



Compulsive Gambling & Teens

"HIGH STAKES: The number of teen gamblers in the United States is rising at an alarming rate."

By Kathleen Benner

They sit, hunched possessively over neon slot machines. Zombie-like, they yank the gold lever again, hoping to hear sirens sound their lucky day. At four in the morning, eyes glazed over with greed, they head home to figure out where tomorrow's money will come from. These are the stereotypical images of gamblers in America, those men and women who squander life savings and drive families to ruin.

And yet, many of today's gamblers have younger faces. Diane spends her baby-sitting money on lottery tickets, and Mike took the money from cutting lawns to set up a sports pool. The problem is serious and growing, according to Dr. Durand Jacobs, chief of psychology services at Jerry L. Pettis Memorial Veterans' Administration Hospital in Loma Linda, California. Jacobs has recently completed the first overview of studies on underage gambling.

Based on independent studies in Connecticut, New Jersey, southern California and Virginia, 4 to 6 percent of all teenagers meet or exceed the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual's criteria for "pathological gambler."

Jacobs said between 40 to 60 percent of the teenagers reported they have gambled for money. That means that as many as seven million high school age kids are gambling on a regular basis and of those, more than one million are experiencing 'serious gambling problems.'

Who are these young gamblers? Jacobs defines adolescents with serious problems as "those who admitted they would like to quit gambling but could not or those who stated their gambling was out of control." Twelve percent indicated that gambling has harmed their family relationships.

"A recent National Institute of Mental Health study suggested the prevalence of probable adult pathological gamblers in the United States to be at 1.4 percent of the population," Jacobs said. "Teenage prevalence is almost four times that figure."

MATURING OUT. Other studies have shown that adolescents who use street drugs tend to "mature out" and do not necessarily demonstrate the same behaviors as adults. However, "there is no evidence at the present time, pro or con, to demonstrate that teenage gambling behaviors might follow the same maturing out sequence," Jacobs said.

"I'm very concerned that kids in environments that encourage gambling behavior will continue to gamble and that those in trouble will get into more trouble," he said.

Most kids start gambling at home, at a card table with family and friends. Thirty percent of children who gamble now started gambling before their eleventh birthday.

Jacobs said by age 15, more than 80 percent of students had gambled for money.

Paradoxically, state laws prohibit children under 18 from gambling, and in Nevada and New Jersey, a person must be 21 to enter a casino.

"It boggles the mind how a phenomenon so pervasive, openly practiced and patently illegal could continue in virtually every state across the United States, without drawing the attention of the media or authorities," Jacobs said.

ACCESSIBLE TO KIDS. Children and adolescents are drawn into gambling because it is accessible, according to Jacobs. Thirty states and the District of Columbia now have state lotteries, and many neighborhood vendors sell tickets to minors.

"The state level directors of lotteries don't feel it's their responsibility to watch out for young gamblers. They believe local vendors should be carding them," Jacobs said.

Lotteries are the most accessible form of gambling, but they are not the only form. Underage gamblers also place bets on sports games, bingo and race tracks, at casinos and at card parlors.

Who should be responsible for keeping the underage from illegal gambling pursuits? Responsibility should lie first with the children, second with their parents and finally with state authorities and gambling authorities, Jacobs said.

Unfortunately, the parents of child gamblers are often gamblers themselves. As with children of alcoholics, the children of problem gamblers often grow up in an environment of deception and disruption, feeling hurt, angry, confused, and guilty and rejected by their affected parents. These parents often have companion problems such as alcoholism and overeating.

SERIOUS RESULTS. Jacobs conducted a study of students who characterized one or both of their parents as "problem gamblers" and students who reported no gambling problems in their families. With exception, children of "problem gamblers" showed higher levels of involvement with health-threatening behaviors such as use of tobacco, alcohol and drug products than did their peers.

"Children of problem gamblers appeared to be at much greater incidence of psychosocial risk indicators than their classmates whose parents had no gambling problems," Jacobs said. Children of problem gamblers are more preoccupied than their peers with "constantly resisting a strong impulse" to drink (31 percent), to use drugs (37 percent) and to eat (46 percent).

In addition, the incidence of dysphoria and suicide risks was greater for the children of problem gamblers. Jacobs' study points dramatically to the effects of "highly stressed, preoccupied, inconsistent and often absent parents who have provided seriously flawed parenting, sex, social and occupational role models for their children."

Not all children of problem gamblers will have the multiple problems that their parents had, but in gambling terms, the odds are poor. "Some kids will turn out invulnerable and resistant," Jacobs said.

RISK CANDIDATES. Still, Jacobs thinks that without early intervention, children of problem gamblers will be seriously disadvantaged in their problem-solving ability. As a consequence, they are high risk candidates for developing one or another form of dysfunctional behavior, including an addictive pattern of behavior.

Treatment efforts for problem gamblers are about 30 to 40 years behind the alcohol treatment field. "It will take massive public education and work in schools," Jacobs said, "and the cooperation of governments with the gaming industry to bring awareness of gambling as a serious problem in the United States.

"The problem is that parents think gambling is fun, kids think its fun and no one sees any danger. Unfortunately, few people are aware of the pitfalls in store for the young people who become addicted to it."

Jacobs said that states instituting lotteries have neglected to do proper research. "If they were building a dam, state authorities would do an environmental study to see who might be harmed by it. They would take steps to guarantee that no further damage would be done to high risk groups. To my knowledge, no gambling impact studies have been done on a state level."

To make matters worse, Jacobs said, the gaming industry has largely ignored the problems of teen gamblers. Atlantic City's 12 casinos refused to admit 200,000 minors in 1987, and officials reportedly ushered an additional 35,000 minors off the casino floor, according to a recent New York Times article.

LEGAL ACTION. Even so, those numbers are small compared to the numbers of minors who do manage to slip past authorities. Jacobs said that so far, lawsuits filed by parents of child gamblers are the only thing that have turned the ear of the gaming industry.

Solving the problem of teen gambling can be an additional role of student assistance programs. Jacobs' objective is to begin in elementary school classrooms, as early as third grade, to teach children social skills, stress management, problem solving and assertiveness.

Some teens turn to crime to solve gambling dilemmas. In breaking up gambling rings at two Rhode Island campuses in the spring of 1992, authorities were concerned not simply with gambling but with evidence of extortion, threats, and in some cases, beatings that prompted some students to leave the schools and others to borrow substantial amounts of money to pay accumulated gambling debts. Said an assistant in the Rhode Island attorney general's office: "We've seen individual cases where the amount gambling debts matches the tuition...When kids have to drop out of school because they've spent their tuition money on gambling, that has a more serious implication than a student who experiments with marijuana." (Las Vegas Sun, April 28, 1992)

There are several implications for Texans concerned about adolescent gambling problems: There is a need for education and counseling for problem gambling among teenagers in school in much the same way as education and counseling are available for alcohol and drug related problems. Intake procedures in addiction treatment centers and juvenile justice institutions should be expanded to include gambling related problems. Correction facilities should screen for gambling problems and address treatment issues before releasing adolescents. Rehabilitation is not complete unless the gambling problem has been arrested.²

TEENAGE GAMBLER WARNING SIGNS

- Preoccupation - mental effects
- Overuse - success fantasies
- Solitary use - denial
- Unplanned and unscheduled use - egotism
- Special money - sense of original discovery
- Symbolic gambling attitude toward work
- Increased risk tolerance

TEACHERS: SOME INDICATORS OF A POSSIBLE PROBLEM IN STUDENTS

- Unexplained absences from school
- Sudden drop in grades
- Intense interest in gambling conversation
- Exaggerated display of money or other material possessions (e.g., cars, clothes, jewelry)

Courtesy of the Center for Compulsive Behavior, David S. Wachtel, Ph.D., Director 10101 Southwest Freeway, Suite 325, Houston, TX 77074 713/270-0020

Dr. Jacobs found between 40 and 60 percent of teenagers reported they have gambled for money. Using these projections, as many as seven million high school age kids are gambling on a regular basis and of those, more than one million are experiencing "serious gambling problems."

Children start gambling at home, usually card games with family and friends. Thirty percent of children who gamble started doing so before their eleventh birthday.

For many of these children, the gambling can bring serious problems:

- A Pennsauken, New Jersey teenager stole \$10,000 of merchandise to support his gambling habit.
- A 17-year-old male from Cumberland, New Jersey owed \$4,000 to a sports bookie.
- A Philadelphia college sophomore was placing weekly \$200 bets with bookies...soon working his debt to \$5,000. Bookies threatened to cut off his mother's legs unless he paid up. (Employee Assistance, May 1989).

Texas teens are not immune to this growing epidemic. In the first ten days of the Texas lottery, counselors operating the hotline of the Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling reported alarming stories about teenage gambling:

An 18-year-old employee of a convenience store called on the second day of the lottery reporting he had scratched off hundreds of tickets belonging to the store, saying, "I thought it was a sure thing I would win enough not only to pay the store for the cost of the tickets but would have a bunch left over." Instead he faced an immediate problem of having no money to pay for the tickets.

An affluent 16-year-old male from a[n] upscale suburban neighborhood reported he had lost "a considerable sum of money" on the lottery.

Realizing he was under the legal age to buy tickets, he had asked older friends to purchase the tickets for him. When asked about any previous gambling experience, he admitted to heavy gambling in school restrooms and that his parents knew nothing about his problem.

A 19-year-old college student called crying that she and her college Roommates couldn't stop buying tickets. "How do you control this urge?" she asked.

A father of a 19-year-old from a rural town in East Texas was distressed because his son was gambling on cards and dice and had spent his weekly paycheck on the lottery.

Adolescents with other addictive behaviors are particularly at risk for gambling related problems Jacobs reports, "Both youth and adults who become involved in one sort of addictive behavior are more likely to become involved in another sort of addictive behavior." Leisure writes, "Alcoholism and drug abuse and pathological gambling have commonalties. All involve states of arousal which heighten or depress one's state of awareness."

Ideally, said Jacobs, when the students reach adolescence, they will be better equipped to deal with stress and not as tempted to choose a form of self-treatment like alcohol, drugs, overeating or gambling.

"There's a tremendous amount of overlap between potentially addictive behaviors," Jacobs said. Because there are many common denominators, it would be easy to integrate compulsive gambling into an existing SAP.

"Not too many years ago, school administrators and educators were denying the existence of alcohol in their schools. We know now that there are alcoholics in every high school," Jacobs said. "The sooner we admit that there are compulsive gamblers in every high school, the sooner we'll be able to help those kids." ¹

TEENAGE GAMBLING ADDICTION

"Childhood is obsolete." lamented Dorothy North, a therapist in Northern Nevada in discussing her compulsive gambling clients. "When I look at case histories of my patients, it just blows my mind that these people with adult problems are actually twelve- year old kids."

She is not alone in her distress over the growing problem of teenage gambling. Time Magazine estimates that of the nearly 8 million compulsive gamblers in America, fully 1 million are teenagers. And they are hooked on all forms of gambling--casinos, sports betting, card playing, lotteries, racetrack betting...and illegal gambling.

The rate of growth of teenage gambling is an alarming as are the numbers. Just ten years ago teenage gambling was rarely mentioned as a problem; today gambling Counselors say an average of 7% of their caseloads involve teenagers. (Time, February 25, 1991).

The future may be even grimmer. Noted California researcher Durand Jacobs, who specializes in the study of adolescent gambling problems, says that high school students are 2.5 times more likely as adults to become problem gamblers, while St. John University sociologist Henry Lesieur found eight times as many gambling addicts among college students as among adults.

- Change of personality (e.g., irritability, impatience, criticism or sarcasm.)
- Large amounts of money in students possession; bragging about winning at gambling
- Change in behavior (e.g., school absences, behavior problems)
- Gambling language in his/her conversation (e.g., 5 timer, 10 timer, bookie, loan shark, point spread, underdog or favorite
- Exaggerated use of word "bet" in his/her vocabulary.
- Does the student have an unusual interest in newspapers, magazines, or periodicals having to do with sports or horse racing?

IF YOU SUSPECT A STUDENT HAS A GAMBLING PROBLEM, DIRECT THEM TO THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE COUNSELOR OR CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY COUNSELOR.

- Unexplained need for money
- Boasting about winnings
- Missing money or valuables from your
- Intense interest in gambling house conversations
- Weekly or daily card game in youngster's
- Unaccountable explanation for new room items of value in their possession (e.g. Jewelry, clothes)
- Truancy from school
- Unusual time spent watching sports on TV
- Does the youngster have an unusual interest in newspapers, magazines, and periodicals having to do with sports or horse racing?
- Large amounts of money in his/her possession
- Several calls to sports phone on telephone bill
- Change of personality (e.g., irritability, impatience, criticism or sarcasm)
- Unaccountable time away from home.

TEXAS COUNCIL ON PROBLEM AND COMPULSIVE GAMBLING'S ADOLESCENT 20 QUESTIONS

1. Do your friends gamble a lot?
2. Do you gamble at school?
3. Have you ever stayed away from school or work to gamble? Is gambling more important than school or work?
4. Do you often spend your free time involved in gambling activities such as poker, sports betting, dice, etc.?
5. Do you find gambling to be the most exciting activity you do?
6. When you are gambling, do you tend to lose track of time and forget about everything else?
7. Do you often daydream about gambling?
8. Do you feel your friends are envious of you when you win money at gambling and that you get extra attention because of gambling?
9. When you win, do you want to return to gambling as soon as possible because you believe that you will continue winning?
10. When you lose, do you feel you must bet as soon as possible to win back your losses?
11. Do you often gamble with money you originally intended to use for other things- like lunch, clothing, tapes/CD's, etc.?
12. Do you ever "borrow" money to gamble?
13. Have you ever sold a favorite possession or something very special to you to get money to gamble or pay a gambling debt?
14. Do you try to prevent your family and friends from knowing how much and how often you gamble?
15. Do you ever lie about your gambling? For example, do you ever tell people that you did not gamble or that you won money gambling when in fact you had lost money or possessions?
16. Do you get into arguments with your parents because gambling or with your friends over a gambling activity?
17. Do you feel depressed or lose sleep or feel guilty because you lost money gambling?
18. Have you ever thought of suicide as a way of solving your problems?
19. Does one or both of your parents do a lot of gambling?

DIAGNOSIS OF PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING

Diagnosis of Pathological Gambling should only be given if the gambling behavior is not better accounted for by the Manic Episode (e.g., a history of maladaptive gambling behavior at times other than during a Manic Episode). Alternatively, an individual with Pathological Gambling may exhibit behavior during a gambling binge that resembles a Manic Episode. However, once the individual is away from the gambling, these manic-like features dissipate. Problems with gambling may occur in individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder; if criteria are met for both disorders, both can be diagnosed.

Diagnostic criteria for 312.31 Pathological Gambling

Persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

- Is preoccupied with gambling (e.g., preoccupied with reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, or thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble)
- needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
- has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
- is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
- gambles as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, depression)
- after losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing one's losses")
- lies to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
- has committed illegal acts such as forgery, fraud, theft, or embezzlement to finance gambling
- has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of gambling
- relies on others to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling
- The gambling behavior is not better accounted for by a Manic Episode.

Compulsive Gambling Massachusetts Gambling Screen (MAGS)

Please circle the response that best represents your answer.

1. Have you ever gambled (for example, bet money on the lottery, bingo, sporting events, casino games, cards, racing Or other games of chance)?	no		yes
2. Have you ever experience social, psychological or financial pressure to start gambling or increase how much You gamble?	no		yes
3. How much do you usually gamble compared with most Other people?	less	about the same	more
4. Do you feel that the amount or frequency of your	yes		no

Gambling is "normal"?			
5. Do friends or relatives think of you as a "normal" gambler?	yes		no
6. Do you ever feel pressure to gamble when you do not gamble?	no		yes
If you <u>never</u> have gambled, please skip to question #29 now.			
7. Do you ever feel guilty about your gambling?	no		yes
8. Does any member of your family ever worry or complain about your gambling?	no		yes
9. Have you ever thought that you should reduce or stop gambling?	no		yes
10. Are you always able to stop gambling when you want?	yes		no
11. Has your gambling ever created problems between you and any member of your family or friends?	no		yes
12. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work or school because of your gambling?	no		yes
13. Have you ever neglected your obligations (e.g., family, Work or school) for two or more days in a row because you were gambling?	no		yes
14. Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your gambling?	no		yes
15. Have you ever been arrested for a gambling related activity?	no		yes
16. Have you been preoccupied during the past 12 months with thinking of ways to get money for gambling or reliving past gambling experiences (e.g., handicapping, Selecting a number)?	no		yes
17. During the past 12 months, have you gambled increasingly larger amounts of money to experience your desired level of gambling excitement?	no		yes
18. During the past 12 months, did you find that the same amount of gambling had less effect on you than before?	no		yes
19. Has stopping gambling or cutting down how much you Gamble made you feel restless or irritable during the past 12 months?	no		yes
20. During the past 12 months, did you gamble to reduce any uncomfortable feelings (e.g., restlessness or irritability) that resulted from having previously stopped or reduced Gambling?	no		yes
21. Have you gambled as a way of escaping from problems or relieving feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety or Depression during the past 12 months?	no		yes
22. During the past 12 months, after losing money gambling, have you returned to gambling on another day to win back your lost money?	no		yes

23. Have you lied to family members or others to conceal the extent to which you have been gambling during the Past 12 months?	no		yes
25. During the past 12 months, have you jeopardized or Lost a significant relationship, job, educational or career opportunity because of your gambling?	no		yes
26. During the past 12 months, have you relied on other sources (e.g., family, friends, co-workers, bank) to provide you with money to resolve a desperate financial situation Caused by your gambling?	no		yes
27. During the past 12 months, have you made efforts unsuccessfully to limit, reduce or stop gambling?	no		yes
28. How old were you when you placed our first bet?			
29. What is your sex?	female		male
30. What is your age as of your last birthday?			
31. How honest were your responses to each of the questions on this survey?	not at all honest	somewhat honest	very honest

MAGS Scoring Guide

To Classify according to the MAGS

(6) no=0	yes= .63	_____
(8) no=0	yes=.91 no=.56	_____
yes=0	yes=.93	_____
no=0		_____
no=0	yes=l. 51	_____
no=0	yes=l.53	_____
(15) no=0	yes=l .63	_____

Classification Key

*If the value on the Total 1 line is a negative number, the respondent is classified as No pathological.

*If the value on the Total 1 line is between 0 and 2 (including 0 and 2) the respondent is classified as in transition.

Subtotal = _____

Subtract .62

*If the value on the Total 1 line is
Total 1 _____

Greater than 2, the respondent is classified as Pathological.

To classify according to DSM-IV

DSM-IV Classification Key

(16) No=0	yes=1	
(17) No=0	yes=.5	
(18) No=0	yes=.5	No=0 yes=1 _____
(19) No=0	yes=.5	No=0 yes=1 _____
(20) No=0	yes=.5	No=0 yes=1 _____
No=0 yes=1	_____	No=0 yes=1 _____
No=0 yes=1	_____	Total 2 _____
No=0 yes=1	_____	

*If the value of the Total 2 line is less than 5, the respondent is classified as No pathological

*If the value of Total 2 line is 5 or greater, the respondent is classified as Pathological

GAMBLING AND COMPULSIVE GAMBLING IN TEXAS PRIOR TO THE TEXAS LOTTERY₄

In spring 1992, just before the Texas Lottery began, a telephone survey of over 6000 adults and 900 adolescents aged 14-17 was carried out by TCADA in order to determine the "baseline" level of gambling behavior in Texas prior to the Lottery. Some finding from the survey of adults are highlighted below.

About three-fourths of Texas adults say they have ever bet for money. Close to half of all adults have placed bets in the past year. Slightly over 10 percent of all adults are "regular" i.e. weekly, bettors. Over 30 percent of all adults had ever bet on an instant or on-line lottery even before the Texas state lottery began. About 15 percent of all adults had bet on lottery games within the year prior to the survey.

Other favored gambling activities were betting on the outcome of sports or some other event with friends or co-workers (40 percent of Texas adults had ever done so), slot machines or video poker machines at a casino (35 percent), bingo (33 percent), and horse or greyhound racing (32 percent).

In Texas, gambling opportunities have been limited. Prior to the Texas Lottery, formal betting was legal only on state-regulated charitable bingo and on a limited amount of horse and greyhound racing. Some 18 percent of Texas adults who had gambled in the year prior to the survey, and 26 percent of regular (weekly) bettors, said that they had gone out of state within that year for the specific purpose of gambling.

Compared to individuals who did not gamble in the past year, people who bet for money in the past year were more likely to be male, young, Catholic, well-educated, never married, and of higher income levels. They were also slightly more likely than non-gamblers to be Anglo and to come from the Dallas/Fort Worth or Houston regions of the state.

The majority of people who have ever bet (61%) report that they bet or gamble for entertainment purposes, but a smaller number bet out of curiosity or for the challenge (12%), to get rich (10%), or for social reasons

(9%). People who have never bet abstain for a large part out of religious or personal scruples (34%), but a substantial percentage say they do not bet for economic reasons (25%) or for lack of interest in betting (20%). Slightly over one percent of the adult population in Texas can be considered to have been compulsive gamblers at some point in their lives, and an additional 3.5 percent have been serious gamblers, with the potential to become compulsive gamblers. That is, a total of 4.8 percent of the population, or between 540,000 and 670,000 Texas adults, have had significant gambling-related problems during their lifetime. Just under one percent (.8%) of Texas adults can be considered to have been compulsive gamblers during the year prior to the survey, and another 1.7% were serious problem gamblers. This means that a total of 2.5%, or between 270,000 and 360,000 Texas adults, had significant gambling problems within the year preceding the beginning of the Texas Lottery.

At 3.5%, Texas has the highest percentage of problem gamblers compared to eight other states where similar gambling prevalence surveys have been conducted, but scores at about the midpoint in its percentage (1.3%) of compulsive gamblers. (The other eight states are Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, California, Maryland, Montana, South Dakota and Iowa).

As compared to the general population of adults who do not have gambling problems, adult problem and compulsive gamblers are more often male, younger, less well educated, less likely to be currently married, and more likely to be minorities. They come equally from all regions of the state. They are equally as likely as people without gambling problems to be currently employed, although they are disproportionately in blue-collar occupations. However, their total reported family income is very similar to that of people who are not problem gamblers.

Compulsive gamblers are more likely than people without gambling problems to have used illicit drugs in their lifetimes and are more likely to report having had substance-related problems.

Fewer than 10% of the programs that provide substance abuse or mental health treatment in Texas also currently provide treatment for gambling addictions, although there is growing interest among them in addressing this problem. There is also a small but increasing number of chapters of Gamblers Anonymous in the state. The Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling, Inc. operates a 24-hour help-line (1800-742-0443) for people with gambling problems and their families and friends. The Council provides telephone counseling and referrals to treatment, as well as educational and prevention information on problem and compulsive gambling.

The level of gambling among adolescents aged 14-17 is similar to that of adults. Some three-fourths have ever bet for money. Almost 60 percent have placed bets within the past year, and about 10 percent gamble weekly. About 7% of adolescents have gambled regularly and used alcohol or illicit drugs during the past year. Teenagers are more likely than adults to report having had problems with gambling. Almost 3% of adolescents can be considered to have been probable compulsive gamblers at some point in their lifetimes, about 2 percent within the past year. Another 7% have had significant problems relating to their gambling, with 5 percent having had such problems in the past year.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH GAMBLING IN YOUNG ADULTHOOD

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Social and environmental influences on gambling behavior are important to understand because localities can console the sanction and location of gambling opportunities (e.g., lottery and slot machine venues are more common in disadvantaged neighborhoods as compared to more affluent neighborhoods). A number of studies have reported that adults living in disadvantaged neighborhoods have higher frequencies of gambling behaviors and gambling problems. Some have postulated that individuals may gamble to escape everyday stress and hassles possibly brought on by their home and community environments. For example, among youth at an Indian Reservation marked with great poverty, 48% reported that they often "dreamt of solving their problems by winning a lot of money" and 33% felt gambling was a "fast and easy way to earn money." On the other hand, the proximity or physical access to gambling venues might bewhat links neighborhood disadvantage to gambling activities and problems. In densely populated and economically depressed neighborhoods, young people are influenced by cultural transmission of antisocial values. Our research group has been collecting data about gambling behaviors from a cohort of youth since 2004 (beginning at age 17). This study, initially funded by the National Center of Responsible Gaming was subsequently funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute on Child and Human Development, National Institutes of Health (NICHD-NIH). To date, seven different waves of gambling behavior data have been collected. Urban youth typically live in more disadvantaged neighborhoods and are more adversely affected by the negative consequences of alcohol and drug use and excessive

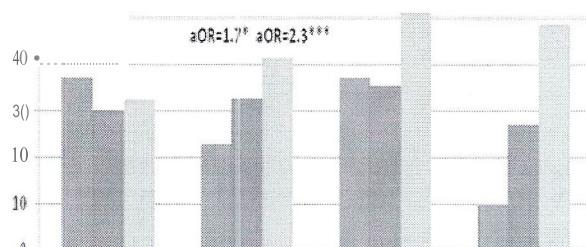
Gambling. In one of our recently published papers, we explored whether neighborhood disadvantage is associated with gambling among these urban young adults and whether differences in physical vs. compositional aspects of the neighborhood existed.

Data are from a sample of 596 young adults interviewed when they were 21-22 years who have been participating in a longitudinal study since entering first grade in nine public Baltimore inner-city schools (52% male, 88% African American, 69% received subsidized lunches in first grade and 49% lived in a single-parent household in first grade). Participants self-reported aspects of their neighborhood (e.g., having safe places to walk, often see drunk people on the street) and were ascertained on 10 neighborhood characteristics. Scores were divided into three different levels (low, moderate and high disadvantage) that reflected increasing aversive neighborhood conditions. Past-year gambling behavior was assessed using the 20-item South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS). The SOGS assessed the frequency (less than once a week or at least once a week) and type of gambling behaviors individuals engaged in during the past year. Those who reported past-year gambling also completed a checklist of 10 gambling problems (e.g., gambling more than intended, felt guilty about gambling) as described in the DSM-III-R.

The results revealed that one-third of the sample had gambled in the year preceding the interview; 42% gambled more than once a week, and 31% had a gambling-related problem (reported at least

one past-year gambling-related problem in the SOGS- RA). Males were not only more likely to gamble in the past year (37% vs. 25%, $p=.002$), but gambled more frequently (49% vs. 33%, $p=.03$), and reported higher rates of gambling-related problems 37% vs. 22%, $p=.04$) than females. Those living in Moderate and High (33% and 41%) disadvantaged neighborhoods were significantly more likely to be past-year gamblers than those living in Low (23%) disadvantaged neighborhoods (Figure 1).

Fig 1. Gambling and neighborhood disadvantage



Our findings are consistent with findings from studies conducted among older adult samples that residents of neighborhoods with more disadvantage gamble more (since we compared residents living in high, moderate and least disadvantaged neighborhoods within our sample). However, characteristics pertaining specifically to the neighborhood's inhabitants (e.g., personality factors, engagement in deviant behaviors, being exposed to neighbors who engage in deviant behaviors) might be more important in specifying who will develop gambling problems than merely the fact of living in a more physically deprived neighborhood.

Frequent gambling among past-year gamblers did not appear to be associated with level of neighborhood disadvantage. Gambling problems among past-year gamblers, on the other hand, were highest in High disadvantage neighborhoods (49%), followed by Moderate (27%), then Least (10%) disadvantage neighborhoods. Models that took into account the other characteristics estimated that those living in High disadvantaged neighborhoods were ten times more likely than those living in Low disadvantaged neighborhoods to have gambling problems.

Two subcomponents of the neighborhood scale were also identified; one that reflected the Inhabitants (e.g., people getting beaten up or mugged, seeing people using or selling drugs or being drunk) and the other their Surroundings (e.g., safe places to spend time outdoors, property damage or theft).

When planning the location of new gambling outlets, cities should try to minimize the harmful effects of problem gambling among already deprived communities. The ecology of disadvantaged neighborhoods may promote gambling pathology, and the availability of gambling opportunities may promote gambling participation and pathology.

GAMBLING AWARENESS/PREVENTION INITIATIVE:

Smart Choices Pilot Program

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Between 2009-2012, the Pennsylvania Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), Division of Prevention funded a pilot project entitled Smart Choices. The Smart Choices Program is an educational and harm minimization gambling prevention program which incorporated several prevention/awareness tools developed by the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University.

Multiple prevention programs for children in late elementary, middle and secondary schools were implemented during this three year period. As well, the Council on Compulsive Gambling of Pennsylvania (CCGP), as directors of the Smart Choices program provided in-service education, consultation to its many Cooperating and collaborating partners.

Numerous training sessions were provided by the CCGP Smart Choices directors as well as Drs. Gupta and Derevensky from McGill University during the three-year pilot program.

Materials Used in the Smart Choices Program

The Smart Choices program used materials developed by the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors including:

- Youth Gambling and Prevention Awareness: Level I
- Youth Gambling and Prevention Awareness: Level II-Revised
- The Amazing Chateau
- Hooked City Participating Students
- Within each of the three years, the number of students participating varied. In total, over 1,000 students in primary, intermediate and secondary schools recently participated in the Smart Choices pilot programs.

Research Plan

For each of the three years, an evaluation plan was implemented. This involved the completion of a pre-test, followed by a general introduction about making smart choices, and materials developed by McGill University, and the subsequent completion of a post-test survey. The survey questionnaires were developed by the team at McGill University's International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors. The pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys were administered by the CCGP Smart Choices team and sent to McGill University for scanning, data entry and evaluation.

Key Findings

While a number of differences were observed between groups, there is little doubt that the Smart Choices Program positively enhanced children's awareness about some of the risks associated with excessive gambling. The data indicates that post intervention children better understood:

- the concepts of luck versus skill
- erroneous cognitions and beliefs about gambling

that practice does little to help their chances of winning in games of chance

- that gambling is not a good way to make money
- the risk and warning signs of problem gambling
- the fact that girls as well as boys can suffer from a gambling problem
- Issues of concern included:
 - the relatively high percentage of youth reporting sports wagering
 - the small but identifiable
 - number of youth involved in wagering via the Internet

DDAP with the CCGP has continued to show both regional and national leadership in helping prevent gambling problems and the Smart Choices program was viewed as a success. Further gambling prevention work with youth in Pennsylvania and at a national level remains warranted

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CHILDREN GAMBLING BEFORE THE AGE OF 10

The recently released 2012 CASA (The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University) Family Dinners report states that teens who have frequent family dinners (5-7 per week) are more likely to have a good relationship with their parents. Frequent family dinners seem to ameliorate the relationships between teens and both their mothers and fathers and these enhanced relationships appear to have protective influences on the teens.

The report indicates that when compared to teens who say they have an "excellent" relationship with their father, teens who have a "less than very good" relationship with their dad are:

- Almost four times likelier to have used marijuana;
- Twice as likely to have used alcohol; and
- Two and half times as likely to have used tobacco.
- When compared to teens who expressed having an "excellent" relationship with their mother, teens having a "less than good" relationship with their mom are:
 - Almost three times likelier to have used marijuana;
 - Two and half times as likely to have used alcohol;
 - Two and half times likelier to have used tobacco.

University of Tasmania researchers in their "Weighing up the Odds" study which polled 606 adolescents aged 14-17 years of age have reported that:

- One in 20 participants reported gambling for the first time before they turned 10 years of age and one in 10 reported gambling before they turned 16 years of age.
- Participants reported that toy gambling games, friends and advertising were more likely to influence them to gamble. Family and teachers were reported more often as influencing participants against gambling.

These findings reinforce the ongoing need for early gambling awareness and prevention campaigns.