



Problem Gambling

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Facts and Figures

National Problem Gambling Awareness Week
March 1-7, 2009

GAMBLING & SPENDING

- 85% of US adults have gambled at least once in their lives, 80% in past year.
- Since 1975, the proportion of adults who "never gambled" dropped from 1 in 3 to 1 in 7.
- 48 States have some form of legalized gambling (Hawaii and Utah are the exceptions)
- In 1999 the National Gambling Impact Study Commission estimated the annual cost to society of problem gambling was \$5 billion.
- It is estimated that in 1997 Americans collectively wagered more than \$1/2 trillion (National Research Council, 1999)
- Consumers spend more on legal gaming in the U.S. than most other forms of entertainment combined (1998 Gross Annual Wager Report, 1999)
- Forty to 60 percent of cash wagered in casinos is withdrawn from ATMs, either from personal accounts or as cash advances from credit cards (NORC, 1999)

HARMFUL IMPACTS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

It is important to recognize that most people can gamble without negative consequences. A small percentage, however, of persons who gamble suffer enormous social, economic, and psychological implications. Individuals, families and communities all suffer from problem gambling, and, while it would be impossible to describe all of the repercussions associated with problem gambling, the following issues help to illustrate why problem gambling can be so destructive.

Domestic Issues

Effects of Adult Problem Gambling on Children:

- Children of compulsive gamblers are often prone to suffer abuse, as well as neglect, as a result of parental problem or pathological gambling" (NORC, 1999)

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- Research consistently shows higher rates of pathological gambling in teens whose parents gamble too much (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997; Jacobs, 2000; Wallisch & Liu, 1996)
- Children of problem gamblers have been shown to have higher levels of use for tobacco, alcohol, drug use, and overeating than do their classroom peers (Gupta & Derevensky, 1997)
- The NRC reported on two studies indicating between 10 and 17 percent of children of compulsive gamblers had been abused" (NRC, 1999)
- Child endangerment was exemplified in Oregon with the September 2001 report of an Oregon licensed day-care provider who left three children (1, 2 and 3 years old) in a van for over 11 hours while she gambled in a casino (Lawrence-Turner, 2001, September 15)

Domestic Violence

- According to the National Research Council (1999), studies indicate that between 25-50 percent of spouses of pathological gamblers have been abused
- Case studies of 10 casino communities revealed that the majority of those communities witnessed increases in domestic violence related to the opening of casinos (National Opinion Research Center, 1999)

Crime

- Several studies suggest that crime rates rise with increased availability of gambling to communities, but this issue is under intense debate
- Forty percent of clients enrolled in Oregon's gambling treatment system reported committing crimes to finance their gambling (Moore, 2003)
- Studies of Gamblers Anonymous (GA) members report that approximately half of the participants had stolen to gamble and over one-third had been arrested (Thompson, Gazel, & Rickman, 1996)
- The vast majority of gambling-related crimes are non-violent; embezzlement, check forgery, stealing credit cards, fencing stolen goods, tax evasion, insurance fraud, employee theft and fraud are common gambling-related crimes

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Suicide/Depression

- Ten percent of clients enrolled in Oregon's gambling treatment system considered and formulated plans to commit suicide within six months of enrollment to treatment (Moore, 2003)
- A major depressive disorder is likely to occur in 76 percent of pathological gamblers (Unwin Davis, & Leeuw, 2000)

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