



Good Luck Rina Gupta!!

In 1992, a little over 23 years ago, a bright-eyed eager student walked into my office searching for a thesis advisor and topic. Having attained an undergraduate degree in Psychology from McGill, she was interested in both clinical and research issues in the area of child and adolescent psychology. Little did I know that this would also be a turning point in my academic career and a shift away from some of my previous research. Dr. Rina Gupta's Master's thesis was our first attempt to better understand the relationship between video-game playing and gambling among children. Her award winning thesis led to multiple studies, conference presentations and research papers. In 1997, after completing her Ph.D. testing Durand Jacobs' General Theory of Addictions (another award winning dissertation), we began work to create the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill. The Centre continues to this day to be focused on research, training, treatment, prevention and policy issues. Rina was the co-creator and co-director of the Centre for the 20 years, heading many innovative projects and sharing in its many accomplishments. During that time, Rina was instrumental in testifying before numerous national and international government commissions, had a significant number of peer-reviewed publications, was keynote speaker and presenter at over a hundred conferences, co-edited a book, had multiple book chapters, was on several editorial boards, advised graduate and post-doctoral students, was instrumental in providing workshops internationally, and spearheaded multiple award-winning prevention programs. Considered an international expert in the field of gambling studies, Rina was the recipient of numerous awards. While government funding cutbacks curtailed our operations, Rina's drive and enthusiasm always helped maintain our productivity and commitment.

Rina has recently left her full-time position at the Centre to assume the role of Associate Director of the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre at Queens University, in Kingston, Ontario. She will continue to hold an Adjunct position within our Centre and we hope that she continues her work in the field of gambling studies in addition to her clinical work at Queens University. On behalf of all our staff, past and current students, the many individuals who benefited from her workshops and talks, we wish Rina the best of luck in her new professional home. Many of the successes of the Centre can be directly attributed to her vast knowledge, enthusiasm, commitment, and interpersonal skills. In Rina's absence, Dr. Jeff Derevensky has assumed the Directorship of the Centre.

Best of luck Rina!
Jeff Derevensky and the Centre team

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Lottery Trends - How Does 'Jackpot Fatigue' Affect State Cooffers?

Jessica McBride, Ph.D.

When it comes to luring individuals to purchase lottery draw tickets it appears size does matter. A number of states in the U.S. are reporting record lows of sales of multi-state lottery games such as Powerball and Mega Millions. Coined "jackpot fatigue", this is a trend in which it takes increasingly bigger jackpots to draw in casual players who only buy tickets when a prize is huge. Whereas \$100 million, or even \$300 million, used to be seen as a massive prize, those numbers now need to be nearer to \$600 million. The irony is that it takes longer to get to those big jackpots because fewer people are playing the lottery. According to lottery industry magazine *La Fleur's*, there has not been a Powerball jackpot above \$257 million in nearly a year; in the 15 months prior to February 2014 there were five jackpots of at least \$400 million, including one of \$600 million in the spring of 2013.

In New Jersey sales of Mega Millions and Powerball games were down 30% through the end of March; if this trend continues sales could drop by \$130 million for the upcoming fiscal year. In Maryland, sales of Powerball were down 15% from a year ago, as were sales of Mega Millions, Racetrax, and Keno. Similarly, in Pennsylvania, Powerball and Mega Millions ticket sales were down about \$55 million, and lottery revenues overall are down nearly \$28 million. Kentucky Lottery executive vice president Howard Kline reported that Powerball sales in Kentucky dropped \$25.4 million in the past fiscal year.

Jackpot fatigue appears to be a national phenomenon, primarily with respect to the big multi-state games. Overall, Powerball lottery ticket sales fell by nearly 40% in the second half of 2014 compared with the same period a year earlier in the 44 states, plus the District of Columbia, which participate in the sweepstakes.

This presents a huge problem as states have grown to rely on lottery revenue to augment their budget. In many states, lottery revenues exceed corporate income taxes, and governments are becoming dependent on the lotteries to fund services in lieu of raising taxes. For example, New Jersey's lottery is the state's fourth-largest revenue producer, behind income tax, sales tax, and corporate taxes. New Jersey Assembly Budget Committee Chairman Gary Schaer (D) has stated that there are programs run by the state that count on lottery revenue and there can be ramifications when those revenue sources do not meet expectations. Since its inception in 1970, the New Jersey lottery has distributed \$22 billion to colleges, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, the School Nutrition Program, the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf, and other organisations and programs. In the entire U.S., total transfers to state governments from lotteries for 2014 were \$19.9 billion.

The trouble with relying on lotteries to fund state programs is that lottery income is not stable. Overall, lotteries in 21 states and DC transferred less money in the fiscal year of 2014 than in the previous year. State governments have budget projections based on lottery sales, and when these fall short, so does the funding for programs. There are real economic and social costs of state reliance on lotteries to generate public revenue. The shortfalls must be found somewhere else. And states are turning to instant-win, or scratch, lottery games to make up the difference.

In contrast to jackpot fatigue, in New Jersey, sales of in-state games such as scratch tickets are up 10%. In Maryland, Gina T. Smith, the acting director of the Lottery and Gaming Control Agency, has been publicising rising sales of instant tickets, sales of which are up more than \$60 million, or 14%, in this fiscal year over the previous year. Maryland

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is broadening its offering of instant tickets, which account for 30.4% of lottery sales; for example, the state launches an average of 4 new scratch cards a month. In Pennsylvania the latest available figures show the Pennsylvania Lottery is also experiencing record sales of instant-win games, with \$1.28 billion in scratch-off tickets sold in 2014, compared to \$1.2 billion a year earlier. In Kentucky, instant games performed strongly, with sales of \$87.5 million – or \$3.5 million more than the same period last fiscal year and \$2.8 million more than called for in the annual budget.

The difficulty with relying on lottery sales to fund state programs lies with the consumers of gambling games. According to a report by National Public Radio, Cornell University economics and management professor David Just posits that lottery gamblers believe there will be a return on their investment. He and his colleagues analysed lottery data from 39 states and found that many people, especially those with less education, simply did not understand how terrible their chances of winning were. Just's research suggested that individuals – particularly those with low socioeconomic status – treated the lottery as an investment opportunity. He referred to it as a "Hail Mary pass" to try and win big. Just found a correlation between living near the poverty line, particularly for individuals on different forms of welfare, and lottery play. It has been argued that for those with low socioeconomic status, the lottery is one of the only legal ways to become rich. The concern is that governments are not offering real hope for economic improvement, but instead are selling an illusion as a way of getting out of poverty. While lottery advertising often touts that profits are going to education, a viable way to raise socioeconomic status, often lottery revenue is not added to these budgets, but rather replaces them (also known as "supplanting"). In addition, during tight budget years, states may use lottery revenue as an "emergency fund." Money normally directed toward advertised programs may be diverted into the general fund to balance the

state budget. Once there, it is impossible to track how specific general-fund dollars are spent. That revenue might have gone to schools and public-welfare programs as promised, or it might have gone to prisons.

Growing dependence on lottery revenue, especially instant-win tickets, for governments may be problematic. The risks for problem gambling increase with games that offer immediate, rather than delayed, payout rates. Governments are advertising, promoting, and trying to find ways to encourage their citizens to participate in a potentially harmful activity. Promisingly, not all states are turning to gambling revenue to improve financial woes. In Alabama, a state which currently has no lottery, Governor Robert Bentley (R) is going against the grain and proposing raising taxes over relying on gambling revenue as a way to increase the state's coffers. His \$500 million tax plan includes eliminating corporate tax breaks and imposing higher levies on tobacco, rental cars, and car registration tags. This is in opposition to Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh who is proposing bills to allow casino games at racetracks and to introduce a state lottery as a way to increase revenue.

However, Alabama appears to be in the minority and using lottery revenue to boost state budgets will continue to be a viable way of funding programs. This can be done in a positive way if some key principles are adhered to. Primarily, lottery funding should not be used to support essential, ongoing programs, which should be funded from the general revenues of government. The main recipients of lottery funding should be charitable, non-profit organizations that benefit the community or the general public directly. In this way, individuals could benefit from lottery revenue without sacrificing viable means of improving their lot – the dream of "making it big" would not have to come at the expense of legitimately, if not making it big, at least making it better.

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Centre Fundraising Campaign in Full Swing

The Centre's ongoing fundraising campaign continues to grow with the support of corporate and private sponsors. Due to restricted government infrastructure funding, we have initiated a fundraising campaign to help us maintain our ability to develop and deploy empirically-based prevention and harm-minimization programs. The Centre is housed on McGill University's main campus in the heart of Montreal, Canada. McGill University is a public university and recognized charitable organization.

Donations can be made to:

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors
McGill University
3724 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1Y2

Official letters of contributions and tax receipts will be forwarded

2015 Durand Jacobs Award

The recipient of the 2015 Durand Jacobs Award is Amanda Levine for her paper titled “Gender-Specific predictors of retention and opioid abstinence during methadone maintenance treatment.” The Durand Jacobs Award recognizes outstanding work related to the psychology of addictive behaviors, and is dedicated to the late Dr. Durand Jacobs' lifelong efforts to help mentor students.

Amanda Levine is in the final year of her Ph.D. in Adult Clinical Psychology at the University of Windsor. She is currently on internship at the London Health Sciences Centre, where she works with clients experiencing severe mental illness, which is often comorbid with substance abuse. Amanda has co-coordinated a randomized control trial testing the effectiveness of a combined cognitive behavioural and motivational interviewing treatment protocol for problem gambling under the guidance of Dr. David Ledgerwood, and has presented her research on treatment of substance use dependence at international conferences. Her dissertation, which was successfully defended in May 2015, examined control and violence at the onset of new dating relationships.

Congratulations Amanda!



Abstract

Aims

Retention in methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) for 1 year is associated with positive outcomes including opioid abstinence, however, most studies have not investigated gender differences. We hypothesized that predictors of retention and opioid abstinence would differ between men and women, and aimed to determine which factors best predict retention and abstinence for each gender.

Methods

Data were available for 290 patients (173 M, 117 F) admitted to outpatient MMT. Regression analyses, stratified by gender, were conducted to identify unique predictors of MMT retention (< 1 vs. > 1 year) and opioid abstinence rate (proportion of opioid-free urine samples up to 1 year retention).

Results

Gender did not significantly predict treatment retention (mean = 231 days, 39% retained > 1 year) or opioid abstinence (49% overall), but predictors of those outcome variables varied depending on participant gender. For males, significant predictors of > 1-year retention were urine samples negative for opioids (OR = 4.00) and cannabinoids (OR = 9.26), and no history of sexual victimization (OR = 3.03). The only significant predictor of higher opioid abstinence rate was first-month opioid-free urine samples.

Conclusions

These findings indicate that the predictors of MMT retention and opioid abstinence vary depending on gender. Future studies on MMT outcomes should examine each gender separately, and consider unique pathways by which females and males adhere to, and benefit from MMT.

News Briefs...

Underage Gambling in Ireland

A new report, *Playing Social Roulette: The Impact of Gambling on Individuals and Society in Ireland*, released by the University College Dublin (UCD) has found that children as young as nine are gambling in Ireland. Additionally, there is evidence that teen gambling rates are significantly higher than adult rates. Premier Lotteries, the national lottery provider, emphasized that lottery rules for all games clearly state that players must be over 18 years of age and prizes cannot be paid to a minor. Additionally, retailers, as part of their Retailer Agreement, are required to sign a Responsible Play Declaration which outlines these regulations.

Online Gambling Firm 888 Purchases Bwin

The online casino and poker firm 888 has purchased rival Bwin.party Digital Entertainment in a cash and stock deal worth almost \$1.4 billion. Buying Bwin.party will allow 888 to increase its scale in a market increasingly challenged by regulation and higher taxation. The purchase is expected to boost 888's earnings in the first year after completion. Additionally, through this acquisition, an annual cost savings of at least \$70 million is forecasted to be reached by the end of the 2018 financial year. The takeover of Bwin.party is part of a series of acquisitions and mergers in the online gaming industry.

Post Doctoral Position Available

An immediate opening for a post-doctoral fellow focused upon studying youth risk-taking behaviors is available. A doctorate degree in developmental, clinical, school/applied, social, experimental or health psychology, addictions research, or related field is required. Fluency in French is an asset. An understanding of addictions is beneficial but not required. The candidate must have skills in statistical analyses and research methodology, and experience in using SPSS and/or SAS for data analyses. The successful candidate should be highly motivated, have strong library research skills, experience in academic writing, strong analytic skills, and be able to conduct field-based research projects independently. We are searching for someone who is independent, yet who enjoys working in a collaborative environment. We are offering either a one-year or two-year position. Salary is commensurate with other post-doctoral positions. The successful candidate will work in the area of youth risk-taking behaviors and will become an active member of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors. He/she will be responsible to the director of the centre and will work closely with the research faculty, other post-doctoral candidates and graduate students. Responsibilities will include developing and conducting field-based research studies, analysis of data, manuscript writing, assistance with grant writing, and literature searches. The candidate will also contribute toward the development, production, and distribution of a quarterly publication. Opportunity to present at national and international conferences is offered and the candidate is expected to publish in peer reviewed journals.

Please e-mail or mail letter of application, curriculum vitae and three reference letters to:

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Centre News...

Congratulations to...



Jessica McBride on completing her Ph.D. entitled "Gambling and video game playing among youth." And in further great news, Dr. McBride's Ph.D. dissertation has been awarded the 2015 Durand Jacobs Doctoral Dissertation Award by the National Council on Problem Gambling. Congratulations Jessica!

Other Great Award News...



Congratulations to Loredana Marchica on receiving the 2016-2016 Heather Munroe-Blum Fellowship in Public Policy. This award recognizes outstanding graduate students pursuing research related to public policy. Loredana's research proposal aims to develop and implement personalized normative feedback as a gambling prevention tool.

Upcoming Events...

- **European Lotteries Responsible Gaming Seminar**
September 16-18, 2015
Helsinki, Finland
- **NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction**
September 27-29, 2015
Las Vegas, Nevada
- **NYCPG Conference on Problem Gambling**
November 4-5, 2015
Albany, New York
- **CCSA / Mise sur toi: Issues of Substance Conference**
November 16-18, 2015
Montreal, Quebec
- **NAGS Conference: More than Just a Game**
November 25-27, 2015
Adelaide, Australia

The Annual Holiday Campaign

The Holiday season is approaching quickly, and once again the widely endorsed annual Holiday Campaign is underway. The annual Holiday Campaign, a collaborative initiative of the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University and the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG), encourages lottery corporations in North America and around the world to share the message that when gifting lottery tickets, it is important to keep the recipient's age in mind. Momentum and participation in this NASPL endorsed Holiday Campaign is growing steadily and participation is free.

Studies show a growing number of high school students reportedly receive one or more lottery tickets or scratch cards as gifts. Additionally, research shows that the majority of adolescents gamble at least occasionally, and that lottery products may be a gateway to problem gambling. Youth gambling has been shown to be linked to other risk-taking and addictive behaviors such as smoking, drinking and drug use.

Last year, 37 lottery organizations world wide formally participated in this initiative. We are continuing to expand our collaborative efforts to promote responsible gambling. This year, we have produced industry-specific materials which will help lottery corporations spread the message including a playcenter insert. The playcenter insert has been designed to publicize this initiative and lottery corporations are encouraged to use it in their retail locations. The insert was designed to facilitate rapid and easy lottery corporation customization. A space is provided on the insert enabling lotteries to add their corporate logo prior to printing. We also encourage lottery corporations to develop their own materials and responsible gambling initiatives based on the Holiday Campaign theme.

Recent publications and presentations

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Derevensky, J. & Gainsbury, S. (in press). Social casino gaming and adolescents: Should we be concerned and is regulation in sight? *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*.

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BOOK CHAPTERS

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Yau, Y., Derevensky, J. & Potenza, M. (in press). Pathological preoccupation with the Internet. In Y. Kaminer (Ed.), *Youth substance abuse and co-occurring disorders*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Kim, A., Wohl, M., Derevensky, J., Hollingshead, S., Salmon, M. & Gupta, R. (2015). *Social casino games: The good and the bad*. Poster presented at the Concordia symposium on problem gambling, Montreal, June.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Derevensky, J. & Marchica, L. (2015). *Fantasy sports wagering: What do we know, should we be concerned and does it matter?* Presented at the 29th National Conference on Problem Gambling, Baltimore, July.

Derevensky, J. (2015). *Social casino gambling: Implications for youth*. Invited symposium panelist. Canadian Gaming Summit, Windsor, Ontario, June.

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