014 and now claims 9.7 million daily active users, proving that viewers will pay to watch people play.

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The tournaments themselves are big business. The website eSportsEarnings.com reported that there were more than 3,200 eSports tournaments with over 12,500 players and nearly \$89 million in total prize money in 2016. The top three tournament games for 2016 were Defense of the Ancients 2 (DotA 2), with 739 players in 102 tournaments earning over \$35 million; Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, with 4,187 players in 806 tournaments earning over \$16 million; and League of Legends, with 1,264 players in 113 tournaments earning just shy of \$10 million. More than 14,000 people turned out to the ESL One Cologne 2016—a Counter-Strike: Global Offensive tournament in Germany held this past July, and the event drew as many as 31 million online viewers. In Katowice, Poland, the Intel Extreme Masters (IEM) three-day tournament in March 2016, which featured Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, StarCraft II, and League of Legends and was called “the Super Bowl of eSports” in Fortune, brought more than 100,000 fans to the city.

NextGen Casinos

The biggest headline in the casino gaming industry is finally starting to get out there, and to sink in: casinos are facing a generation gap. The younger you are, the less interested you are in conventional gambling. Social and skill-based games are in, and games of chance are out. Entertainment is being redefined, as Las Vegas’ market

is continually shifting toward nightclubs, fast-casual dining, spas and pool parties, and other dimensions of an integrated resort experience that appeal specifically to Millennials and Generation Z.

With the global popularity of eSports and growing U.S. and Canadian markets, it's no surprise that brick-and-mortar casinos are looking to eSports to attract younger customers. Last year, Las Vegas' Downtown Grand casino opened an eSports Lounge in its former high-limit room, replacing slot machines with big screens and high-end PCs, Xbox Ones, and PlayStation 4s. The lounge hosts weekly tournaments with a \$15 entry fee and cash prizes.



Photo Source: Pokernews.com

Meanwhile, a former movie theater and nightclub in downtown Las Vegas's Neonopolis will be transformed into the city's first eSports arena. In California, the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, which operates two casinos in the Coachella Valley region, partnered with the Canadian League of Gamers, the largest eSports league in Canada. The partnership plans to create a "Southern Arena" eSports league and hopes to attract 5,000 fans and 500,000 online viewers to its first two major events. And at UNLV's International Gaming Institute, the eSports Lab offers students a chance to develop business plans for casinos to leverage eSports into more Millennial—and, ultimately, Gen Z—customers.

NextGen Betting

eSports are not merely prize-based competitions or spectator sports; there is a largely untapped market for eSports betting. Reportedly, over \$1 million was wagered on a match at the March 2016 IEM tournament. Legal wagering is not the most pressing issue. In most jurisdictions, regulations likely need only limited tailoring to address eSports. For example, in late 2016, the Nevada Gaming Policy Committee directed state regulators to develop rules for betting on eSports.

More surprising for many is the market for wagering "skins"—the in-game add-ons that can give a player an advantage, or just the ability to look cool, like the aesthetics of virtual weapons. Skins can be earned through game play, traded with other players, or simply purchased through online forums, such as Steam, a site

operated by Valve Corporation, the creator of Counter-Strike: Global Offensive. A knife skin with a custom animation might sell for \$400 and up. But fans can wager skins, too. The most common form of skins wagering is sportsbook-style betting—that is, wagers on the outcome of eSports matches. Skins wagering on eSports far exceeds cash wagers. By one estimate, over 90% of betting on eSports is in the form of skins wagers. Skins also can be used to play lottery-type games, where players trade skins for a chance to win a jackpot. Though currently less popular, skins are accepted as currency in some online casino-style games, such as roulette and blackjack. Gambling websites accept skins by linking to Steam, allowing bettors to use their Steam accounts to place and collect on wagers. One consulting firm estimated that 3 million people wagered \$2.3 billion worth of skins on eSports competitions in 2015, while another predicted that over \$7 billion worth of skins would be wagered worldwide in 2016.

Because skins have real monetary value, the question is whether betting with skins is illegal—arguably, the wagers are not virtual even if the skins are. Because skins may seem more akin to Pokémon trading cards than currency to many adults, skins wagering has been largely under the radar of regulators. A handful of recent court cases have addressed similar concerns in the context of online and mobile social games that trade in virtual "currency"—such as Castle Clash's gems and Game of War's gold. These cases generally have held that bets made with "play money" are outside state gambling laws.

The majority of eSports players and fans are over 25 years old. Yet anecdotal accounts of teens and pre-teens wagering skins abound. At a recent conference we attended, a casino executive shared the ironic story of his pre-teen son showing him how to purchase and bet skins. The legality of skins wagering, and its accessibility to teens, is coming under fire in Washington, Valve Corporation's home state. In late 2016, a federal trial court in Washington dismissed a case against Valve claiming that the company's Steam platform created an illegal online gambling market. The plaintiffs in the class action complaint included parents of minors who had purchased skins through Steam. The court's dismissal was based on lack of federal jurisdiction over the claims. The day after the court's decision, the Washington State Gambling Commission ordered Valve to "immediately stop allowing the transfer of virtual weapons known as 'skins' for gambling activities through the company's Steam platform." Washington State Gambling Commissioner Chris Stearns stated, "In Washington, and everywhere else in the United States, skins betting on eSports remains a large, unregulated black market for gambling. And that carries great risk for the players who remain wholly unprotected in an unregulated environment. We are also required to pay attention to and investigate the risk of underage gambling which is especially heightened in the eSports world."

NextGen Policy

If the future of gambling indeed is gaming, and the future of gaming is found in the youngest generation of players, what are the policy implications of integrating eSports into the casino setting?

First, there's market: The gambling industry inevitably will bend toward its younger clientele and what will draw them into integrated casino resorts, changing the population on the casino floor.

Second, there's content: The next generation continues to move away from slot machines and games of chance and toward video games and games of skill, shifting the nature of the games themselves.

Third, there's delivery: Streaming video and social media translate gaming into the expectation of shared experiences and spectator events, transforming the quality of player engagement.

Finally, there's betting: The combination of outcome-based and in-game skins wagering creates new a transactional setting for gambling on eSports in which everything old is new again, and this time, youth is at a premium.

What is missing, though, is the next generation of regulatory policy. While Nevada and Washington State are taking the lead in addressing eSports and gambling, sound public policy must address the real-world value of virtual currency and its potential impacts on underage gambling.

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Age Verification and Underage Gambling Prevention - Key Issues

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The importance of preventing minors from gambling participation is underpinned by the empirically proven evidence that places minors at a substantially higher risk of developing gambling-related problems than is the case for adults (Shaffer & Hall, 2001). Not only is early initiation more likely to lead to adverse outcomes (Forrest & McHale, 2012) but those negative consequences are also likely to be more numerous, more severe and longer lasting (Gupta & Derevensky, 2014). This renders it rather unsurprising that most jurisdictions around the world agree that underage gambling should be prohibited and that the gambling industry, typically under the threat of criminal sanctions, is required to develop, adopt and monitor age-verification measures in order to prevent underage access (Harris & Hagan, 2012).

In the United Kingdom, the liberalisation of the gambling industry effected by the Gambling Act of 2005 was subjected to a clear caveat that children and other vulnerable persons must be protected from gambling-related harm (s.1 Gambling Act 2005). The overall premise that minors should not be engaging in gambling activities has been reinforced by the 'invitation', 'employment' and 'participation' offences. The first two offences target the industry ensuring that they do not invite, cause or allow children or young people to gamble or access prohibited gambling premises and that underage minors are not employed to carry out any work-related duties in gambling venues. In the UK, the minimum age for lottery, Scratchcards and football pools is 16, while the minimum age for all other forms of commercial gambling is 18, with the exception of Category D gaming machines which are permitted to be played by anyone regardless of age. Participation offences are directed at young people and criminalise their potential attempts to overcome age restrictions. Invitation and employment offences benefit from the statutory 'due diligence' defence that discharges gambling providers from liability if they can prove that they "took reasonable steps to determine the individual's age" and they "reasonably believed that the individual is not a child or a young person" (s.63 Gambling Act 2005).

In the implementation of "reasonable steps" to prevent underage gambling, the gambling industry must comply with the conditions stipulated by the Gambling Commission (the UK gambling regulator) in the Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice. The provisions reflect the practical variations between face-to-face and online environments but the functional equivalence is maintained. All operators are obliged to have "policies and procedures designed to prevent underage gambling". Land-based venues should age-verify all customers who appear to be under 21 years of age in line with the 'Think 21/Challenge 21' approach and verification will only be valid if reliable forms of identifications are used. Actions must be taken against those who attempt to make an unlawful purchase or attempt a casino entry. Casinos must be supervised by a human supervisor. Additionally, all venues must be proactive in ensuring that minors do not enter their premises. Venue design must facilitate compliance and all operators must participate in a mystery shopping programme.

Online providers' policies must contain special measures. A mandatory warning that underage gambling is an offence must be prominent on the website and all players are required to affirm their age. However, the providers are not permitted to rely on customers' self-affirmation. They are obliged to carry out their own age verification checks that must be completed within 72 hours. This can be done by relying on credit cards, online databases or third-party age-verification specialists. Additionally, all staff must receive relevant training and providers must enable 'filtering software' to be used by third parties.

Contrary to popular expectations, online age-verification procedures are significantly more robust than their offline counterparts. The remote and cashless nature of the online environment makes it easier for online providers to age verify customers simply because they cannot rely on the face-to-face subjective assessment of an individual's age but are forced to utilise the more reliable technological solutions. These have proved to be largely successful and ensure that it is rare for a licensed provider to open a gambling account for an underage customer for longer than 72 hours. On the other hand, age-verification in land-based venues continues to be in need of significant improvements.

Nevertheless, young people continue to be able to access gambling both in land-based venues and on the Internet. By the industry's own admission, in 2015/2016 there were still 23,619 instances where a customer has been challenged after gambling offline but was unable to prove their age and the Young People Omnibus 2015 reported that 17% of children aged between 11 and 16 years old gambled in the past year using their own money. My own research carried out in UK with children and young people also concluded that those minors who wanted to gamble found a way of doing so.

This poses the question as to why minors are still able to access gambling despite the existence of such wide-ranging conditions and genuine efforts on the part of the industry to prevent underage access. The reasons are not easy to find, are multifarious and nuanced. The very low priority given to the enforcement of gambling offences is likely to have a salient effect on compliance rates as the deterrent effect of the statutory provisions is essentially missing. This is further exacerbated by the existence of the 'due diligence' defence that subtly may be diverting providers' focus from ensuring that minors actually do not gamble into ensuring that they have a policy that satisfies the defence. The land-based age-verification processes still primarily rely upon staff members challenging young-looking customers and refusing sale in appropriate circumstances. Despite extensive training that is typically offered to employees, the subjective assessment of an individual's age has proved to be error prone, especially during busy periods. Face-to-face challenges may also result in disputes

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with customers. The potential for confrontation coupled with the remoteness of any enforcement action may result in some staff being reluctant to challenge individuals unless absolutely sure. Even then, the staff members may feel intimidated (for example, by groups of people).

However, while the aforementioned reasons should not be ignored, my own research led me to strongly support the argument previously mentioned by Blaszczynski et al. (2014) that the more critical issue in the context of age-verification relates to the environmental risk whereby adults directly or indirectly facilitate underage gambling. Practical limitations would make it impossible to play (e.g., blackjack or slots) on behalf of a minor but lottery tickets, Scratchcards, or betting slips can easily be purchased with the intention of giving them to a child (Carran, 2013) and have been known to be given as Christmas or birthday gifts (Derevensky, Gupta & Magoon, 2004). This risk is even more acute in the online environment if an adult allows a minor to access their online account where a child may engage in all forms of gambling. Of particular concern is emerging evidence that some parents prefer online gambling precisely to allow the whole family to be involved (Cotte and Latour, 2009). Indeed, the latest Young People Omnibus 2015 reported that 91% of underage lottery players purchased their tickets in the company of an older person. Most of the pupils in my sample who gambled in a land-based venue had adults' assistance and all pupils who gambled online used an older person's gambling account.

Such adults' facilitation of minors' gambling substantially undermines the efforts of the gambling industry but this risk remains largely ignored. In light of the evidence that parents often have relaxed attitudes to this form of leisure and that adults indeed help minors to gamble, is unwelcome and should be more proactively addressed within the harm-minimisation strategies (both in the UK and elsewhere). The regulators and the gambling industry need to intervene and ensure that adult gamblers understand that gambling by minors may be harmful and should not be encouraged by anyone but especially not by family members, even if they gamble themselves. Even though direct age-verification measures appear to be successful, notably online, the regulator and the gambling industry must not become complacent. The wider implication of the ubiquitous

nature of gambling and the cultural acceptability of this form of entertainment must be addressed in order to ensure that the prevention of underage gambling takes a holistic approach rather than narrowly focuses only on refusal at the point of sale.

Note: This article will form part of a chapter on age verification in the forthcoming book titled 'Gambling Regulation and Vulnerability'

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Centre Fundraising Campaign in Full Swing

The Centre's ongoing fundraising campaign continues to grow with the support of corporate and private sponsors. Due to restricted government infrastructure funding, we have initiated a fundraising campaign to help us maintain our ability to develop and deploy empirically-based prevention and harm-minimization programs. The Centre is housed on McGill University's main campus in the heart of Montreal, Canada. McGill University is a public university and recognized charitable organization.

Donations can be made to:

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors
McGill University
3724 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

Official letters of contributions and tax receipts will be forwarded

Holiday Campaign 2016

Thank you!!

The campaign participation grew tremendously in 2016! We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the lottery corporations who have collaborated with us in 2016 and look forward to even greater support for next year's initiative!

The annual Holiday Campaign, a collaborative initiative of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University and the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), highlights the risks of giving lottery tickets and scratch cards as holiday gifts to minors.

Support for the campaign by North American and international lottery corporations has grown incrementally every year since the program inception. In 2016, a record number of lotteries participated in the campaign. The final list of 2016 participating lotteries included:

United States

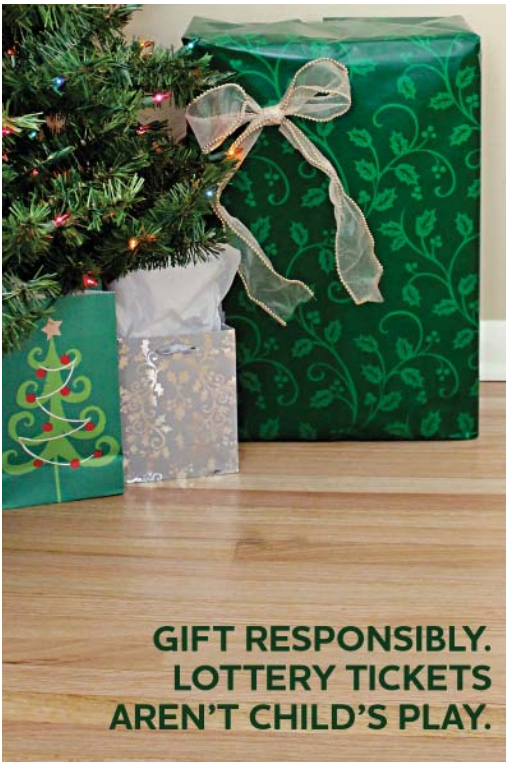
Arizona Lottery, Arkansas Lottery Commission, California Lottery, Connecticut Lottery Corporation, Delaware Lottery, DC Lottery and Charitable Games, Florida Lottery, Georgia Lottery Corporation, Hoosier Lottery, Idaho Lottery, Iowa Lottery, Illinois Lottery, Kansas Lottery, Kentucky Lottery Corporation, Maine Lottery, Maryland Lottery & Gaming Control Agency, Massachusetts State Lottery, Michigan Bureau of State Lottery, Minnesota State Lottery, Missouri Lottery, Montana Lottery, Nebraska Lottery, New Hampshire Lottery, New Jersey Lottery, New Mexico Lottery, New York Lottery, North Carolina Education Lottery, Ohio Lottery Commission, Oklahoma Lottery Commission, Oregon Lottery, Pennsylvania Lottery, Rhode Island Lottery, South Carolina Education Lottery, South Dakota Lottery, Tennessee Education Lottery Corporation, Texas Lottery, Vermont Lottery Commission, Virgin Islands Lottery, Virginia Lottery, Washington's Lottery, West Virginia Lottery, Wisconsin Lottery, Wyoming Lottery.

Canada

Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, Atlantic Lottery, British Columbia Lottery Corporation, Loto-Quebec, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, Nova Scotia Provincial Lotteries and Casino Corp., Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, Saskatchewan Lotteries.

International

AB Svenska Spel (Sweden), Austrian Lotteries, Hrvatska Lutrija d.o.o. (Croatia), Lottotech Limited (Mauritius), Lotto New Zealand, Tatts Group Limited (Australia)



2017 Durand Jacobs Award

Call for Papers

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University invites submissions to the 2017 Durand Jacobs Award competition, to be awarded to the best graduate student paper related to the psychology of addictive behaviors. This annual award is dedicated to Dr. Durand Jacobs' lifelong desire 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 April 1, 2017.

Please submit all entries electronically to lynette.gilbeau@mcgill.ca.

If you have any questions, please direct them to:

Lynette Gilbeau by email, or telephone: (514) 398-4438.

Centre News

New Centre Team Member



Our Centre welcomes Jeremie Richard. Jeremie is a Master's student in the Counselling Psychology Program at McGill University. He completed his B.A. (Specialization) in Psychology in 2016 at McGill University. Jeremie has been a research assistant at the Jewish General Hospital and McGill University Health Centre focusing on the psychosocial consequences of infertility and quality of life in cancer patients. His current research interests include factors influencing addiction and high risk behaviors in adolescents and the risks associated with the changing gambling environment. Email: jeremie.richard@mail.mcgill.ca

Partners in Prevention

Our Centre will once again participate in 3 evening presentations of the "Amazing Prevention Adventure", a Partners in Prevention initiative which is a collaborative partnership between the Lester B. Pearson School Board of Montreal, Montreal Urban Police (SPVM), Risk within Reason, Pavillion Foster (substance abuse rehabilitation center), the Quebec Lung Association and ourselves. Annually, the Partners in Prevention host events aimed at Grade 5 and 6 students and their parents to promote healthy choices in an attempt to minimize adolescent risky behaviours.

News Brief

What are the Odds of Trump Completing his Term?

Bookmakers in the U.K. and Ireland are leading the way on setting odds regarding President Donald Trump's ability to complete his four year term before possible impeachment or early resignation from office. Ladbrokes has the odds at 50-50 that he will not complete his mandated term while Irish bookmaker Paddy Power has set the odds at 6/1 that President Trump will be impeached in his first six months in office. Only time will tell the outcome!

CONGRATULATIONS To Dr. Mark Griffiths!

A heartfelt Congratulations to Dr. Mark Griffiths on being named a "Distinguished Professor" at Nottingham-Trent University. Dr. Griffiths is an exceptional academic who publishes widely in the field of addictions, has influenced gambling law and policy, mentored dozens of students, and consults to governments and industry internationally.



Congratulations on this much deserved award!

Post Doctoral Position Available

An immediate opening for a post-doctoral fellow focused upon studying youth risk-taking behaviors is available. A doctorate degree in developmental, clinical, school/applied, social, experimental or health psychology, addictions research, or related field is required. Fluency in French is an asset. An understanding of addictions is beneficial but not required. The candidate must have skills in statistical analyses and research methodology, and experience in using SPSS and/or SAS for data analyses. The successful candidate should be highly motivated, have strong library research skills, experience in academic writing, strong analytic skills, and be able to conduct field-based research projects independently. We are searching for someone who is independent, yet who enjoys working in a collaborative environment. We are offering either a one-year or two-year position. Salary is commensurate with other post-doctoral positions. The successful candidate will work in the area of youth risk-taking behaviors and will become an active member of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors. He/she will be responsible to the director of the centre and will work closely with the research faculty, other post-doctoral candidates and graduate students. Responsibilities will include developing and conducting field-based research studies, analysis of data, manuscript writing, assistance with grant writing, and literature searches. The candidate will also contribute toward the development, production, and distribution of a quarterly publication. Opportunity to present at national and international conferences is offered and the candidate is expected to publish in peer reviewed journals.

Please e-mail or mail letter of application, curriculum vitae and three reference letters to:

Dr. Jeffrey Derevensky
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Recent Publications and Presentations

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

Castren, S., Temcheff, C., Derevensky, J., Joeslsson, K., Alho, H. & Salonen, A. (in press). Teacher awareness and attitudes regarding adolescent risk behaviours: A sample of Finnish Middle and High School teachers. *International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction*.

Deans, E., Thomas, S., Derevensky, J. & Daube, M. (in press). The influence of marketing on the sports betting and consumption behaviours of young men: Implications for harm reduction and prevention strategies. *Harm Reduction Journal*.

Marchica, L., Zhao, Y., Derevensky, J. & Ivoska, W. (in press). Understanding the relationship between sports-relevant gambling and being at-risk for a gambling problem among American adolescents. *Journal of Gambling Studies*.

Zhao, Y., Marchica, L., Derevensky, J. & Shaffer, H. J. (in press). The scope, focus and types of gambling policies among Canadian colleges and universities. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Deans, E., Thomas, S., Daube, M. & Derevensky, J. (2016). How do gambling environments stimulate risky gambling behaviours? A qualitative study of Australian men. Paper presented at the International Congress of Behavioural Medicine, Melbourne, December.

Pitt, H., Thomas, S., Bestman, A., Daube, M., Derevensky, J. & Randle, M. (2016). Marketing techniques that may appeal to children in Australian sports betting television advertisements. Paper presented at the International Congress of Behavioural Medicine, Melbourne, December.

UPCOMING CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Derevensky, J. (2017). Fantasy sports wagering: Should we be concerned? Invited paper to be presented at the New Horizons annual gambling conference, Vancouver, B.C., February.

Deans, E., Thomas, S., Daube, M. & Derevensky, J. (2017). I can sit on the beach and punt through my mobile phone: The influence of physical and online environments on the gambling risk behaviours of young men. Paper to be presented at the World Public Health Conference, Melbourne, April.

Pitt, H., Thomas, S., Daube, M., & Derevensky, J. (2017). They show you what to bet on. The role of marketing in the normalization of gambling for children in Australia. Paper to be presented at the World Public Health Conference, Melbourne, April.

Upcoming Events...

- **BCLC New Horizons in Responsible Gambling Conference**
February 20-22, 2017
Vancouver, B.C.
- **Alberta Gambling Institute - Just Gambling? Ethical Challenges Pertaining to Gambling Provision, Policy and Research**
April 6-8, 2017
Banff, Alberta
- **Discovery**
April 18- 20, 2017
Toronto, Ontario
- **NCPG 31st National Conference on Problem Gambling**
July 21-22, 2017
Portland, Oregon
- **NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction**
October 1-2, 2017
Las Vegas, Nevada



YGI Newsletter

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