

Understanding adolescent gambling problems from a high-risk framework: Implications for prevention and treatment

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Gambling has Become Normalized in our Society

- increased availability (venues & types of gambling)
- increased accessibility
- increased social acceptability
- continued lack of awareness that gambling problems can afflict underage youth

Global Prevalence Findings

- 3-8% Level III, Probable pathological/problem/disordered gamblers
- 8-15% at-risk for problem gambling
- 1.1 million youth 12-17 exhibit pathological gambling behavior
- 5 million youth have serious gambling related problems
- A problem not limited to the U.S. & Canada but internationally as well

Understanding Adolescent Gambling Problems from a High-risk Framework

- Past research has shown a high degree of comorbidity between gambling problems and other potentially addictive behaviors.
- What is the current relationship between gambling and other environmental and mental health disorders?
- What are the implications for prevention and treatment?

2020 Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Survey (ADMHS)

- Biennial survey since 2006
- The current data is based on the 2020 survey amongst middle and secondary school students in 10 school districts
- Data presented is based on 6,744 adolescents from Wood County, Ohio

Methodology

Procedure

Paper/pencil survey was completed in classrooms

Participants

- The current data is based on the 2020 survey amongst middle and secondary school students
- Data presented is based on 6,744 adolescents

Gambling and Risk for Problem Gambling

8 different gambling activities were identified (e.g., playing cards for money, betting on games of personal skill, sports wagering, lottery tickets, scratch-offs, fantasy sports (daily or seasonal), betting on esports)

NODS-CLiP

3 questions (*loss of control, lying, preoccupation*):
Individuals endorsing any one of the 3 items is considered at risk for a gambling problem

Demographic Distribution Based Upon Gambling Severity

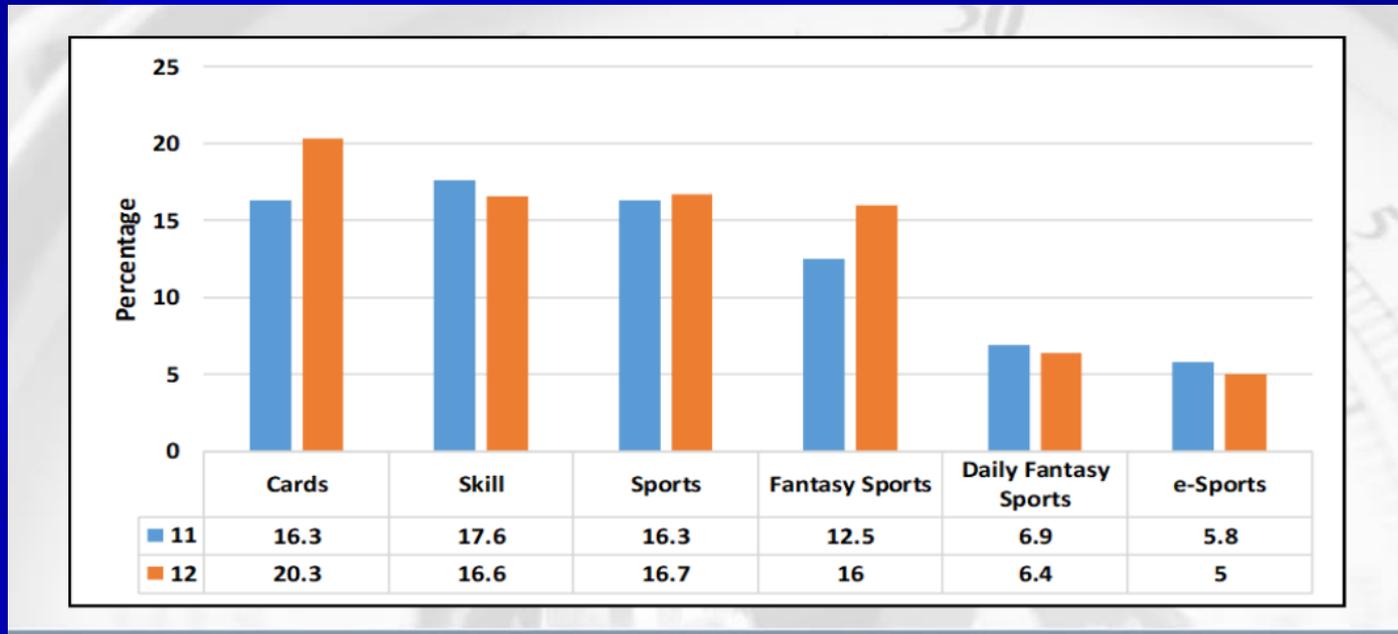
Demographic	No Gambling	Social/Occasional Gambler	Problem Gambler
Male	(N=2061) 64.1%	(N=855) 26.6%	(N=297) 9.2%
Female	(N=2509) 79%	(N=523) 16.5%	(N=145) 4.6%
Grade 7/8	(N=1514) 71.2%	(N=464) 21.8%	(N=148) 7.0%
Grade 9/10	(N=1458) 69.1%	(N=491) 23.3%	(N=161) 7.6%
Grade 11/12	(N=1506) 74.6%	(N=392) 19.4%	(N=122) 6.0%
Total Sample	(N=4805) 70.6%	(N=1463) 21.5%	N=(476) 7.0%

Trends in Gambling Prevalence Among Adolescents (2016-2020) (Wood County, Ohio)



Ivoska, W. (2020). *Behavioral Health Barometer Wood County Youth Indicators as measured through the 2020 ADAMHS Youth Survey on Addiction and Mental Health*. Wood County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board.

Adolescent Gambling Behaviours – 11th and 12th Grade Males



Ivoska, W. (2020). *Behavioral Health Barometer Wood County Youth Indicators as measured through the 2020 ADAMHS Youth Survey on Addiction and Mental Health*. Wood County Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board.

Prevalence of Gambling and Gaming Activities – Adolescents 12-18

Table 8. Prevalence of Gambling and Gaming Activities among Adolescents (ages 12 to 18) in Wood County (n=5852), 2020.

	Daily	About once a week	About once a month	Less than once a month	Not at all
Played cards for money	.7	1.0	2.2	7.0	89.1
Bet money on games of person skill like pool, golf, or bowling	.7	1.3	2.8	6.9	88.3
Bet money on sports teams (pro, college, or amateur)	.9	1.9	2.6	6.4	88.2
Bought lottery tickets (mega millions, Powerball, etc.)	.5	1.0	1.7	4.6	92.2
Bought scratch offs	.5	1.2	2.2	7.1	89.0
Bet money on fantasy sports or games (with an entry fee to play)	.8	1.4	1.6	3.7	92.5
Bet money on daily fantasy sports (FanDuel or DraftKings, etc)	.5	1.0	.9	1.8	95.7
Bet money on e-Sports	.6	.8	.8	1.8	95.9
Played games on computer, tablet, gaming console, etc.	40.1	15.3	4.6	4.6	35.4
Spent at least 2 hours daily playing games online or offline	28.0	17.8	7.0	7.1	40.0

Prevalence of Gambling Activities by Gender – Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Table 9. Prevalence of Gambling Activities by Gender among Adolescents (ages 12 to 18) in Wood County (n=5852), 2020.

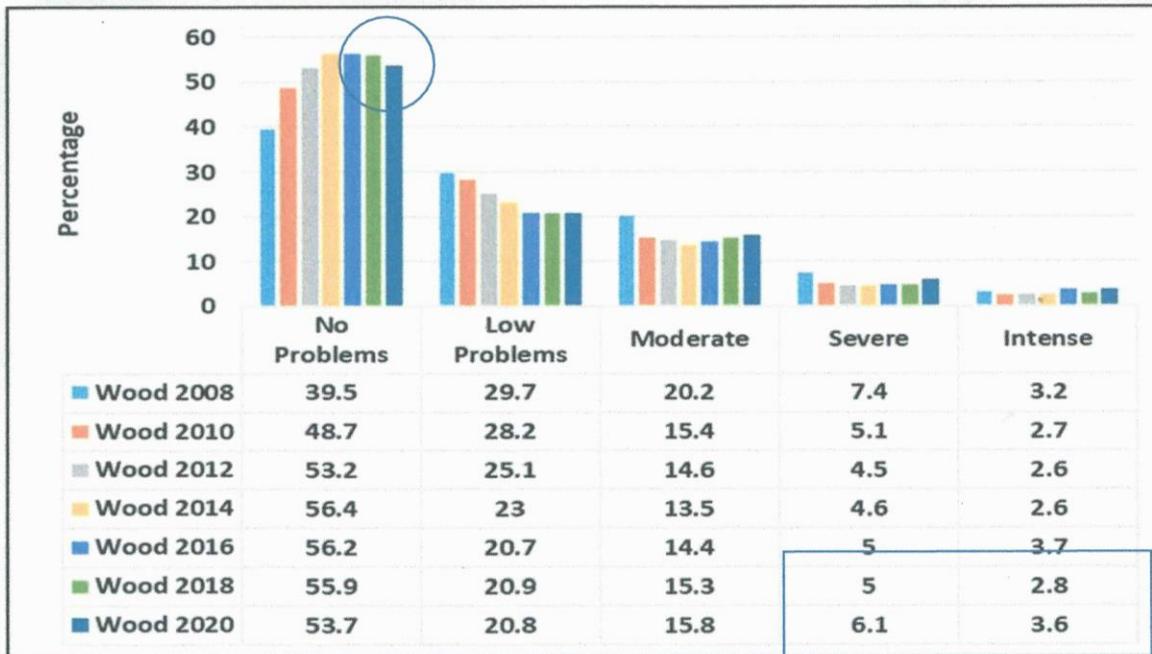
	Gender	Daily	About once a week	About once a month	Less than once a month	Not at all
Played cards for money	Female	.3	.5	1.1	4.0	94.1
	Male	1.0	1.4	3.1	10.3	84.3
Bet money on games of person skill like pool, golf, or bowling	Female	.2	.7	1.1	3.8	94.2
	Male	1.0	1.9	4.5	10.2	82.4
Bet money on sports teams (pro, college, or amateur)	Female	.4	1.0	2.3	3.9	93.5
	Male	1.4	2.6	4.0	9.1	82.9
Bought lottery tickets (mega millions, Powerball, etc.)	Female	.3	.5	1.2	4.0	94.0
	Male	.7	1.3	2.1	4.9	91.1
Bought scratch offs	Female	.4	.7	1.7	7.0	90.3
	Male	.7	1.8	3.5	6.9	88.1
Bet money on fantasy sports or games (with an entry fee to play)	Female	.1	.4	.4	1.3	97.8
	Male	1.3	2.4	2.9	6.1	87.3
Bet or wager on daily fantasy sports (FanDuel or DraftKings, etc.)	Female	.9	.3	.1	.7	98.8
	Male	.1	1.6	1.6	3.1	92.8
Bet money on e-Sports	Female	.3	.2	.2	.5	98.7
	Male	.8	1.3	1.4	3.2	93.3
Played games on computer, tablet, gaming console, etc.	Female	31.0	16.0	5.6	6.4	41.0
	Male	50.0	14.4	3.5	2.8	29.3
Spent at least 2 hours daily playing games online or offline	Female	19.3	13.8	8.2	9.4	49.3
	Male	37.3	21.6	6.0	4.7	30.5

Mental Health Issues Based Upon Gambling Behaviors

Mental Health Issues	No Gambling	Social/Occasional Gambler	Problem Gambler
Live with someone having mental health issues	23.8%	25.2%	30.5%
Live with someone who was a problem drinker	16.6%	21%	26.1%
Live with someone that went to jail/prison	18.3%	22.4%	32.3%
Witnessed parents separated/divorced	36.8%	38.4%	46.8%
Domestic violence. Witnessed adults slap, hit, kick each other in your home	5.2%	6.9%	11.4%
Physical abuse. Experienced being slapped, hit, kicked, hurt by an adult in your home	6.3%	8.1%	17.5%
Verbal abuse. Experienced parents swear, insult, put you down	19.9%	26.3%	31.4%
Experienced sexual abuse	5.1%	5.8%	9.0%
Experienced neglect (felt did not have enough food, wore dirty clothes, had no one to protect you)	4.7%	6.4%	13.9%
Experienced emotional abuse, neglect (no one in family loved you, thought you are special)	18.6%	24.1%	32.4%
Suicide ideation	20.7%	23.1%	35.1%
Suicide attempt	5.8%	6.7%	16.6%

Youth Mental Health

Youth Mental Health



Severe &
Intense:

2018 = 7.8%

2020 = 9.7%

Mental Health Issues by Gambling Behaviors

Mental Health Issues	No Gambling	Social/Occasional Gambler	Problem Gambler
No symptoms	56%	41.2%	36.6%
Low symptoms	19.6%	23.9%	21.1%
Moderate symptoms	15%	20.8%	20.9%
Severe symptoms*	6.1%	8.1%	11.7%
Intense symptoms*	3.2%	6%	9.6%

Substance Use by Gambling Behavior

Substance Use	No Gambling	Social/Occasional Gambler	Problem Gambler
Smoking cigarettes*	1.5%	3.7%	6.3%
Vaping nicotine	27.7%	37.9%	37.5%
Vaping cannabis*	16.4%	21.8%	24.4%
Vaping flavors*	16.5%	25.5%	30.7%
Alcohol use*	11.6%	19.4%	25.4%
Binge drinking*	5.7%	10%	13.9%
Marijuana use*	7.5%	10.4%	14.3%
Stimulant use (ritalin/adderall) in past year*	1.8%	4.4%	6.9%
MDMA (ecstasy/molly)use in past year*	0.6%	1.7%	2.7%

Bullying/Abuse by Gambling Behaviors

Bullying	No Gambling	Social/Occasional Gambler	Problem Gambler
Physical*	8.4%	13.6%	23.0%
Verbal*	24.1%	32.4%	37.9%
Cyber*	10.8%	16.8%	23.7%
Indirect*	19.4%	23.4%	27.5%

Gaming & Gambling

Gaming Behavior	No Gambling	Social/Occasional Gambler	Problem Gambler
Playing games	Not at all: 41.2% < monthly: 3.9% Monthly: 3.8% Weekly: 14.6% Daily: 36.6%	Not at all: 22% < monthly: 6.1% Monthly: 6.2% Weekly: 16% Daily: 49.7%	Not at all: 25.5% < monthly: 6.9% Monthly: 6.7% Weekly: 14.5% Daily: 46.3%
2+ hours a day playing	Not at all: 46.7% < monthly: 5.9% Monthly: 6.1% Weekly: 15.9% Daily: 25.4%	Not at all: 24% < monthly: 9.6% Monthly: 9.2% Weekly: 20.5% Daily: 36.7%	Not at all: 24.9% < monthly: 10.1% Monthly: 7.6% Weekly: 17.1% Daily: 40.3%

General Findings

- Approximately 30% of youth are gambling for money
 - 21.5% could be identified as social/recreational/occasional gamblers
 - 7% (9.2% males; 4.6% females) exhibiting some gambling related problems
- Adolescents remain at high risk for a variety of mental health problems
 - 53% no mental health problems;
 - 20.8% low number of problems
 - 15.8% moderate problems
 - 9.7% severe intense problems (up from 7.8% in 2008)
- As gambling severity increases from no gambling to social/occasional gambling to problem gambling we see a linear increase in individuals who report:
 - Living with someone with mental health issues
 - Living with someone with a drinking problem
 - Living with someone who has been incarcerated
 - Increased domestic violence, abuse (verbal, physical, sexual, neglect)
 - Increased suicide ideation
 - Increased reported suicide attempts

General Findings

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 - Increased suicide ideation
 - Increased reported suicide attempts
 - Increased cigarette smoking, marijuana consumption, alcohol use, binge drinking, stimulant use, MDMA
- Problem gamblers report more severe/intense mental health symptoms (21%) compared to social/occasional gamblers (14.1%) and non gamblers (9.3%)

Gambling Disorders do not Exist in a Vacuum



Prevention Recommendations

- Need to build problem gambling prevention into a wider mental health curriculum
- Mental health prevention initiatives should begin in elementary school
- Education of parents, mental health professionals, school administrators, public policy makers about the need for prevention initiatives
- Prevention specialists will need to monitor the relationship between gaming and gambling (e.g., loot boxes)
- Sports wagering will be increasing and will need to be addressed

Recommendations for Treatment Providers

- Merely focusing on cognitive and mathematical aspects associated with gambling will likely be insufficient
- Need to address a multitude of mental health issues; cause & effect issues
- Need to focus on developing youth coping strategies in the face of adversity and resilience
- Greater need for additional funding for mental health curriculum and education
- Need for increased training of school-based mental health prevention and treatment providers