

March 2010

ISSUE 3/10

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COMMENT

DO PEOPLE (YOU, FOR INSTANCE) GAMBLE FOR THE FUN OR THE MONEY?

by Al Krigman
Australia News
19 March, 2010

Casino gambling has advocates and detractors. Boosters deem it to be an enjoyable leisure pursuit; they picture the cognoscenti seeking the excitement offered, hoping that chance will bring them a profit but not really expecting this to happen. Detractors consider it an unproductive, wasteful, and irrational activity; this, because the house has a statistical edge but the unsophisticated believe they can win other than by random luck, counting cards at blackjack, or following optimum strategies at "full pay" video poker – the latter two giving the few players willing to diligently do their homework a slight mathematical advantage.

According to Professor Jason Zimmerman of the South Dakota State University, writing in the *Journal of Business and Economic Research*, these contrasting views can be examined in terms of economic theory. The methodology he uses is based on what's known as the "backward-bending labor supply curve." This suggests that, with respect to work, folks with low incomes are inclined to forego leisure in favor of activities that promise to yield financial gain, while high earners tend to prefer recreation over efforts to further enhance their wealth.

Extending this concept to casinos, Dr Zimmerman says that "if gamblers actually expect (wrongly) to increase their incomes through gambling, then gambling should be more prevalent among those with lower incomes... On the other hand, if gamblers perceive casino patronage as a leisure activity... [the well-to-do] would likely devote more time to gambling."

Dr Zimmerman investigated this hypothesis utilizing data from a survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC). Respondents were grouped by household earnings. One question examined was the likelihood of any casino gambling at all within the various groups. The probabilities of casino patronage were found to be as follows: income under \$24,000 – 41.7 percent, income between \$24,000 and \$50,000 – 45.2 percent, income between \$50,000 and \$100,000 – 48.7 percent, and income over \$100,000 – 52.2 percent. These values strongly indicate that individuals were more apt to gamble in casinos as their fiscal status improved.

Another item of interest, illustrating the effect in more detail, was the frequency of visits by respondents who gambled in casinos at least once in the past year. This information is enumerated by household income in the table below.

Frequency of visits as a function of household income for respondents who gambled in a casino at least once during the previous year

Frequency	Household income			
	Under \$24 000	\$24 000 to \$50 000	\$50 000 to \$100 000	Over \$100 000
Once a year	46.90%	40.30%	33.90%	28.10%
A few times a year	45.70%	50.30%	54.10%	56.70%
Once or twice a month	5.80%	7.40%	9.40%	11.70%
One to three times a week	0.90%	1.20%	1.60%	2.10%
Almost every day	0.60%	0.80%	1.10%	1.40%

The table shows that, notwithstanding income level, a large majority of the solid citizens who gambled in casinos at all during the previous year went only once or a few times. The likelihood of just a single visit was greatest within the group having the lowest earnings, and decreased as household incomes rose; for instance, 46.9 percent of the bettors at the "under \$24,000" level went once, in contrast with 28.1 percent in the "over \$100,000" category. For those who visited more often, the effect was the opposite. Frequencies increased with affluence; for instance, although 0.6 percent of players earning under \$24,000 gambled almost every day, 1.4 percent having household incomes exceeding \$100,000 did so.

According to Dr Zimmerman, the most important aspect of the data is that gambling activity is positively correlated with household income. This would suggest that increasing prosperity leads to a greater frequency of casino gambling, supporting the supposition that gambling is a relatively innocuous recreational pastime rather than an activity conducted by "vice merchants [who] prey on the poor." Other data in the NORC study show that greater affluence also corresponds to larger gambling expenditures.

This doesn't prove, or even intimate, of course, that all fat cats gamble for fun while all their humbler counterparts are in it for the dough. But it does leave punters to ponder their own motivations and how they correlate with their pecuniary positions. About such introspection, the inspired inkster, Sumner A Ingmark, intrepidly intimated:

The secrets you keep from yourself,
Wreak havoc with your mental health.

NEW EDITION OF AUSTRALASIAN GAMBLING REVIEW NOW AVAILABLE

The South Australian Independent Gambling Authority has published the fourth edition of the *Australasian Gambling Review*, which is designed to provide a comprehensive and critical summary of relevant gambling research over the last decade and a half.

The first edition, published in 2003, was originally designed to assist in the regulatory needs of South Australia, but the review now includes material from a variety of research areas and constitutes a useful research reference for people working in different areas of the sector, including university researchers, practitioners, and policy makers. This current version of the review builds upon the previous edition, and includes new material drawn from the 2007/08 financial year, as well as other material from previous years not previously included in the earlier editions.

In his preface to this publication, Professor Paul Delfabbro of the School of Psychology at the University of Adelaide writes that "the 2007/08 period has seen the publication of several new large government studies in both Australia and New Zealand, but also a substantial increase in the number of journal publications appearing in peer-reviewed journals, most notably in the *Journal of Gambling Studies*, *International Gambling Studies* and the *International Journal for Mental Health and Addiction*. Many of these papers are based on previously published reports so much of the material is not new, but it is encouraging that so many academic researchers have been able to convert material from reports into a peer-refereed form that is recognised by international audiences. In a sense, this validates the quality of research in both countries and enables researchers, particularly those who are university based, to develop their research careers while also contributing their time to government research that has immediate policy and regulatory implications.

"Some most of the notable Australian research reports during the last 12-18 months include Hing and Breen's (Southern Cross University, NSW) detailed studies of gambling and problem in gaming venue staff in Queensland; Tuffin and Parr's study of the 6-hour machine shut-downs in NSW; Delfabbro et al.'s SA-ACT study of identifiable signs of problem gamblers in gaming venues for Gambling Research Australia; Livingstone and Woolley's (Australian Institute for Primary Care, VIC) study of gaming machine features and types in South Australia; Lambos, Delfabbro and Pulgies study of adolescent gambling in SA, and Oei and Raylu's multiple studies of gambling in the Chinese community in Queensland. In New Zealand, some of the major studies have included: Rossen's study of adolescents in northern New Zealand, Bellringer, Clarke, Abbott and colleagues' longitudinal research into Pacific Islands Families, as well as geographical and prevalence data from several major population surveys undertaken by the New Zealand government (e.g., Ministry of Health national health survey for 2005-06) and Massey University.

"Apart from the inclusion of new material, this version of the AGR also includes revisions to a

number of sections to accommodate feedback received from a several readers as well as to ensure that the general discussions reflect advances in research knowledge and current policy debates. For example, in the section on problem gambling and problem gambling screens, more attention is given to the importance of capturing harm in the national definition of problem gambling and the extent to which the widely accepted Canadian Problem Gambling Index is able to capture this concept. Although the CPGI has brought greater consistency to Australian studies, there is still uncertainty as to whether it has entirely solved many of the problems thought to be associated with previous measures such as the South Oaks Gambling Screen. More detailed analysis has also been provided of existing studies relating to the use of cash facilities in gaming venues, most notably the study conducted in the ACT, to ensure that the evidence supporting, or not supporting, the removal of ATMs in venues is clearly set out for readers. There are also more detailed sections on the evaluation of codes of practice in NSW and QLD, prevalence rates in New Zealand and gambling in indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities."

The full publication may be accessed at -

<http://www.iga.sa.gov.au/pdf/agr2009-4-websecure-100301.pdf>

NEW RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED IN AUSTRALIA

A new product developed by the Australian company Techlink Entertainment offers responsible gambling solutions for video lottery terminals, slot machines, lottery terminals, the Internet and other gaming systems. Called Gameplan, the product enables players to get running figures on wagers and losses, as well as apply limits and self-exclusion which the system would enforce.

GamePlan is a card-based technology that empowers individuals to have more control and information when using gaming machines. Players create a profile on a small plug-and-play tool called the Responsible Gaming Device, which then tracks wagers and results, providing players with the information they need to make informed and responsible decisions when gambling. The machine gives a running picture of the player's money management, allowing for what Techlink calls the "player's reality check."

Players use their card to activate the gaming machine, and then have access to up-to-the-second information on their action.

- * They find out exactly how much money they have won or lost on a machine.
- * They can track how much they have spent over the past days, weeks, months, or year.
- * They can set limits on the amount of money they want to gamble over a period of time.
- * They can lock themselves out from gambling for any given period of time.

GamePlan took ten years to develop and has undergone a two-year intensive field-testing process, with results analysed by three independent research firms. "Information and game play tools are the key to helping gamblers," says Techlink president and chief executive John Xidos. "Gameplan gives players the best information possible and the tools to help them make more informed choices.

The device is currently designed for use at cooperating land casinos, but may prove useful for online casino sites. A group called the Internet Gaming Study Committee is presently studying Gameplan for its effectiveness at online casinos, and to recommend standardized usage to the Gaming Standards Association.

COURT APPROVES LOTO-QUEBEC PROBLEM GAMBLING SETTLEMENT...

The Superior Court of Quebec has approved a multi-million dollar settlement between Canada's Loto-Quebec and thousands of problem gamblers in the province, bringing an end to the class action lawsuit filed against the provincial state lottery operator nearly ten years ago.

A group of pathological gamblers was seeking compensation for addicts, estimated by the plaintiffs to number 119 000 in the province. The gamblers also claimed video lottery terminals are tied to pathological gambling and blamed the government agency for playing down the dangers of VLTs.

The trial began in 2008, but an out-of-court deal was reached last December.

About a dozen gamblers opposed the settlement, but after examining it, Justice Gratien Duchesne ruled the deal is "just, fair, reasonable, appropriate and in the best interests of the members of the group." He ordered both parties to conform to it.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Quebec government will reimburse addiction treatments and other fees, for an average amount of \$5 000, to gamblers who underwent therapy between 1994 and 2002. The province has been paying for the treatment for people suffering from compulsive gambling since 2002. The claims will have to be filed in the next 18 months with supporting documents.

Loto-Québec said it is satisfied with the deal that clearly states that the VLT machines did not cause the gamblers' addiction. "We were proved right on the most fundamental argument," said Loto-Québec spokesman Jean-Pierre Roy.

...BUT, IN ONTARIO, JUDGE REJECTS \$3.5-BILLION GAMBLING CLASS ACTION

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLGC) has won a legal victory in a \$3.5-billion lawsuit filed against the government agency on behalf of problem gamblers. More than 10 000 people who signed self-exclusion forms to stay out of government-run casinos between 1999 and 2005 were seeking approval for the lawsuit to go ahead as a class action.

The lottery corporation is alleged to have failed to exercise its duty to prevent people from continuing to gamble after signing the forms.

Ontario Superior Court Justice Maurice Cullity declined to certify the lawsuit as a class-action proceeding. "The tension between maximizing profits and promoting responsible gambling to the financial detriment of the OLGC is acute," the judge observed.

But the issue he was required to decide was a "procedural motion," wrote Judge Cullity. "I am of the opinion that the attempt to define the common issues in a manner that would avoid an inquiry into the status of each class member as a "problem gambler" has not been successful," the judge wrote.

The ruling did not determine the merits of the claims against the lottery corporation, only whether a class action was the proper way to proceed. Judge Cullity concluded that the personal circumstances of each problem gambler are too varied and require individual lawsuits.

Jerome Morse, lead lawyer on the class action, said yesterday that he is in the process of filing an appeal of the ruling.

Even if an appeal is unsuccessful, the issue of what obligation the Crown agency has to people with gambling addictions is likely to be the subject of several lawsuits. The court heard that the lottery corporation has paid out an average of \$167 000 per case to settle nine individual lawsuits with problem gamblers and at least four more are outstanding.

Casino and slot operations at government-operated venues in Ontario generated more than \$3.5 billion in the 2008/09 fiscal year. The provincial government and the lottery corporation spent a total of \$49.5 million on "responsible gambling initiatives," such as research and funding for counselling services, the court heard.

Self-exclusion forms require an individual to provide photo identification and people are warned they could be charged with trespassing if they re-enter a casino. The forms in place since 2005 include a clause that absolves the lottery corporation of any responsibility if someone who signs a form continues gambling at a government-owned site.

A senior official at the lottery corporation indicated that it is a leader within North America in its problem gambling initiatives. "We are introducing new training for gaming staff to search for red flags" involving its customers, noted Paul Pellizzari, director of policy and social responsibility at the lottery corporation. It is also considering the introduction of facial recognition technology at its sites.

The exclusion forms are a "self-help" program and not "policing," which he said is not the obligation of the Crown agency, Mr. Pellizzari said. "Experts have told us that to be effective, any controls have to be by the individuals themselves," he said. For gaming customers who think they may have a problem, "Our role is to get them help as quickly as possible," he explained.

National Post
20 March, 2010

PROBLEM GAMBLER EXCLUSIONS FAILING DUE TO WEAK ID SYSTEMS

Nearly a third of problem gamblers in a study by the Australian University of Technology study were found to have breached their exclusions from gambling venues. Over half of those who had breached exclusions had done so more than once during the study period with some avoiding detection by using a disguise.

Gambling Research Centre coordinator Rebecca Coombes said a greater number of breaches took place in pubs than in the casinos monitored in the study. "Gambling is the prime business of the casinos so within their commitments to host responsibility there has to be a strong focus on monitoring the exclusions. Gambling is not the prime business of the pubs though and their lack of resources to police the exclusions showed in the number of undetected breaches that took place."

Coombes says casino pit bosses have rolling images of the problem gamblers that are banned

but the pubs have printed images of problem gamblers "tucked away in a book".

Feedback from pub staff was that images needed to be more accessible and of better quality to enable excluded gamblers to be identified.

Coombes says reducing the rate of exclusions could be achieved with better quality digital images of problem gamblers.

Currently images are sourced from driver's licence photographs.

Staff working in pubs also noted that approaching excluded gamblers without any relevant training could be daunting and acted as another barrier to enforcing exclusions.

Results of this study are being considered as part of a larger review of how exclusions are functioning.

"Services that support problem gamblers are looking at using exclusions in a different way, so rather than the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff they are considering using shorter exclusion periods earlier on to prevent people reaching a crisis point," says Coombes.

Exclusions from gambling venues - casinos and pubs with gaming machines - are put in place to prohibit entry to individuals once they have been identified as problem gamblers.

The study included 123 people who had been excluded from gambling venues in the last five years.

Voxy News

24 February, 2010

67% OF US CITIZENS OPPOSE INTERNET GAMBLING

A new poll has found that most United States citizens oppose Internet gambling and half oppose sports betting, but many have gambled themselves at a casino. The Fairleigh Dickinson University PublicMind survey found two-thirds of those surveyed oppose changing the law to allow bets to be placed over the Internet, and 53% oppose allowing bets on the outcome of professional or college sporting events.

Yet the poll also found 62% of those surveyed have gambled at a casino at least once. One in three respondents said they or someone in their household had visited a casino within the past year. Men are more likely than women to have hit the tables or slots. Sixty-two percent report they have visited a casino or slots parlour at some point in their life.

One in five (20%) say they or someone in their household has participated in an office betting pool, such as for the World Series or the Super Bowl. Males (17%) are three times more likely than females (5%) to have participated, while those aged 30-44 (17%) are more likely than those aged 18-29 (4%) or 60+ (6%) to have participated.

The telephone poll surveyed more than 1 000 people randomly chosen across the country, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

44% of those surveyed said legalised sports betting is a bad idea because it can promote excessive gambling and can corrupt sports. But 39% said that because so many people bet illegally on sports already, it should be allowed and taxed by the government. Besides, 67% of respondents oppose legalising Internet betting.

Americans' views of the local impact of casinos are not favourable: the poll found 46% think casinos have a negative effect on the surrounding community, while 38% said they have a positive effect. Those who have visited a casino in the past 12 months split on the question (43%-42%) but those who haven't been to visit a casino in the past year are decisive, with 61% saying casinos have a negative impact. Living near a casino town doesn't make a difference in one's views on the impact of casinos. Among those who live within 30 miles, 46% say casinos have a negative impact, while 40% say they have a positive impact. Among those who live further than 30 miles from a casino town, 44% say they have negative impact, while 38% say their impact is positive. "Citizens may like the jobs and tax revenue from gaming, but they don't necessarily want it in their backyards," said Donald Hoover, a professor in FDU's International School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and a former casino executive.

Question: Overall, would you say casinos have a positive or negative impact on the local community?

%	All	Visited casino/slots		Lives within 30 miles		Party		
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep
Positive	38	43	20	40	38	39	38	38
Negative	46	42	61	46	44	43	46	51
Mixed/unsure	16	15	19	13	18	18	16	11

More than half (54%) would oppose bringing any form of gambling facility to their own town, with women being more strongly opposed than men (58%-50%).

Two-thirds (67%) oppose changing the law to permit people to place bets over the Internet. No partisan difference emerges on the issue, but men are twice as likely as women to support a change (29%-14%), and liberals are more likely than conservatives to favour Internet betting (27%-18%).

A majority (53%) also oppose legalizing sports betting in all states. Once again, males (45%) are more likely to support the measure than are females (34%). Those in the 18-29 age category support the change more (57%) than those in the older age groups. A majority (54%) say legalized sports betting is a bad idea because it promotes too much gambling and can corrupt sports, while 39% agree that since so many people bet on sports anyway, it should be allowed and taxed by the government. Younger people, liberals and those who participate in office pools are more likely than others to think it should be legalized and taxed.

Question: Some people say...lots of people bet on sports anyway, so government should allow it and tax it. Others say...legal betting on sports is a bad idea because it promotes too much gambling and can corrupt sports. Which comes closer to your view?

%	All	Men	Women	Ideology			Age				Betting pool	
				Lib	Mod	Cons	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+	Yes	No
Allow it	39	46	33	47	42	33	50	41	38	32	60	34
Bad idea	54	49	58	48	50	62	42	53	55	59	35	58
Don't know	7	5	9	6	8	5	8	6	7	8	5	8

The full report may be accessed at – <http://publicmind.fdu.edu/casino/>

NEW ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION NOW AVAILABLE

The following is a selection of abstracts of articles published in the January 2010 issue of the *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* published by Springer New York.

Recruiting Gamblers from the General Population for Research Purposes: Outcomes from Two Contrasting Approaches (Jeremy D. Williams, Justin Pulford, Maria Bellringer and Max Abbott)

Multiple means exist by which gamblers including problem gamblers may be recruited from the general population for research survey purposes. However, there appears to be limited discussion in the published literature about the relative merits of one or other approach. This paper addresses this gap, in part, by reporting the experiences of employing two contrasting approaches to survey recruitment: passive advertisement versus active solicitation outside gambling venues. Fifty participants were recruited by advertisement and 54 by active solicitation. The former group was found to be less ethnically diverse and more likely to be problem gamblers than the latter group which, due to the nature of the recruitment process, showed a more even distribution of ethnicity and PGSI classified risk and problem gambler categories. Results also indicated that recruitment by advertisement was more cost effective for reaching problem gamblers whilst active solicitation was more cost effective for the recruitment of low risk and moderate risk gamblers.

The Use of Online Methodologies in Data Collection for Gambling and Gaming Addictions (Mark D. Griffiths)

The paper outlines the advantages, disadvantages, and other implications of using the Internet to collect data from gaming addicts. Drawing from experience of numerous addiction studies carried out online by the author, and by reviewing the methodological literature examining online data collection among both gambling addicts and video game addicts, the main issues concerning data collected using the Internet are discussed and reviewed. This paper extends upon previous methodological papers in the area by outlining some of the methodological and ethical issues associated with specific (rather than generic) online methodologies that have been used to carry out gaming addiction research. The specific online data collection methods examined include the collection of gambling and video game addiction research data via (i) online questionnaires, (ii) online forums, (iii) online participant observation, (iv) online secondary data, (v) online interviews, (vi) online exemplar websites, and (vii) mixed methods online evaluation. It is concluded that the many advantages of online research methods can be a useful and practical way of examining many different aspects of gambling and video game addictions.

An Empirical Study Examining the Impact of Gambling Advertisements on Adolescent Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors (Jeffrey Derevensky, Alissa Sklar, Rina Gupta and Carmen Messerlian)

Based upon a previous qualitative study a questionnaire ascertaining adolescents' awareness of gambling advertisements and their impact upon their behaviour was developed and administered to 1 147 youth between the ages of 12 and 19. The findings suggest that almost all youth report being exposed to advertising with many individuals indicating being bombarded with messages, especially through pop-up ads viewed on the Internet. Sixty-one percent of youth reported receiving

spam gambling advertisements by e-mail and 96% had seen TV advertisements for gambling. The underlying perceived message is that winning is easy, the chance of winning is high and that gambling is an easy way to become wealthy. While most youth are dismissive of the messages and are aware of the risks associated with gambling, a large percentage of youth report that these messages prompt them to gamble. Rather than inciting non-gamblers to begin gambling, advertisements appear to serve the function of maintaining established gambling habits and were particularly problematic to youth with gambling problems. Gender and developmental trends were noted.

Advertising the "New Fun-Tier": Selling Casinos to Consumers (John L. McMullan and Delthia Miller)

There is an absence of research on the commercial advertising of gambling as it relates to casinos. This study examines print, radio, television and point of sale casino ads that aired in Canada. Using quantitative and qualitative methods we analyze a convenience sample of 367 ads that aired or were printed in 2005 and 2006. Our findings indicate that these ads target audiences along age, gender and ethnic lines and mobilize excitement and sex as persuasive techniques to promote the view that casino gambling is the "new fun-tier" of the entertainment industry where visiting a casino is as normal as going to a movie and where winning, glitz and gracious living prevail over losing, work and everyday life. We conclude that casino advertising evinces troubling similarities with some of the factors that research has shown contributes to at-risk gambling: the association between spatial segregation, stepping out of real life and the development of dissociated states; between excitement, sensation seeking and the potential to develop vertigo and disorientation and between the entertainment of the games, the devaluation of money and the propensity to chase loses.

Limited Cash Flow on Slot Machines: Effects of Prohibition of Note Acceptors on Adolescent Gambling Behaviour (Marianne Hansen and Ingeborg Rossow)

This study addresses the impact of prohibition of note acceptors on gambling behaviour and gambling problems among Norwegian adolescents. Data comprised school surveys at three time points; 2004 and 2005 (before intervention) and 2006 (after intervention). Net samples comprised 20 000 students aged 13–19 years at each data collection. Identical measures of gambling behaviour (gambling frequency and expenditures on slot machines) and indicators of problem gambling (SOGS-RA and Lie/Bet) were assessed at all three time points. No significant changes in gambling behaviour and problem gambling were observed in the period prior to the intervention, whereas slot machine gambling frequency was reduced by 20%, the proportion that gambled frequently on slot machines was reduced by 26%; overall gambling frequency was reduced by 10% and the proportion of problem gamblers (SOGS-RA 4+) was reduced by 20% after the intervention when controlling for potential confounders. It is suggested that these findings can be attributed to the removal of the note acceptors on slot machines.

Online Poker Gambling in University Students: Further Findings from an Online Survey (Mark Griffiths, Jonathan Parke, Richard Wood and Jane Rigbye)

Online poker is one of the fastest growing forms of online gambling yet there has been relatively little research to date. This study comprised 422 online poker players (362 males and 60 females) and investigated some of the predicting factors of online poker success and problem gambling using an online questionnaire. Results showed that length of time as a player was positively correlated with the number of days playing per year, length of poker sessions, and financial success. However, length of time playing did not correlate with either score on DSM-IV problem gambling criteria or perceived skill. Using a stepwise multiple regression, predictors of winning play and financial success among the online players were examined. Those players who were more likely to have financial success were: (1) disciplined and avoided spending over their monthly gambling budget; (2) played at higher stake levels; (3) did not over-estimate the skill involved in poker; and (4) perceived themselves to be more skilful. A further multiple regression examined predictors of problem gambling. Results showed that problem online poker players were (1) more likely to swap genders when playing online; (2) undisciplined and spent over their allocated budget; and (3) played more frequently for longer periods of time. Even though there is some skill involved in poker, skill was not a predictor in problem gambling. These results are discussed along with implications from the findings for key stakeholders (i.e., the players, gaming industry, policy makers and researchers).

The Role of Light and Music in Gambling Behaviour: An Empirical Pilot Study (Jenny Spenwyn, Doug J. K. Barrett and Mark D. Griffiths)

Empirical research examining the situational characteristics of gambling and their effect on gambling behaviour is limited but growing. This experimental pilot investigation reports the first ever empirical study into the combined effects of both music and light on gambling behaviour. While playing an online version of roulette, 56 participants took part in one of four experimental conditions (14 participants in each condition); (1) gambling with fast tempo music under normal (white) light, (2) gambling with fast tempo music under red light, (3) gambling with slow tempo music under normal (white) light, and (4) gambling with slow tempo music under red light. Risk (dollars spent) per spin and speed of bets were measured as indicators of gambling behaviour. Significant main effects were found for speed of bets in relation to musical tempo, but not light. No significant effects were found for risk per spin for either of the two independent variables. A significant interaction between light and music for speed of bets was shown. Planned comparisons revealed that fast tempo music under red light resulted in faster gambling. These findings are discussed along with the methodological limitations, and potential

implications for various stakeholders including the gambling industry and practitioners.

The Role of Context in Online Gaming Excess and Addiction: Some Case Study Evidence (Mark D. Griffiths)

Research into online gaming addiction is a relatively new area of psychological study. Furthermore, there are studies that have claimed that online gaming addiction may be addictive because of self-report accounts of very excessive use of up to 80 hours a week. This study uses data from two case studies to highlight the role of context in distinguishing excessive gaming from addictive gaming. Both of the gamers in this study claimed to be playing for up to 14 hours a day yet and although they were behaviourally identical in terms of their game playing, they were very different in terms of psychological motivation and the meaning and experience of gaming within their lives. It is argued that one of the players appears to be genuinely addicted to online gaming but that the other player is not based on context and consequences. The two cases outlined highlight the importance of context in the life of a gamer and demonstrates that excessive gaming does not necessarily mean that a person is addicted. It is argued that online gaming addiction should be characterized by the extent to which excessive gaming impacts negatively on other areas of the gamers' lives rather than the amount of time spent playing. It is also concluded that an activity cannot be described as an addiction if there are few (or no) negative consequences in the player's life even if the gamer is playing 14 hours a day.

NEW RESEARCH SHOULD INFORM GAMBLING POLICY, SAYS NEW ZEALAND FOUNDATION

The New Zealand Problem Gambling Foundation says all councils should consider new research which has found that there is almost one new problem gambler for each additional pokie machine (electronic gaming machine) in a community.

The research was conducted by Professor Max Abbott, Director of AUT University's Gambling and Addictions Research Centre, Dr Judith Stubbs from the University of New South Wales and John Storer from Judith Stubbs and Associates, Australia. Together they did a meta-analysis of the 34 studies conducted in Australia and New Zealand, thus providing the most complete study of gambling prevalence in Australasia to date.

The findings were clear - every additional pokie machine in a community results in .8 new problem gamblers. Further, there is no evidence that this plateaus.

Graeme Ramsey, Problem Gambling Foundation CEO, says research such as this should inform gambling policy.

"This study clearly shows that if new pokie machines are put into New Zealand communities, we can expect to see new problem gamblers - in fact, nearly one new problem gambler for each new machine," he says.

The authors say the findings support a view that restricting the per capita density of electronic gaming machines (EGMs) will lead to reduced gambling harm.

"Policies related to restricting or reducing the density of EGMs are likely to play a significant role in containing or reducing gambling-related harm," the authors state.

"Holding or reducing EGM numbers would appear prudent based on our findings and is likely to lead to reduced harm," they say.

Graeme Ramsey says the Problem Gambling Foundation advocates for a sinking lid policy to reduce the number of pokies in communities.

"We know how dangerous these machines are and the best policy that Councils can adopt to reduce the number of pokies and the harm caused by gambling is a sinking lid on pokie machines," he says.

'Sinking lids' have contributed to the number of pokie machines in New Zealand dropping from 25,221 in 2003 to 19,359 to end of December 2009.

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

- 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
- 1 – 3 December 2010, Jupiters, Queensland
20th Annual Conference of the Australian National Association for Gambling Studies

BRIEFER BRIEFINGS

FDJ ADDS PLAYSCAN PROTECTION TOOL TO GAMING SITES

In a bid to increase player protection and give players a greater insight to their gaming behaviour, La Française des Jeux has introduced the Playscan software developed by Svenska Spel to its gaming and betting sites Fdjeux.com and ParionsWeb.fr.

Playscan has been operating on Svenska Spel's website since 2007 and was developed by the company in cooperation with Sweden's Spelinstitutet and ICU Intelligence.

The Playscan system enables players to sign up on a voluntary basis to the free service which analyses the number of bets, the amounts bet, the amounts of winnings recycled as bets and the durations of gaming sessions for each player. The system then provides players with information and advice, using a traffic light system with red representing those most at risk and green representing recreational gamblers.

When a player gets an amber light which signifies intensive gambling, they are reminded of the built-in features which can be reconfigured to reduce deposit or weekly betting limits, or they may exclude themselves entirely.

On reaching the red level, the system stops La Française des Jeux from sending further offers to the player concerned and instead suggests that they get in touch with 'SOS Joueurs', an association that provides assistance to problem gamblers.