

FEATURE ARTICLE

Adolescent Gambling in Israel

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Gambling has become a widespread phenomenon in Israel. In 1951, only three years after its inception as a country, the Israeli government issued a license to operate a raffle in Tel Aviv to raise money for public infrastructure needs, such as the construction of a new hospital. Since that time, Israelis have witnessed the expansion of different forms of legal and illegal gambling.

Legal gambling in Israel is managed by a department known as *Mifaal Hapais*, which oversees the lottery, the marketing of scratch cards and related games of chance, as well as the Council for Sports Gambling that operate gambling related to soccer games. In

addition, Israelis have witnessed the growth of many forms of illegal gambling, including illegal casinos, internet gambling and private bookies who run different types of gambling operations.

As in many other countries, there is growing awareness and concern for the ways in which children and adolescents in Israel are exposed to gambling activities, but there is not yet much research on the topic in the country.

In the course of my dissertation research at Tel Aviv University (under the supervision of Rahav Giora and Teichman Meir), we found that 78.8% of Israeli adolescents between 16 and 19 years reported gambling in the past year. Of these adolescents, 5.5% have been diagnosed as problem gamblers.

The table on page 2 shows the frequencies of participation in gambling activities, with 50% of those surveyed reporting gambling up to 20 times in the preceding 12 months. The types of gambling preferred by Israeli adolescents were private bets between individuals (60.5%), card games (34.9%), lottery and related games (34.7%), wagers on soccer games ("Totto") (30%), scratch cards (29.6%) and bingo (29%). Teens are also playing on illegal slot machines (24.7%) and wagering on other sporting events (21%).

A variety of interesting correlations were found between different socio-economic variables and gambling behaviors. For example, insofar as gender is concerned, Israeli boys follow

the same patterns demonstrated in other countries, participating in more types of gambling than girls, and showing higher scores on the problem gambling (PG) scale. Parental education was a significant factor, where the more formal education the parents have, the less their children report gambling and the lower their scores on the PG scale. In addition, age of onset of gambling was also found to be significant; the earlier adolescents start to gamble, the greater their participation in different types of gambling and the higher their scores on the PG scale. Adolescents whose parents gamble tended to gamble more themselves, and got higher scores on the PG Scale.

There were two interesting findings in

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this study related to adolescents' attitudes towards religion, their parents' ethnic origin and their correlation to gambling behaviors. Adolescents who declared that they are culturally traditional (that is, they celebrate the major holidays and customs, but do not regularly attend synagogue or follow all religious obligations) participated in a greater number of gambling activities than those who declared that they were either secular or religious. This culturally traditional group also got higher scores on the PG scale. This finding is not in line with previous research that found religion to be a protective factor when it comes to gambling disorders (Frank & Kendall, 2001). One explanation for this finding might be the ambiguous attitudes towards gambling in the Jewish tradition. According to Friedberon, Thomps & Lutrin (2000), although the traditional social codes for the Jewish way of life (the written works of the Mishna, the Talmud and the Shulchan Aruch) prohibit gambling and compare it to robbery, the Jewish tradition nevertheless also includes gambling customs (such as the dreidel at Hanukka) and references (in the holiday of Purim). There is a possibility that the adolescents who define themselves as culturally traditional identify more with these customs, which legitimizes these forms of gambling.

interesting correlation was found between parents' origin and gambling participation. Adolescents whose parents were born in the former Soviet Union participated in fewer types of gambling than adolescents whose parents were born in Israel.

This finding may be explained by different attitudes to gambling in the different cultures. Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union may still have conservative attitudes to gambling behavior because of the fact that lottery and casino gambling were illegal in the Former Soviet Union until 1991.

Those two findings highlight the importance of different cultural and religious factors that distinguish between different nations regarding gambling. It would be interesting to research how these issues play out in multicultural societies.

We are only just starting to see public awareness of adolescent gambling as a social problem in Israel. It is important to stimulate public

discussion regarding this issue, so that effective prevention programs can be directed to high risk populations.

References:

Frank, N. C., & Kendall, S. J. (2001). Religion, risk prevention and health promotion in adolescents: A community based approach. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 4, 133-148.

Friedberg, A., Thompson, W. N., & Lutrin, C. (2001). Gambling in Israel and Jericho Casino: Moralistic political culture bends toward pragmatism. *Gaming Law Review*, 5, 25-32.

Kassinove, J. I., Tsytsarev, S. V., & Davidson, I. (1998). Russian attitudes toward gambling. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 24, 41-46.



U.S. Court Rules Parolee Can't Be Forced into 12-Step Treatment

In an interesting new development in the U.S. legal system, an appellate court has ruled that a parolee cannot be ordered into a treatment program that uses the 12-step model developed by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

At least eight other federal and state courts have issued similar opinions in the past, holding that coerced treatment

in a religion-based program is unconstitutional. On Sept. 8th, the Ninth District Court of Appeals reiterated that precedent.

The case involved a Buddhist, Ricky Inouye of Hawaii, who had objected to religiously oriented drug treatment while in prison on a drug case. Over his objection, his parole agent ordered

him to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings after a urinalysis tested positive for drugs. He has since died, but this ruling allows his son to continue Inouye's civil lawsuit against his parole agent. The opinion held that Narcotics Anonymous has pronounced religious overtones, including references to God, a "higher power," and prayer.

Monitoring the Future: Key Findings of the 2006 Drug Abuse Study

Substance abuse remains one of the leading causes of mortality for Americans, during both adolescence and adulthood. Because trends in substance abuse are rapidly changing, regular assessments of licit and illicit drug use are required in order to understand this phenomenon. *Monitoring the Future* offers a systematic overview of the 2006 results in this on-going, longitudinal survey of drug use among American youth. This study has assessed the problems of substance abuse over the last thirty years, through the annual collection of data from American youth. Nearly 50,000 students in 8th, 10th and 12th grades have completed questionnaires for this study during this time.

Drug categories investigated in the study include marijuana, other illicit drugs, hallucinogens other than LSD, amphetamines, methamphetamines, alcohol, and cigarettes. Each drug category is examined separately, with discussion of the trends in the overall proportions of students using the drug at each grade level. Levels of perceived risk, personal disapproval and perceived

availability are also analyzed, as the authors found these factors to be associated with trends in the use of licit and illicit drugs.

In 2006, many drugs demonstrated declines in use, while others remained at a steady level.

Only a few classes of drugs showed an increase in use. The increase in use of Ecstasy at the two older grade levels – after a substantial decline in use at all three grade levels was reported in 2001– suggests how youth need to be better informed about drugs. The authors assert that in 2001, a significant rise in levels of perceived risk in using Ecstasy across all grades was found while in 2006, levels of perceived risk and disapproval decreased in the two lower grades. The use of inhalants has also increased and interestingly has shown different trends from the usual patterns in drug use. The study reports that over the years, 8th graders have continuously shown the highest incidence of inhalant use while 12th graders have shown the lowest.

A new category of drug studied for the first time this year was over-the-counter cough and cold

medicines. These medicines have a cough suppressant that can alter levels of consciousness and easily affect one's mood when taken in large doses. The proportion of students using these over-the-counter drugs with the intention of getting high increased from 4% to 7% across the grades. The study reflects concern for at-risk students who take these medicines with the aim of "getting high," without fully recognizing the risks of doing so.

According to the authors, a more extensive analysis of the entire project including data from American college students and adults through age 45 will be available later this year. The initial results reported in this handbook do, however, provide professionals with the academic tools to target specific age groups and risk factors in the fight against youth drug abuse.

Johnston, L.D., O'Malley, P.M., Bachman, J.G., & Schulenberg, J.E. (2007). *Monitoring the Future national results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2006*. (NIH Publication No. 07-6202). Bethesda, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Website Pulls Bets on High School Football Game

An online gambling website, recently announced they had changed their minds about a decision to offer bets for a high school football game between Southlake Carroll and Miami (Fla.) Northwestern.

The website, *5dimes.com*, based out of Costa Rica, had odds on the game as well as a money line in early September. However, management e-mailed a response to a Texas newspaper, the Star-

Telegram, stating that has changed due to "negative feedback from various media outlets."

The football teams were scheduled to meet at SMU's Gerald J. Ford Stadium on Sept. 15 in a game televised by ESPNU.

"In the past, offerings on these events were made available because customers directly requested odds on these games," the e-mail read. "While many of our customers enjoy wagering on these homemade offerings, we are not interested in

a moral debate. Requests for wagering lines on future high school and Little League requests will be declined."

Carroll athletic director Ronnie Tipps was pleased when told about the change, according to an article in the Star-Telegram.

"It's the right thing for high school football," he said. "I'm glad they've taken it off. I had no clue that any of it was going on until I got a call yesterday."

The Newest Addictions on Campus

Sheri Stock and Kelly Walsh

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

According to recent polls across college campuses in the U.S., students are exhibiting signs of new forms of dependency. Experts are voicing concern about the incredible amount of time some students spend playing video games, as well as the alarming quantities of highly concentrated caffeinated beverages that are often relied upon in order to stay awake for hardcore gaming streaks or late night cramming. There is evidence that school work suffers from these excesses – sometimes to the point where hardcore gamers cut class to play. In such cases, gaming habits and caffeine consumption seem to be crossing over into the realm of compulsion and addiction, which has increasingly become a cause for concern.

There is some debate regarding the validity of the claim set forth by psychologists who assert that gaming can indeed become pathological. It has also been found that pathological gaming is sometimes a symptom of another underlying condition such as depression or OCD. Not all avid game players are game addicts; many students play, but only a fraction will become addicted. So how does one draw the line between the two? No formal diagnosis for video game addiction currently exists and professionals say that spotting such addiction is particularly difficult because 80% of college students - mostly boys – play, according to research by developmental psychologist Douglas Gentile at the Iowa State University. The American Psychiatric Association has not yet reached any conclusions as to

whether gaming addictions are a real phenomenon, though further research on the subject has been commissioned.

Just how prevalent are gaming addictions among youth? A Harris Interactive poll released in February states that nearly ten percent of youth gamers could be classified as pathologically or clinically addicted to playing video games. Furthermore, nearly half of students polled reported that video games distracted them from studying either some or a lot of the time. Perhaps what is more disturbing is that just over thirty percent revealed that they play in class. This stands as a testament of the extent to which the game playing can integrate itself into all aspects of a student's everyday life. Problems arise

Most individuals do not even recognize their enthusiastic playing has transformed into compulsions.

because most individuals do not even recognize their enthusiastic playing has transformed into compulsions. Instead, many will fall into a pattern of desperately trying to cut back on their gaming, and lying about it when they cannot stop. These are some of the signs of parallels that can be drawn between compulsive gaming and substance abuse.

Caffeine consumption is also wrought with its share of addictive potential. According to the National Geographic Society, caffeine is considered to be the world's most popular psychoactive drug. A physical dependence on caffeine

can be developed from drinking as little as half a cup per day. Students who are hoping to eliminate their morning fatigue by drinking coffee are only perpetuating a cycle of dependence. By interpreting nightly withdrawal symptoms as exhaustion, students are going to sleep at the height of their withdrawal and waking up only to consume more caffeine. The caffeine then serves to restore normal functioning instead of increasing attentiveness. There are also many college students who are accustomed to night time caffeine jolts in the interest of working on a paper or studying for an exam. What these students do not realize is that by accelerating their heart rates and blood pressure, the caffeine induces anxiety rather than alertness.

With the abundance of technological resources that are available to gamers, especially savvy college students, the temptation can be difficult to overcome for those who are particularly vulnerable. As such, health officials are making it their duty to raise awareness among students about “safe” game playing. Coffee shops and “energy drinks” are also more pervasive than ever, making it difficult to resist those caffeine cravings. Campuses are therefore taking students’ excessive gaming behaviour and caffeine consumption very seriously in an effort to properly address their potential for addictions.

Student Sports Wagering Needs to Be Taken Seriously

Alissa Sklar, Ph.D.

International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

When former NBA basketball referee Tim Donaghy pled guilty to two felony charges related to sports wagering in August, the 13-year NBA veteran unwittingly refocused concern on the darker side of professional sports. Donaghy is reported to have had a gambling problem, placing bets on NBA games as far back as 2003, and was allegedly approached by mob contacts in December 2006 to fix games for them, in order to wipe out his own mounting losses and debts.

this list from the NCAA website, so that school officials, working with their IT departments, can monitor the use and abuse of sports wagering, and all of these related activities on their campuses.

The NCAA also brought together sports wagering experts from all over the country for a Sports Wagering Experts Summit in August 2007, including representatives from the FBI, local law enforcement, the National Football League and members of the Nevada gaming industry. They discussed educational

During the last school year, the University of Pittsburgh athletics department brought in former gambling-ring leader Michael Franzese to speak to the student-athletes about the dangers and pitfalls of organized gambling, and football student-athletes met with a Senior Resident Agent with the FBI on a similar topic. Finally, an e-mail flyer explaining the prohibitions surrounding bracket pools is distributed to all student-athletes and staff in the days leading up to the March Madness basketball finals season.

The NCAA supports efforts to spread the message about the dangers of problem gambling.

While the 40-year-old Donaghy faces up to 25 years in prison in addition to substantial monetary fines when he is sentenced Nov. 9, countless other professional, college and amateur athletes and fans continue to grapple with the continuing problem of sports betting. Another gambling scandal occurring simultaneously in the tennis world this August, involving 4th ranked Russian player Nikolay Davydenko and a British online gambling company, Betfair, shows that no sport is immune to these concerns.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association has taken a strong stance on this topic, with efforts aimed at prevention and awareness in a college sports. Their Sports Wagering Task Force has compiled a list of major online sports wagering websites, sports wagering information, handicapping web sites, fantasy sports web sites and sports pool websites. Athletics departments on school campuses can get access to

initiatives on how to help curb sports wagering at US colleges and universities, as well as methods for more effectively investigating cases.

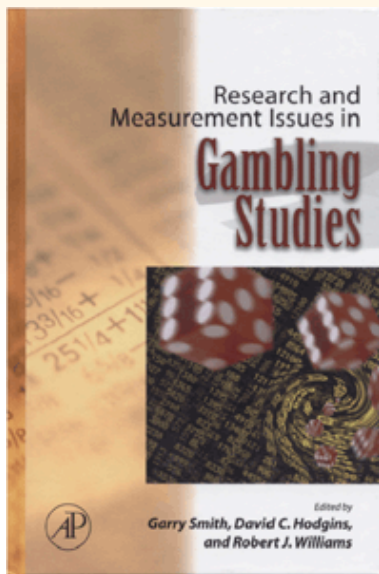
The NCAA also promotes and supports the efforts of their member schools to spread the message about the dangers of problem gambling. One such example is the University of Pittsburgh, which has integrated a number of prevention and awareness initiatives on this subject. At the beginning of each semester, sports team members and coaching staff review the NCAA rules related to gambling. The student athlete handbook also contains a section on sports wagering activities, and each student-athlete has to review and sign a NCAA form on sports wagering, dealing with their intention to abstain from prohibited gambling activities. New staff are required to review rules on gambling activities, and sign an equivalent form. In addition, there are post-season affidavit meetings.

In Canada, there is no equivalent set of formal initiatives at the national level. Neither the Canadian Colleges

Athletic Association, nor the Canadian Interuniversity Sports association, had any specific program or awareness campaign about sports wagering. The CIS does not even address the issue in their Codes of Conduct, and the executive directors of both associations had no knowledge or sports wagering being a big problem on Canadian college campuses.

It's quite likely this lack of formal recognition of sports wagering on campus can be linked to an absence of formal betting off-campus. The casinos and bookies laying bets on American college games may lead to increased betting among the students themselves, and also lead to more public awareness of how this problem can spiral out of control. But even without formal off-campus betting, research shows that the prevalence of problem gambling on Canadian campuses requires some attention and concern.

Current Publications of Interest



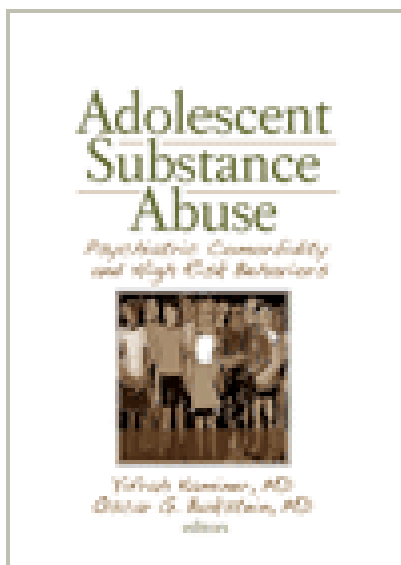
Smith, G., Hodgins, D. C., & Williams, R. J. (2007). Research and Measurement Issues in Gambling Studies. Burlington, MA: Academic Press.

Dozens of leading researchers from around the globe have come together to provide a comprehensive reference tool in the field of gambling studies. With a large focus on measurement techniques, this book offers valuable information to not only professionals and students in the field, but also to scholars and students at large who wish to hone their skills in developing effective research strategies and methods.

Chapter themes range from situational factors which affect gambling

behaviour, to the neurobiology of pathological gambling, to gambling on the Internet and the treatment of problem gambling. Drs. Jeffrey Derevensky and Rina Gupta, co-directors of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High Risk Behaviors, have a chapter on adolescent gambling, with a discussion of risk factors linked to adolescent gambling behaviour, as well as treatment and prevention issues.

This volume should prove an effective learning tool for researchers in the field, as well as for problem gambling counselors and clinicians world-wide. With the collaboration of so many leading scholars, this handbook is previewed to become a standard reference point in the field of gambling research.



Kaminer, Y., & Bukstein, O. G. (2007). Adolescent Substance Abuse: Psychiatric Comorbidity and High Risk Behaviors. Haworth Press, Inc.

The assessment and treatment of comorbid psychiatric disorders can be a critical step in successfully treating adolescents suffering from substance abuse. Dual diagnoses of adolescent substance use disorders and psychiatric disorders is often a difficult task; assessment and treatment can be complicated. Kaminer & Bukstein provide an effective learning tool for mental health professionals, students and educators, helping them to provide simultaneous treatment and services to youth.

The book comprehensively reviews different substance use and psychiatric disorders as well as other high risk behaviors. A discussion of integrated services and ethical, legal, and policy issues affecting this population follows. Topics addressing the issue of adolescents suffering from numerous psychiatric co-morbid disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, gambling behavior, suicidal behavior and ADHD are discussed at length. Adolescent Substance Abuse: Psychiatric Comorbidity and High Risk Behaviors helps mental health professionals with the assessment, treatment and development of services for adolescents with substance use disorders, a significant contribution to the field.

Recent Publications and Presentations

Recent Publications

Ellenbogen, S., Jacobs, D., Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., & Paskus, T. (in press). Gambling behaviour among college athletes. *Journal of Applied Sports Psychology*.

Dickson, L., Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (in press). Youth gambling problems: An examination of risk and protective factors. *International Gambling Studies*.

Derevensky, J., (in press). Youth gambling: A Canadian perspective. In J. F. Cosgrave T. R. Klassen (Eds.) *Gambling in 21st century Canada: Citizens, consumers and the state*. Toronto: McGill-Queen's Press.

Derevensky, J. (in press). Gambling. In W. A. Darity (Ed.). *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 2nd edition. London, U.K.: Elsevier.

Derevensky, J. (in press). Youth gambling problems: The hidden addiction. In Y. Kaminer & O. G. Buckstein (Eds.). *Adolescent substance abuse: Psychiatric comorbidity and high risk behaviors*. New York: Haworth Press.

Derevensky, J., & Gupta, R. (2007). Adolescent gambling: Current knowledge, myths, assessment strategies and public policy implications. In G. Smith, D. Hodgins, & R. Williams (Eds.)

Research and measurement issues in gambling. New York: Elsevier, Inc., 437-463.

Derevensky, J., Pratt, L., Haroon, K., & Gupta, R. (2007). The relationship between gambling problems and impulsivity among adolescents: Some preliminary data and thoughts. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*, 1(3), 165-172.

Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., & Baboushkin, H. (2007). Underlying cognitions in children's gambling behavior: Can they be modified? *International Gambling Studies*, 7(3), 359-376.

Derevensky, J., Sklar, A., Gupta, R., Messerlian, C., Laroche, M., & Mansour, S. (2007). The effects of gambling advertisements on child and adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviors (Les effets de la publicité sur les attitudes et les comportements de jeu des enfants et des adolescents). *Fonds de recherche en santé du Québec (FRSQ)*, Québec, 68 pp.

Recent Presentations

Derevensky, J. (2007). Worldwide trends in youth problem gambling. Invited keynote address presented at the Inaugural National Conference on Problem Gambling, Singapore, July.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Research based prevention strategies for youth: What works? What doesn't work? Invited paper presented at the Inaugural National Conference on Problem Gambling, Singapore, July.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Designing a research based prevention program for youth gambling problems. Invited paper presented at the Inaugural National Conference on Problem Gambling, Singapore, July.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Identification and treatment strategies for youth with gambling problems. Invited paper presented at the Inaugural National Conference on Problem Gambling, Singapore, July.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Life in the fast lane - The link between problem gambling and instant gratification. Invited address presented at the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling 13th annual conference, Lake Buena Vista, Florida, May.

Derevensky, J. (2007). Strategic planning: A youth perspective. Round Table discussion presented at the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling 13th annual conference, Lake Buena Vista, Florida, May.

Durand Jacobs Award: Call for Papers

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University is pleased to offer the 2007-2008 **Durand Jacobs Award** to the graduate student who submits an outstanding paper related to the psychology of addictive behaviors. This annual award is dedicated to Dr. Durand Jacobs' lifelong efforts

to help mentor students. Published and/or publishable papers will be considered by the selection committee, comprised of an international panel of experts in the field. The recipient will receive an award plaque and their work will be featured in the Youth Gambling International Newsletter. Graduate students from all related

disciplines are encouraged to submit their papers by Feb 28th, 2008.

Please submit all entries electronically to alissa.sklar@mcgill.ca. If you have any questions, please direct them to Dr. Alissa Sklar by email, or telephone: (514) 398-2470.

News from the Centre ...

Visiting researcher

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behavior has been pleased to host Belle Gavriel-Fried, a visiting researcher from the Bob-Shappel School of Social Work at Tel Aviv University in Israel. Ms. Gavriel-Fried, a Ph.D. student, spent the month of September with us in order to expand her knowledge about adolescent gambling, a relatively new phenomenon in Israel. She is in the process of defending her dissertation entitled "Adolescent gambling and the correlation between temperament, source of coherence and exposure to advertising."

FQRSC Advertising project completed

With the submission of our final report to the FQRSC in mid-September, our two-phase project on gambling advertising and youth is officially complete. Entitled "The effects of gambling advertisements on child and adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviors," the project involved focus groups with 143 teens between 12 and 19 years on the subject of gambling ads, which was used to develop a questionnaire completed by 1,147 high school students in Quebec and Ontario. The findings, in general, suggest that gambling advertisements likely constitute one important factor in determining youth participation in gambling activities. Details will be posted on the Centre's website.

Our Newest Member

Aidan James was born on July 16th 2007 to the Centre's co-director, Dr. Rina Gupta and Richard Louie. He weighed in at 7 pounds, 4 ounces. Aidan just celebrated his second month and is keeping mom very, very busy.



Upcoming Events

[International Responsible Gaming Organisation \(IRGO\) Conference](#)

October 18-19, 2007 - Stockholm, Sweden

[8th Annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction](#)

November 11 – 13, 2007

Las Vegas, Nevada

[National Association for Gambling Studies Conference 2007](#)

November 14 - 16, 2007

Cairns, Queensland, Australia

[4th International Conference on Gaming Industry and Public Welfare](#)

December 1 - 3, 2007 - Shanghai and Macao, China

[2008 International Gambling Conference](#)

February 21 - 23, 2008 - Auckland, New Zealand

[Tenth Annual Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling Statewide Conference](#)

March 13 - 14, 2008 - Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA

[Responsible Gambling Council Discovery 2008 Conference](#)

April 13 - 16, 2008 - Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

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