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## **COMMENT**

### **SLOT-MACHINE GAMBLERS ARE HARD TO PIN DOWN; WHY ARE GAMBLERS SUCH A DIFFICULT SUBJECT FOR ACADEMIC STUDY?**

*The Guardian*  
16 February, 2010

It's hard to get good payoffs from slot machines, yes. But it's also hard to get good information from slot-machine gamblers, and that made things awkward for psychologists Mark Griffiths, of Nottingham Trent University, and Jonathan Parke, of Salford University. They explained how, in a monograph called *Slot Machine Gamblers – Why Are They So Hard to Study?*

Griffiths and Parke published it a few years ago in the *Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues*. "We have both spent over ten years playing in and researching this area," they wrote, "and we can offer some explanations on why it is so hard to gather reliable and valid data."

Here are three from their long list.

First, gamblers become engrossed in gambling. "We have observed that many gamblers will often miss meals and even utilise devices (such as catheters) so that they do not have to take toilet breaks. Given these observations, there is sometimes little chance that we as researchers can persuade them to participate in research studies."

Second, gamblers like their privacy. They "may be dishonest about the extent of their gambling activities to researchers as well as to those close to them. This obviously has implications for the reliability and validity of any data collected."

Third, gamblers sometimes notice when a person is spying on them. "The most important aspect of non-participant observation research while monitoring fruit-machine players is the art of being inconspicuous. If the researcher fails to blend in, then slot-machine gamblers soon realise they are being watched and are therefore highly likely to change their behaviour."

The gambling machines go by many names, "fruit machine" and "one-armed bandit" also being popular. But Griffiths and Parke don't obsess about nomenclature.

The two are giants in their chosen profession. The *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* ran a paean from a researcher who said: "In the problem gambling field we don't exhibit the same adulation as music fans for their idols, but we have our superstars and, for me, Mark Griffiths is one."

Professor Griffiths is one of the world's most published scholars on matters relating to the

psychology of fruit-machine gamblers, with at least 27 published studies that mention fruit machines in their title.

These range from 1994's appreciative *Beating the Fruit Machine: Systems and Ploys Both Legal And Illegal* to 1988's admonitory *Fruit Machine Gambling and Criminal Behaviour: Issues for the Judiciary*.

Women get special attention (*Fruit Machine Addiction in Females: a Case Study*), as do youths (*Adolescent Gambling on Fruit Machines and several other monographs*).

There is the humanist perspective (*Observing the Social World of Fruit-Machine Playing*) as well as that of the biomedical specialist (*The Psychobiology of the Near Miss in Fruit Machine Gambling*).

Griffiths and Parke collaborate often. Strangers to their work might wish to begin by reading the classic *The Psychology of the Fruit Machine*.

Their fruitful publication record reminds every scholar that, even when a subject is difficult to study, persistence and determination can yield a rewarding payoff.

## **NEW UK SURVEY DATA ON GAMBLING PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF GAMBLING**

The UK Gambling Commission has published survey data on gambling participation and public perceptions of gambling.

On public perceptions on gambling, the questions measure how far people in the UK think, firstly gambling is fair and can be trusted, and secondly gambling is associated with criminal activity. Figures covering last year show that 49.6% of the adults surveyed agreed that gambling in the UK is conducted fairly and can be trusted. This percentage was considerably higher among those who gamble. Less than half of all respondents (41.3%) agreed that gambling was associated with criminal activity.

- For the year 2009 (that is, an average of figures from the four quarterly surveys conducted in 2009), 49.6% of the 4 000 adults surveyed agreed that gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted. This compares with 48.8% in the previous year.
- Over the same period, 41.3% of the 4 000 adults surveyed agreed with the statement that gambling in the UK is associated with criminal activity. This compares with 42.0% in the previous year.
- Participation in gambling is associated with a more positive perception of gambling, with past-year gamblers more likely than past-year non-gamblers to agree that gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted (60.3% compared with 30.2% respectively) and less likely to associate gambling with criminal activity (38.2% and 46.7% respectively).
- The category of crime that respondents most associate with gambling is 'Thefts committed by gambling addicts to support their addiction' (14.0% of respondents), followed by 'Money laundering' (7.9%), 'Violent crime' (7.4%) and 'Other serious/organised crime' (7.0%).

Respondents were asked introductory questions to establish whether they have gambled in the last 12 months. They were then asked to what extent they agree or disagree with the following statements:

- In this country, gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted.
- Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity.

The tables below show the percentage of respondents who agreed (either strongly or slightly) with the above statements. Participation in gambling was associated with a more positive perception of gambling, with past-year gamblers more likely to agree that gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted, and less likely to associate gambling with criminal activity.

### **In this country, gambling is conducted fairly and can be trusted**

<b>Agree with statement</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
All respondents	48.8%	49.6%
Gambled in past 12 months	60.7%	60.3%
Have not gambled in past 12 months	35.9%	30.2%

### **Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity**

<b>Agree with statement</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
All respondents	42.0%	41.3%
Gambled in past 12 months	40.3%	38.2%
Have not gambled in past 12 months	44.6%	46.7%

Responses to the question 'what crimes do you yourself associate with gambling?' have been analysed for those respondents who agreed with the statement 'Gambling in this country is associated with criminal activity'. Respondents were free to provide any answers they liked for this question, with responses then collated into broad categories. The following table shows the categories of crime that these respondents considered were associated with gambling. The figures, however, are expressed as percentages of all respondents, including those who did not agree there is any association between gambling and criminal activity.

### What crimes do you yourself, associate with gambling?

Category of crime	2008	2009
Thefts committed by gambling addicts to support their addiction	12.6%	14.0%
Money laundering	8.8%	7.9%
Violent crime	7.8%	7.4%
Other serious/organised crime	5.9%	7.0%
Other financial crime (excluding money laundering)	4.3%	5.0%
People who run gambling businesses acting illegally	2.5%	2.8%
Criminal organisations illegally influencing sporting events	3.3%	2.4%
Criminal organisations buying and/or operating gambling businesses	2.2%	1.9%
Other	2.4%	3.5%
Crime not specified	10.2%	8.9%

This data will be published annually, based on an updated sample of 4 000 interviews. The next publication will thus include average figures for the four quarters up to the end of 2010.

The survey data on gambling participation provides information on the participation in all gambling activities, including remote forms of gambling. It sets out the findings from questions asked through an omnibus survey conducted by ICM Research. The annual data is published quarterly, based on an updated sample of 8 000 interviews.

The following findings are based on two separate sets of questions. The first set measures participation in all types of gambling activity (including by remote means); the second set measures participation in remote forms of gambling (that is, gambling through a computer, mobile phone or interactive/digital TV):

#### All gambling participation (including by remote means)

- Over the year to December 2009 (that is, an average of figures for March 2009, June 2009, September 2009 and December 2009), 55.2% of the 7 000 adults surveyed said they had participated in at least one form of gambling in the previous four weeks.
- The most popular gambling activity was National Lottery tickets (45.7% of respondents), followed by tickets for society or other good cause lotteries (10.9%) and National Lottery scratchcards (10.8%). Betting on horse races, fruit or slot machine gambling, and private betting and gaming with family and friends were the next most popular activities (3.4%, 3.3% and 3.3% respectively).
- Those participating in gambling were more likely to be male than female, and were more likely to be aged over 45.

#### Remote gambling participation

- Over the year to December 2009 (that is, an average of figures for March 2009, June 2009, September 2009 and December 2009), 10.5% of the 8 000 adults surveyed said they had participated in at least one form of remote gambling in the previous month. Around half of these had participated just in National Lottery products.
- This figure of 10.5% compares with the 2008 calendar year figure of 9.7%, the 2007 calendar year figure of 8.8% and the 2006 calendar year figure of 7.2%.
- The growth in participation in remote gambling is explained very largely by increased online participation in the National Lottery. If those only playing National Lottery products remotely are excluded, 5.7% of respondents had participated in remote gambling in the year to December 2009, compared with 5.6% in 2008, 5.2% in 2007 and 5.1% in 2006.
- Overall, in the year to December 2009, 8.3% of respondents said they had remotely purchased tickets for the National Lottery draw in the previous month (either only or in addition to other types of gambling activity).
- Those participating in remote gambling were more likely to be male than female, and were more likely to be aged 18-44.
- Remote gambling via a computer, laptop or handheld device was most popular (9.1% of all respondents), followed by gambling via mobile phone (2.8%) and interactive/digital TV (1.9%).

The full report may be accessed at -

<http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/pdf/Survey%20data%20on%20gambling%20participation%20-%20January%202010.pdf>

## REVISION TO DSM COULD INTRODUCE PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING AS NEW CATEGORY OF DISORDER

Gambling – along with sex addiction and binge eating – is to be added to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The manual is to be revised for the first time in 16 years, and the changes could radically alter the way people think of mental illness. The new DSM won't be released until 2013, but a draft of the book is available online for public commenting until April.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) released the proposed draft diagnostic criteria for the fifth edition of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) on 10 February. The

draft criteria represent content changes under consideration for DSM, which is the standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health and other health professionals, and is used for diagnostic and research purposes.

The proposed diagnostic criteria will be available for public comment until 20 April, and will be reviewed and refined over the next two years. During this time, the APA will conduct three phases of field trials to test some of the proposed diagnostic criteria in real-world clinical settings.

Among the draft revisions is the elimination of the current categories substance abuse and dependence, replacing them with the new category "addiction and related disorders." The DSM Substance-Related Disorders Work Group members have also recommended a new category of behavioral addictions, in which gambling will be the sole disorder.

Dr Charles O'Brien, the chairman of the Substance-Related Disorders Work Group explained the work group's reasoning behind the new category of behavioral addiction: "There is substantive research that supports the position that pathological gambling and substance use disorders are very similar in the way they affect the brain and neurological reward system. Both are related to poor impulse control and the brain's system of reward and aggression."

Pathological gambling is listed in the current version of DSM, but in a different category. While "internet addiction" was considered for inclusion in this category, the work group decided there was insufficient research data to do so. They are recommending it be included in the manual's appendix instead, with a goal of encouraging additional study.

Dr. David Kupfer, the chairman of the DSM-5 Task Force, said: "It is our job to review and consider the significant advances that have been made in neuroscience and behavioral science over the past two decades. The APA is committed to developing a manual that is both based on the best science available and useful to clinicians and researchers."

It is proposed that pathological (disordered) gambling is defined as "persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior as indicated by five (or more) of the following" -

1. 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
2. needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
3. has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
4. is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
5. gambles as a way of escaping from problems or of relieving a dysphoric mood (e.g., feelings of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, depression)
6. after losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing" one's losses)
7. lies to family members, therapist, or others to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
8. has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
9. relies on other to provide money to relieve a desperate financial situation caused by gambling

## **US LOBBYISTS PUSH FOR LEGALISATION OF INTERNET GAMBLING**

Poker lobbyists are ramping up an aggressive push backed by millions of dollars to legalise internet gambling in the United States this year, hoping to overcome passionate objections from social conservatives, sports leagues and other longtime opponents.

Partly bankrolled by offshore gaming companies, the campaign already has persuaded the Obama administration to delay enforcement of a 2006 law cracking down on internet wagers.

Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts and other Democrats are using the six-month reprieve to push ahead with legislation that would legalise and regulate poker, mahjong and other online betting games - pastimes that have exploded in popularity in a country that accounts for more than half of the \$16 billion global internet gambling market. The federal government, which rarely prosecutes online gambling, would net billions of dollars in tax and licensing revenue if it were legalised, proponents say.

The legalisation push has alarmed the National Football League, Focus on the Family and other internet gambling opponents, who say that online betting would encourage criminal activity, threaten children and dramatically increase gambling addiction. Sen. Jon Kyl, a Republican from Arizona, has placed a hold on six Treasury Department nominees to retaliate for the delay in the anti-gambling law, legislative aides said.

But those in favour are hoping that with Congress in the hands of Democrats, who have historically been less opposed to gambling than Republicans, along with the growing popularity of recreational poker, will work to their advantage.

The list of backers includes Frank, a New England liberal who says the government should not bother gamblers, and former GOP senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York, chairman of the Poker Players

Alliance, which is leading the Capitol Hill push.

With 1.2 million members, the alliance is funded largely by the Interactive Gaming Council, a Canada-based trade group for offshore gambling firms. Together, the groups have spent more than \$4 million on Washington lobbying over the past year, and the alliance says its members recently have sent more than 300 000 mailings and e-mails to members of Congress.

"I think there's a growing realisation in Washington that prohibition probably isn't going to work, just like prohibitions throughout history have not worked," said John Pappas, the poker group's executive director. "There needs to be a more commonsense approach, because it's not going away."

Those opposed to legalised gaming include all four major sports leagues and numerous religious groups. Major casinos are divided on whether online gaming is a threat or an opportunity.

Chad Hills, a gambling research analyst for Focus on the Family Action, said opponents "are just trying to fortify the vaults" against the legislation, which they think would dramatically expand gambling in the United States. "This would go outside the walls of a brick-and-mortar casino, outside the walls of a convenience store lottery, and into the living rooms and homes of all Americans," he said.

The outlook on Capitol Hill, however, is uncertain given a slate of unfinished business on health-care reform, cap-and-trade legislation, and financial market regulations, not to mention nervousness among Democrats about November mid-term challenges. Gambling opponents say Democrats are unlikely to muster support during such a contentious year, but proponents say that changing mores and the prospect of new tax revenue give the effort a better chance than at any other time in recent memory.

The Justice Department views all online gambling as illegal under a 1961 law aimed at mob bookies using telephone lines, but it has prosecuted only a handful of internet betting operations. The market is run by firms operating from Antigua, Malta and other foreign sanctuaries.

*The Washington Post*  
7 February, 2010

## **LOTO-QUÉBEC REJECTS CALL FOR DELAY OF ONLINE GAMBLING**

Canadian state lottery operator Loto-Québec has dismissed claims by regional public health officials who have called on the government to postpone Loto-Québec's online gambling launch by at least one year. The officials claim research suggests that nationalising online gambling would lead to an increase in gamblers and a subsequent rise in health risks to the province's residents.

Public health directors for the 18 regions of Québec (RPHD) said that the government needed to do more research before launching online gambling, claiming that it would be easier for residents to become addicted to gambling by playing online. The RPHD called for a postponement of at least one year from the date of introduction of online gambling to allow preliminary research to be published. This would include the establishment of an independent committee of experts to study the impact of an increased and diversified game offering on Quebec society, and the formation of a social ethics committee within the National Assembly and Parliament Committee.

The RPHD said further that if the launch was then considered to be safe, online gambling would be launched for a transitional period of two years during which its activities, in terms of marketing and its impact, would be closely monitored. The project would then again be reassessed.

The RPHD goes on to quote data from Sweden which claimed that 52% of new online players at state-owned operator Svenska Spel had "never played on other sites before", and that 20% of players on the site were said to be problem gamblers.

Responding to these claims however, Loto-Québec said that the conclusions drawn from the study, conducted by Dr. Mark Griffiths of the International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University, were not even supported by the author of the research.

According to Loto-Québec, Dr. Griffiths acknowledges that the 2 500 participants in the study were not a reflection of Svenska Spel's entire clientele and, therefore, that the results of his study could not be used to draw conclusions regarding either the percentage of players who play only on Svenska Spel's site or the percentage of new players. Loto-Québec said therefore that it was "false to assume that 52% of Svenska Spel players who play only on that Swedish site are new players."

Loto-Québec points to further research from a Swedish report in 2008 based on a study of 2 000 poker players which shows that the percentage of problem gamblers who played on other sites was almost four times higher than those who played on the Svenska Spel site, 3% compared to 11%, and almost three times higher than that of players who played both on Svenska Spel's site and on an illegal site, 3% versus 9%.

Loto-Québec said it was surprised that this information was not cited by the RPHD, claiming that public health officials appeared to "rely on the analysis of only a selection of available literature."

The state-owned lottery operator insists that online gambling is a booming sector with Quebec

residents currently having access to some 2 000 illegal and unregulated gambling sites, which could be channelled into a "controlled, safe environment with irreproachable integrity."

Loto-Québec said it will implement internationally recognized expertise in responsible gaming using a number of control and prevention measures, particularly with regard to player age verification, establishing weekly deposit limits, as well as player-exclusion opportunities.

Ahead of its launch later this year in September, Loto-Québec confirmed its online gambling offering will be submitted for a review of its responsible gaming measures. In addition, the provincial government has already announced the establishment of a monitoring committee to follow up on the number of players gambling online and their gaming habits.

## **CLASS ACTION CLAIMS DRUGS TURNED PARKINSON'S PATIENTS INTO GAMBLING ADDICTS**

An Ontario judge has approved to a class-action lawsuit by Parkinson's patients who say a commonly used drug turned them into "relentless" gambling addicts, causing some to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. The decision to certify the unusual class action is the first such ruling in Canada among several cases that have been launched over "dopamine-agonist" drugs, designed to counter stiffness, shaking and other symptoms of the nervous-system disease.

A growing number of studies have linked the medicine to excessive gambling, sex addiction and other compulsive behaviour in a minority of Parkinson's sufferers.

The certification judgment by Justice George Strathy of the Ontario Superior Court deals with Permax, which was taken off the market in 2007 because of other, heart-related side effects. About three dozen Parkinson's patients have already signed up with the class-action, said Darcy Merkur, one of the lawyers handling the lawsuit.

Some had losses well into the six figures, and went as far as taking money from employers to feed their out-of-control habits, he said. "The amounts varied, but there is a consistent claim of devastating financial losses: generally all their savings [gone], or as much as they could get their hands on."

Justice Strathy also authorised an agreement among the parties to enter what is called a "pilot project," where the plaintiffs and defendants will work through the issues and possibly come up with an out-of-court settlement.

The lawsuit claims more than \$3 million in damages for each of the plaintiffs; ads are to be placed in newspapers Saturday calling for others to come forward, Mr. Merkur said.

The plaintiffs allege that the manufacturers of Permax aggressively marketed the drug but failed to warn patients of the potential side effects.

Laurel Swartz, a spokeswoman for Eli Lilly, the drug's developer, said the claims against it are "without merit" and notes that all drugs have side effects for some patients. Information about adverse effects was properly communicated by the firm to regulators and doctors, she said. Lilly will work on a possible settlement but, if that is not possible, will "vigorously defend" the lawsuit in court, said Ms. Swartz.

Patients with the degenerative illness suffer from tremors, stiffness, impaired balance and muscle rigidity, generally brought on by a shortage of the neurotransmitter dopamine in their brains.

Permax and other dopamine agonists essentially mimic the chemical's effect to lessen such symptoms. But dopamine also influences the pleasure and reward areas of the brain.

Research indicates that Parkinson's patients who take the medicine are more likely than others with the disease or the general public to develop "impulse-control disorders" like problem gambling, said Dr. Michel Panisset, a neurologist at Montreal's Notre-Dame Hospital.

One study published in 2008 by Calgary physicians found that one in ten Parkinson's patients at a local clinic had gambling addictions of some sort, about five times the rate in the general population. "We've had a significant number of patients with these problems over the years," said Dr. Panisset. "It's the experience of every neurologist who treats these patients. People lose lots of money and get into personal, familial problems."

According to the statement of claim filed by his lawyers, though, the Mississauga, Ont., man was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1997 and prescribed Permax in 2000. Soon after, the computer technician began gambling voraciously, eventually burning through over \$200,000, twice re-mortgaging his condominium and causing a serious rift with his wife and children.

"He gambled indiscriminately and relentlessly," said the statement. "He visited casinos and played the slot machines compulsively. He made impulsive and uncontrolled stock market transactions. He spent large sums of money on lottery tickets."

When Mr. Banerjee finally stopped taking the drug in 2003, his gambling problem ended, too,

the lawsuit says.

Dr. Panisset said neurologists now warn patients and their spouses of the risk of gambling problems. If signs of such problems crop up, they are moved on to another drug, Levodopa, which has similar benefits. Physicians try to avoid using Levodopa in the early stages of the disease because of its side effects, said Dr. Panisset.

Meanwhile, other class actions are in the works over two dopamine-agonist drugs still on the market, Mirapex and ReQuip

*National Post*

17 February, 2010

## **CONTESTED SURVEY SHOWS DECLINE IN NEW SOUTH WALES PROBLEM GAMBLING RATE**

The New South Wales government has released the results of a new survey which shows that the rate of problem gambling in the state has halved, giving NSW the lowest problem gambling rate in Australia.

The NSW Population Health Survey found that 0.4% of the state's adult population were identified as problem gamblers, down from previous survey results which revealed the rate to be 0.8%. It found that 1.3% could be identified as moderate-risk gamblers and a further 2.5% as low-risk gamblers. The problem gambling rate was calculated using the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI).

89% of adults never bet more than they can afford to lose, while 97% never have financial problems because of gambling.

The survey showed that 70% of respondents engaged in at least one form of gambling over the past twelve months. Lottery products were found to be the most popular form of gambling with 51% of respondents taking part during the period, followed by raffles at 44%, gaming machines at 25% and horse and greyhound racing at 16%.

The NSW Population Health Survey has been carried out since 2002 to evaluate health standards and access to services within the state. The 2008/09 survey included a series of questions about gambling to monitor the extent of problem gambling in the community, with more than 9 400 people interviewed, making it one of the biggest gambling surveys of its type ever undertaken in the state.

Gaming and Racing Minister Kevin Greene said the reduction in the rate of problem gambling was likely due to the recent introduction by the NSW government of a wide range of harm minimisation strategies including a state-wide cap on poker machine numbers and a poker machine forfeiture scheme that has removed more than 5 500 machines from gaming venues over the past seven years. The government also introduced a ban on gaming machine advertising, a mandatory six-hour gaming machine shutdown period every day as well as a \$2.4-million three-year problem gambling early intervention and prevention strategy.

However, the survey results have been questioned by Dr Charles Livingstone, a senior lecturer in Health Social Sciences at Monash University and a board member of the journal *International Gambling Studies*. He said that telephone surveys of problem gambling tended to have a selection bias. His interpretation of gambling data collected in New South Wales in the past decade showed a problem gambling rate about 2.5% in the adult population, which had remained largely unchanged. "Gambling continues to be very much out of control in NSW," he said.

The survey also contradicts the findings of a draft Productivity Commission report released last October, which found that measures introduced by state governments to limit problem gambling in the past decade had been largely ineffective. The Productivity Commission was due to submit its final report on gambling to the federal government in late February.

## **CAI VOTED AS RESPONSIBLE CASINO OPERATOR OF THE YEAR**

Casinos Austria International (CAI) has been voted "Socially Responsible Casino Operator of the Year" at the International Gaming Awards 2010 in London.

Managed by Empire Casino Recruitment, the International Gaming Awards 2010 seek to reward excellence in all areas of the gaming industry. The "Socially Responsible Casino Operator of the Year" award is presented to the casino operator that has demonstrated the greatest commitment in the area of player protection, with special consideration given to operators that have campaigned for socially responsible gaming.

Judges in the category "Socially Responsible Casino Operator of the Year" were looking for casino operators that had gone the extra mile in implementing procedures and safeguards for consumers. This included, among other issues, an assessment of the availability of problem gambling assistance and implementation of responsible gaming safeguards. Nominees in this category also included Casino Cosmopol, Grand Casino Helsinki, Codere, Holland Casino, Gala Coral, Great Canadian Gaming Corporation, Rank and 888.com.

"It's a great honour to have our ongoing commitment and efforts in the area of social responsibility recognized in this way," said CEO Paul Herzfeld, accepting the award on behalf of Casinos Austria International. "As a global player, Casinos Austria International has always regarded effective player protection in all its operations as an absolute priority and continues to draw attention to the topic and support research in this area."

Panels of judges included leading international industry experts, journalists, analysts and representatives of the main sponsors, who selected the winners in an extensive judging process and presented awards in a total 18 categories.

## NEW BOOKS

### **Betting Their Lives: The Close Relations of Problem Gamblers**

By Lorne Tepperman  
Oxford University Press, 2009

Problem gambling has traditionally been seen as an individual issue: it's your problem, you deal with it. But this new book, the only study of its kind, takes an innovative sociological approach, considering problem gambling as a public health issue (it has social causes and significant health outcomes). *Betting Their Lives* is based on first-hand interviews that take us right into the lives of a selection of problem gamblers; we see how gambling is influenced by, and in turn influences, relationships with intimate partners - husbands, wives, children.

Based on important new research by outstanding Canadian sociologist Lorne Tepperman, this book looks into the personal relationships of problem gamblers, and comes out with some surprising results. It provides a superb discussion of expert opinion on the subject, includes first-hand narratives of those who have suffered from gambling addictions, and brings essential new explanatory concepts to the issue.

While more research is required into this growing problem, *Betting Their Lives* introduces a new and urgently needed understanding of problem gambling.

### **Integrated Resort Casinos: Implications for Economic Growth and Social Impacts**

Edited by William R. Eadington and Meighan R. Doyle  
Institute for the Study of Gambling & Commercial Gaming, University of Nevada, 2009

Legalisation of casino gaming has now occurred almost everywhere in the world. A few astute observers have noted that not all gambling should be treated alike; the benefit/cost ratios depend a lot on what kind of gambling is authorized in a jurisdiction. In particular, integrated resort casinos might be considerably more beneficial than a wide variety of forms of permitted casino gambling.

This volume, which uses Slovenia as a case study, points out that this challenging question - whether or not to permit a "state of the art" integrated resort casino - remains a daunting challenge for jurisdictions as diverse and separated as Singapore, Massachusetts, China, Texas, Viet Nam, India, and Britain, as well as Slovenia.

A number of chapters in the book deal with problem gambling and mitigation strategies.

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

- 9 – 10 April 2010, Banff, Alberta Canada  
Alberta Gaming Research Institute's 9th Annual Conference  
The conference theme is "Emergent Clinical Issues in Problem Gambling." Presentation and discussion topics will include competing perspectives on etiology and conceptualization of gambling disorders. Research into problem gambling issues was begun to develop an evidence-base for understanding what treatments work. But how do we make these treatments work even better? How can we maximize the number of people who are exposed to these treatments? How can we "sell" our treatments to those that could benefit? What new approaches are worthy of further investigation? What are the most effective knowledge transfer approaches - getting research to influence policy and practice?  
[http://www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca/2010\\_conference.cfm](http://www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca/2010_conference.cfm)

- 13 – 16 April 2010, Toronto, Canada  
Responsible Gambling Council's Discovery 2010 Conference  
Themes for panel discussions will include: • Genetic Theories and Problem Gambling – What Do We Know Now? • Pay Day Loans/Bookies/Bankruptcies – Looking for Prevention and Early Intervention Opportunities Before the Crisis Hits • Poker – Is It Really a Game of Skill? • Gambling and the Aboriginal Experience – Has It Helped or Hurt? • Are New Slot Machine Features Truly Game Changers? What Are the Implications for Research, Prevention and Treatment? • Fantasy Leagues – Are They Betting on More Female Gamblers? • A Tough Economy – What Are the Impacts on Problem Gamblers? • Game Design – Innovative or Predatory? • Is Legalized Online Gaming in North America Inevitable?  
<http://www.responsiblegambling.org/en/programs/events-upcoming.cfm>

- 4 May 2010, Minnesota, USA  
Minnesota Institute of Public Health 7th Annual Minnesota Problem Gambling Conference  
<http://www.miph.org/events/7th-annual-minnesota-problem-gambling-conference>
- 9 – 12 June 2010, Portland, Oregon, USA  
National Council on Problem Gambling 24th National Annual Conference
- 10 – 12 June 2010, Portland, Oregon  
National Council on Problem Gambling 24th National Annual Conference  
<http://www.ncpgambling.org:80/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3824>
- 14 – 17 September 2010, Vienna, Austria  
8th European Conference on Gambling Studies and Policy Issues

## BRIEFER BRIEFINGS

### **PROBLEM GAMBLING MAY START IN FAILURE OF BRAIN'S FEAR INSTINCT**

A study released on Monday has found that a part of the brain that controls fear may prevent gambling, even when the estimated benefit is greater than the cost. Conversely, those whose amygdalas, containing the brain's fear responses, are damaged were found to gamble even when the odds are against them, like problem gamblers.

Using data acquired by comparing two women with damaged amygdalas to women with ordinary brain structure, researchers from the California Institute of Technology and the University College of London discovered that a healthy amygdala may lead a person to reject gambling, even in an instance such as risking \$5 to win \$20.

Meanwhile, the women suffering from a genetic condition called Urbach-Wiethe disease were eager to risk large amounts on the chance of winning less.

The study's authors noted the sample was far too small to determine any significant statistical probability, but only victims of the rare disease qualify as subjects.

"We think this shows that the amygdala is critical for triggering a sense of caution toward making gambles in which you might lose," said researcher Colin Camerer in a summary of the survey.

"We already know that the amygdala is involved in processing fear, and it also appears to make us 'afraid' to risk losing money," said fellow scientist Ralph Adolphs.

Problem gambling has been frequently linked to an imbalance of brain chemicals, and now may also be related to proper functioning of the amygdala.

*Online Casino Advisory*

### **STUDY SHOWS SPIKE IN GAMING MACHINE USE BY YOUNG GERMANS**

Recently published research from the German Federal Centre for Health Education has shown that while the overall level of gaming participation by German adults has remained unchanged compared to two years ago, the use of gaming machines has more than doubled, particularly amongst men, with 1.1% of the

population currently exhibiting problem gambling behaviour.

### **QUEENSLAND INTRODUCES NEW PROBLEM GAMBLING MEASURES**

The Queensland government has introduced amendments to its gambling legislation to protect problem gamblers. In a statement released on 15 February, the minister for gaming regulation, Peter Lawlor, said the legislative changes would greatly help problem gamblers trying to kick the habit: "People who recognise they have a problem can choose to exclude themselves from gaming venues and this legislation will ensure they're not enticed back by receiving advertising from gaming operators."

In terms of the changes, gaming operators can now be fined up to \$4 000 for advertising directly to gamblers who have chosen to exclude themselves from gaming venues. Until recently the distribution of gambling-related promotional material to excluded persons was only considered a breach of the industry's voluntary Code of Practice.

The legislation was enacted after a series of incidents in which excluded persons were sent promotional material. Gaming operators have failed to remove people from mailing lists even after being warned of previous failures by the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation.

In one case, an excluded person sent promotional material returned to gambling and was allowed into a gaming premises on multiple occasions.

"Gambling can be a serious concern for some people, and I applaud anybody who has the courage to recognise their problem and take this step," Mr Lawlor said. "Choosing to be excluded from a gaming venue is a great first step and the Queensland Government is helping these people by ensuring less direct exposure to the very problem they're trying to leave behind."