
The prevalence of gambling and problem gambling among adolescents in New Zealand has not been adequately investigated. Prospective studies of current underage gambling may be unreliable, because respondents may fear self-incrimination. In this retrospective study, a non-representative sample of 68 first year psychology students, between the ages of 15 and 24 years, completed and questionnaire which asked them to recall their gambling activities before the age of 20 years, and which included the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS). In adolescence, the entire sample had gambled for money at least once, and 18% regularly. Participants who played housie (bingo), gambled in casinos, or bought Lotto tickets, had the highest spending rates. 13% of the sample was classified as problem gamblers and 5% probable pathological gamblers in adolescence. Activities associated with pathological gambling included scratch tickets, gaming machines and housie. Regular gambling significantly predicted problem gambling scores. The results were compared with findings from a national sample and adolescent samples overseas.


We describe self-reported sources of income and expenditure, and the association between part-time employment and spending on fast food, alcohol, cigarettes, and gambling for a sample of 3434 New Zealand (NZ) secondary school students (mean age 15.0 years). Disposable income was usually received from parents and guardians, but nearly 40% of students also reported receiving money from part-time employment. The proportion of students employed increased as socioeconomic rating increased, and was associated with increased purchasing of fast food and alcohol, and increased spending on cigarettes and gambling. Spending by youth has obvious public health implications, particularly when it is concentrated on products that have a negative health impact.


The role of gambling in adolescent life, the prevalence of adolescent problem gambling, and associated risk factors were investigated. This research also adopted a largely unique perspective within the youth gambling field, extending investigations to include the role of protective factors, particularly social connectedness. This investigation of protective factors supports strengths-based approaches to youth behavioural issues, with the potential to aid in the prevention or minimisation of harm, as opposed to approaches that focus upon responding to problems, as is encouraged by dysfunction-based models. This research demonstrates that gambling is part of youth culture in New Zealand. The findings indicate that choices around gambling are strongly influenced by contextual factors and that young New Zealanders participate in a wide variety of gambling modes. While most gamble safely, approximately four percent were observed to satisfy the problem gambling criteria. Social connectedness was strongly correlated to problem gambling behaviour and the research points towards the investigation of protective factors, resiliency, and strengths-based strategies in the future. The continuing exploration of common denominators between gambling and other dangerous consumptions also offer promising avenues for future research within the gambling field.


This project explored youth participation in gambling, the impact of problem gambling on young people in New Zealand (including identifiable risk and resiliency factors) and best practice approaches for providing problem gambling services to young people. It consisted of a literature review, a secondary analysis of data from Youth’ 07-The Second National Health and Wellbeing Survey of New Zealand Secondary School Students, and interviews with individuals working within youth gambling and related fields.


We encourage sociologists to apply sociological theory to understanding gambling. In this

Compiled by Nathan Burgess, Research Librarian, Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand. Some abstracts edited for length.

Given the worldwide increasing spending on gambling activities and the increasing number of problem gamblers, it is unfortunate but likely that the children who grow up in problem gambling families will become an important area of concern for child health and social workers. Considerable research has been undertaken into problem gambling and the adult problem gambler, but within the gambling and child health literature there is almost no recognition of the experiences of children who live in problem-gambling families. Drawing on the findings of the landmark Productivity Commission Report, this review explores the marked increase in gambling and its social effects, especially from the Australian perspective. The damaging social effects of problem gambling on families and children are reviewed and the comparative invisibility of children and young people in such research is discussed. The pervasive influence of developmentalism is critiqued and highlighted in relation to the exclusion of children’s perspectives from our research understandings. The review concludes by proposing that adoption of some of the emerging “new paradigm” approaches to childhood and children’s experiences could markedly enhance our understandings of the lives and experiences of this significant group of children and young people.


Gambling research has contributed much to our understanding of the effects of gambling on families, yet we have only the most cursory understanding of the child’s perspective on what it is like to grow up in such a family. The aim of this qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of Australian children who live in families where a parent or caregiver has a serious gambling problem by exploring the perspectives and understandings of the children and young people themselves. This paper reports a central finding, the experience of ‘Pervasive Loss,’ from our interviews with 15 young people, 11 males and 4 females, aged between 7 and 18 years. Their sense of loss encompassed both physical and existential aspects of the child’s life, including their parent(s), relationships, trust, security, sense of home, and material goods. The dimensions of this experience of pervasive loss are explored from the child’s perspective. Children living in families where gambling is a problem experience threats to their overall well-being to the extent that parental problem gambling must now considered to be a significant child health as well as social problem.


The study, Children at Risk of Developing Problem Gambling was undertaken by the Problem Gambling Research and Treatment Centre – a joint initiative of the Victorian Government, University of Melbourne and Monash University. The study provides a reasoned analysis of the contribution of risk exposures towards the development of problem gambling in individuals raised in problem gambling families and provides guidelines for use in strategies targeted at children at risk of developing problem gambling. This research project involved four separate studies being: a large scale national community telephone survey; a survey of adolescents aged 12-18 years from secondary schools; a survey of young adults from tertiary institutions; a survey of individuals seeking problem gambling counselling. The four studies focussed on identifying risk (and protective) factors in the development of gambling problems in children with a family member who was a problem gambler.


This study examined the association between a wide range of factors and young adults’ gambling. Data were from the Mater-University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy. The study is based on 3691 individuals for whom data were available on self-report gambling and gambling expenditure at the 21-year follow-up. Independent variables were measured at the baseline and 14-year follow-up. Adolescents who smoked cigarettes, exhibited externalizing problems, performed poorly at high school or experienced childhood sexual abuse were more likely to gamble or spend more money on gambling at 21 years. While it is uncertain whether early interventions for those individuals who start to use substances at an early age or face difficulties due to family circumstances will impact on rates of gambling, research should examine whether intervention programmes that target modifiable factors...
such as adolescent school performance and externalizing behavior reduce later gambling.


Eight-hundred and seventeen adolescent high school students in the Montreal region completed the DSM-IV-J gambling screen along with a questionnaire devised by the authors inquiring about their gambling behavior, including items assessing the types of activities in which. The results indicate that, in general, 80.2% of students reported having gambled during the previous year, with 35.1% gambling a minimum of once per week. Adolescents reported participating in gambling behavior more often than any other addictive behavior, including cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, and illicit drug use. The mean age of onset of gambling behavior for the sample was 11.5 years. The rate of pathological gambling was 4.7% as measured by the DSM-IV-J. Pathological gamblers were more likely to have parents with gambling problems and to be engaging in illegal activities than non-pathological gamblers. Gender differences were evident, with males engaging in gambling activities more than females. Differences in game preferences were found, with males more attracted to sports lottery tickets and sports pool betting and females more attracted to lottery tickets and bingo.


This text gives information on the new status of gambling and the issues that arise with the existence of legal commercial gaming. It includes contributions from some of the world’s leading authorities on theory and treatment approaches to problem and pathological gambling.


This paper offers an overview of the existing literature concerning problem gambling and families and identifies gaps in current research knowledge on this topic. Relevant theoretical perspectives are outlined and the role of familial factors in the development of problem gambling is discussed. This is followed by a focused review of the effects of problem gambling on family members, specifically the spouse, children and parents. Available treatments and therapies for family members are also reviewed. The paper concludes by identifying the limitations of existing knowledge and directions for future research.


One hundred and five children of Gamblers Anonymous (GA) members and pathological gamblers in treatment were surveyed concerning behavioral, psychological, and emotional problems as well as parental use of violence. The results were compared with control groups and Jacobs’ study of high school students who reported they were children of compulsive gamblers. Children of known pathological gamblers were less likely to admit to moderate or heavy use of cocaine/crack and less likely to gamble more than they could afford than either Jacobs’ children of compulsive gamblers or controls. Children of multiple-problem families are more likely than children of pure gamblers to smoke tobacco, get drunk, overeat, sleep worse than most people, have an unhappy present state of mind, and feel more insecure, inferior, or inadequate than most. GA and treatment children as a whole were more likely to say they had an unhappy childhood, and feel a need for success, acceptance, and approval than Jacobs’ children of compulsive gamblers or his controls. Using Straus et al.’s conflict tactics scale, children of known pathological gamblers were more subject to parental violence and abuse than nationally normed samples. On most measures, the children of multiple-problem families fared worse than children of pure gamblers. However, there were no differences in the expressions of anger, hurt, sadness, depression, confusion, and other feelings between these groups concerning their parents’ gambling.


In a national sample, we examined self-experienced harms related to gambling and the relationship between reported harms and gambling behavior among Finnish adolescents. A national survey of 12–18-year-olds was conducted in Finland in 2011 (N = 4,566). Main measures were frequency of gambling and gambling-related harms reported during the past 6 months. The relationship between reported harms and gambling behavior was assessed using logistic regression analysis. Overall, 44% had gambled during the past 6 months. Of the sample, 12% were frequent gamblers (at least weekly) and 32% were occasional gamblers (monthly or less often). Compared to occasional gamblers, frequent gamblers were more likely to experience harms. The most commonly reported harms among frequent gamblers were “felt guilty or shameful due to gambling” (17%) followed by “problems with relationships” (13%) and “disruptions of daily rhythms” (10%). In age and gender-adjusted analysis, daily gamblers were significantly more likely to report all different types of harms compared...
Pathological gambling (PG) is widely reported to have negative consequences on marriages, families, and children. Empirical evidence is only now accumulating but when put together with anecdotal information, the extent of these problems is clear. PG contributes to chaos and dysfunction within the family unit, disrupts marriages, leading to high rates of separation and divorce, and is associated with child abuse and neglect. Divorce rates are high, not surprising in light of reports that these marriages are often abusive. Research shows that the families of pathological gamblers are filled with members who gamble excessively, suffer from depressive or anxiety disorders, and misuse alcohol, drugs, or both. Families of persons with PG are also large, a variable independently related to family dysfunction.


Most studies of youth gambling have found that the majority of youths have gambled but do so infrequently and do not suffer any adverse consequences. A minority of youths, however, appear to be over-involved in gambling and are experiencing problems associated with their gambling. This is the first generation of youths to be exposed to such widespread access to gambling venues, ubiquitous gambling advertising, and general social approval of gambling. Gambling is the only so-called vice endorsed and promoted in many locales by both the church and state. On the one hand, youths are instructed by their teachers (and ostensibly their state department of education) that the way to get ahead in life is to study and work hard; on the other hand, their state lottery tells them that they need only to be lucky. Youths are adept at recognizing these apparent discrepancies and may be confused by this mixed message.


The purpose of the study was to compare the influence of specific primary prevention with rational emotive education (REE) on the subjects’ knowledge about games. The experimental design randomly assigned children (N = 81, age 12-13, 37 male and 44 female) into three groups:

1. control, 2. specific information about games using the interactive software “Amazing Chateau”, and 3. REE. All children completed a questionnaire with 38 items at the beginning of the study and after 10 weekly interventional meetings. Each item had three answering options, children choosing only one correct answer. Findings indicated that the use of the software significantly improved subjects’ knowledge about gambling and corrected their information about how games work. The results of the study confirmed that using specific primary prevention tools for changing erroneous conceptions about games is more efficient than using only REE.


This study examined whether low inhibition (i.e., low anxiety) predicted early gambling, above and beyond disinhibition (i.e., impulsivity) and whether the two personal dispositions operated independently or interactively. It also examined whether the predictive role of these personal dispositions towards early gambling depended on parent gambling. Children’s personal dispositions were assessed at ages 6, 7, and 8 years through teacher ratings. Parent gambling participation and gambling problems were assessed when the children were 8 years old. Finally, children’s early gambling was measured through self-reports when the children were 10 years old. Results showed that teacher-rated impulsivity predicted early gambling for both genders. In addition, low anxiety predicted early gambling behavior, above and beyond impulsivity and control variables, albeit only in boys. Impulsivity and anxiety did not interact with each other, nor did they interact with parent gambling in predicting early gambling. However, parent gambling participation, but not problems, additively predicted early gambling for boys and for girls.


Developmental pathways of youth gambling problem severity (no problem gambling, at-risk gambling, and problem gambling) are described on the basis of a 3-wave data set that spans midadolescence to young adulthood (N = 305). The most prevalent group was the resisters (no problem gambling at all data points); 60% of study participants were in this group. New incidence cases (no problem gambling followed by at-risk or problem gambling) and desisters (at-risk or problem gambling followed by no problem gambling) were found among 21% and 13% of participants, respectively. Only 4% of cases were persistors, that is, at-risk or problem gambling at all 3 data waves.