Trends, Trials, Trajectories & Traction: The Direction of U.S. Youth Problem Gambling Prevention

Julie Hynes, Director of Responsible Gambling, Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling

TRENDS
“Trends, like horses, are easier to ride in the direction they are going.” - John Naisbitt

In the early 2000s, a device called the “pocket cam” shot to popularity in the TV poker world by enabling TV viewers to see players’ face-down cards (Holden, 2007). This insider view helped to skyrocket ratings for programs such as “World Series of Poker,” “World Poker Tour,” and “Celebrity Poker Showdown.” In 2003, a young college graduate with an iconic name, Chris Moneymaker, barged onto the scene and became many a teenager’s career aspiration. It was then that a cottage industry of local Texas Hold’em tournaments arose, card rooms popped up, and gray areas between legal and illegal gambling became spotlighted—particularly as age restrictions for games were few and far between.

In response to gambling trends and data showing increasing rates of youth gambling and problem gambling behavior from the 1980s to 1990s (Jacobs, 2000), a host of problem gambling awareness and prevention efforts arose quickly. Dickson, Derevensky, and Gupta (2002) first compiled research in a prevention framework that demonstrated links between research in the field of problem gambling with well-researched risk and protective factors for other problem behaviors (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992).

TRIALS
Since the early 2000s, there have been a host of studies also demonstrating risk and protective factors for youth problem gambling behavior, some of which were outlined in Williams, West & Simpson (2012); however, problem gambling to date is still not addressed in any official capacity as a “problem behavior” in this Risk and Protective Factor Framework. The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration itself, which is the “home” for Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Risk and Protective Factor Framework, dedicates no resources to problem gambling. The other primary source of public health funding in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, also offers no resources (funding or otherwise) to address problem gambling.

Overall, there are still zero federal dollars in the United States dedicated to problem gambling services, and most resources are industry-based and provided at the state level. The most recent survey of problem gambling services in the United States (Marotta et al., 2017) revealed that the total funds across states for problem gambling awareness and prevention efforts was $17.45 million, as contrasted with $577 million dedicated for substance abuse prevention services.

In this Issue

- Holiday Campaign .................5
- 2019 Durand Jacobs Award ..........6
- News Briefs ..........................7
- Centre News .........................8
- Recent Publications ...............9
- Recent Presentations .............10
- Upcoming Events ..................11

Spending on Substance Use vs. Problem Gambling Prevention Services in the U.S. (Marotta et al., 2017)

Notwithstanding funding challenges, problem gambling prevention programs have generally intended to address risk and protective factors because of the apparent obvious similarities between problem gambling and other problem behaviors. These efforts have tended to be modeled in alignment with SAMSHA’s Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) six strategies, which are information dissemination, prevention education, environmental/policy approach, community-based process, and identification and referral (Marotta & Hynes, 2003; National Council on Problem Gambling Prevention Committee, 2017; Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, 2017). The CSAP strategies are very much in alignment with recommendations specific to problem gambling prevention as outlined in Messerlain, Derevensky & Gupta (2005).

TRAJECTORIES
Spanning over a decade since poker’s general decline in youth popularity, problem gambling prevention and awareness efforts have grown in a variety of areas, as has the field overall. In 2006, individual members of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) met in an exploratory capacity to develop a prevention committee, and the committee has grown from about a handful of members to over 30 members across the United States and Canada. In 2015, the “Prevention of Gambling Disorders: A Common Understanding” developed by the National Council on Problem Gambling Prevention Committee (2015) aimed to provide clarity to roles and responsibilities of those in the problem gambling field by articulating the comprehensive nature of effective prevention strategies in using the public health approach and SAMHSA models.

A survey conducted by members of the NCPG Prevention Committee revealed a non-exhaustive list of 17 prevention programs as of 2017 being conducted within the United States (Buzzelli, Winters, & Poggenburg, 2017) aligned with risk and protective factors. One program, the “Stacked Deck” curriculum for grades 9-12 (Williams, Wood & Currie, 2010), represented the sole problem gambling prevention program in the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) National Registry of Effective Programs & Practices (NREPP), although the NREPP itself was deprecated as of early 2018 (SAMHSA, 2018).

TRACTION
As the definitions between “gaming” and “gambling” blur beyond what have been traditionally known in the casino industry, the author contends that problem gambling prevention efforts should be addressing problematic video gaming in earnest. Video games often have gambling-like features within them (e.g., an in-game casino in “Grand Theft Auto V,” a lottery in “The Sims 4”), and there are real opportunities to gamble using features within video games (e.g., skins, or in-game virtual decorative weapons/materials) in a variety of games that convey the definition of gambling in prize, chance, and consideration (Rose, 2006). The indicators for video gaming disorder and gambling disorder clearly overlap (Petry et al., 2014), and there is increasing evidence in social casino gaming relating to increased gambling behavior in youth and later gambling problems (Gainsbury et al., 2014, 2016; King, Delfabbro & Griffiths, 2010). The U.K. Gaming Commission reported that 31% of 11-16-year-olds have paid or used in-game items to open loot boxes and 3% had bet with in-game items (U.K. Gaming Commission, 2018), and the amount of money spent on loot boxes by those playing video games has been linked to severity of gambling problems (Zendle & Cairns, 2018).

Loot box opening in Overwatch video game (source: https://gfycat.com/gifs/detail/zealousglossygazelle)
While youth gambling is seen by parents as not as harmful of an issue and a low priority to address compared with many other behaviors (Campbell, Derevensky, Meerkamper & Cutajar, 2011), concerns about youth video gaming are inarguably on the rise and the 2019 official classification of video gaming disorder in the 11th edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11, World Health Organization) gives additional credence to the need to address video gaming. There is much to be gained in leveraging public interest in problematic video gaming with youth problem gambling prevention efforts. Initiatives such as those developed in Ohio (https://changethegameohio.org/), Oregon (www.preventionlane.org/gaming), and Ontario, Canada (https://learn.problemgambling.ca/) use available data to develop material aligned with evidence-informed problem gambling prevention practices.

The author argues that problem gambling prevention specialists, due to their unique expertise in a field aligned so closely to problematic video gaming, can and ought to advocate for and seek resources to address video gaming disorder and problem gambling together. We are no longer in a world of Texas Hold’em, where the pocket cam clearly shows us a set of cards on a gambling table. We are now in a blurry convergence that requires prevention specialists to thoughtfully and diligently work with new trends and evidence, make the connections, and work together to advocate vigilantly for services to promote health and mitigate harm.

Julie Hynes, MA, CPS, is the Director of Responsible Gambling with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling. Hynes’ experience in problem gambling prevention began in 2002, and extends regionally and nationally in prevention programming, research projects, advocacy and public policy, team building, training and technical assistance, and cross-sector collaboration. Her immediate past roles were leading a problem gambling prevention program in Oregon and faculty with the University of Oregon. She is a past recipient of the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) Wuelfing Prevention Award, and a current member of the NCPG Board of Directors.

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The Annual Holiday Campaign

While the Holiday season is months away, preparations for the widely endorsed annual Holiday Lottery Campaign are already underway. This annual 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 Lottery 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.

In 2018, all American and Canadian lotteries participated in the campaign as well as numerous international lotteries. For the first time in 2018, non-lottery organizations were also invited to participate in the campaign. For a complete list of the 2018 participants, visit www.youthgambling.com. We are continuing to expand our collaborative efforts to promote responsible gambling. This year, we will once again produce industry-specific materials that 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.

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.
2019 Durand Jacobs Award

The recipient of the 2019 Durand Jacobs Award is Ivy-Lee Kehayes for her paper titled “Drinking motives and drinking behaviours in romantic couples: A longitudinal actor-partner interdependence model.” 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.

Ivy-Lee graduated with a Bachelor of Science, First-Class Honours in Psychology from Dalhousie University and is now pursuing her PhD in Clinical Psychology at Dalhousie University. Ivy-Lee is currently in her fifth year of the combined MSc/PhD program. Her dissertation is entitled, “Social influences, drinking motivations and alcohol outcomes in dyads.” Ivy-Lee’s research focuses on how social relationships, specifically friendships and romantic partnerships, influence individuals to drink alcohol, and tests theoretical questions about how individual drinking motivations influence problem drinking in close others. Ivy-Lee’s research will have implications for assessing and treating individuals with alcohol problems. There is often a strong focus in psychological research on the individual and how they function in isolation. Ivy-Lee hopes her research will inform individuals of the ways in which their social connections are influencing their drinking habits, thus helping young adults make healthier choices for not only themselves but also for their partners and friends. Ivy-Lee’s future plans include working at an institution that will allow her to integrate research into her clinical practice as she believes this is incredibly important when trying to provide the best treatment possible.

Ivy-Lee has a strong research and publication record with several first-authored publications in high impact journals and has presented her research at numerous national and international conferences. Ivy-Lee has received several academic scholarships including multiple Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) scholarships as well as a Killam Pre-Doctoral Scholarship. She also received the D. O. Hebb Post-Graduate Prize, which is awarded to the student with the strongest potential as a psychological scientist, and the APNS Brian Dufton Memorial Prize for Outstanding Graduate Achievement in Psychology.

Congratulations Ivy-Lee!

Abstract
Excessive alcohol consumption is related to adverse physical and social consequences. Various models exist to explain why individuals drink despite negative consequences. Motivational models of drinking posit that individuals drink to achieve specific desired outcomes. Interpersonal factors also predict alcohol use through socialization processes. Romantic couples often engage in a “drinking partnership,” where partners reciprocally influence each other’s drinking. Though alcohol consumption partner effects have been studied, partner effects of drinking motives on an individual’s alcohol consumption have not been investigated in romantic couples. We investigated this topic. Romantic couples (N = 203) were assessed once weekly for four weeks using self-report questionnaires. Participants were on average 22.7 years old (SD = 5.5) and were in their relationship an average of 2.3 years (SD = 2.4). Actor-partner interdependence models using multilevel path-analysis with indistinguishable dyads were conducted, with each motive predicting drinking quantity consumed (i.e., the sum of drinks consumed per week divided by the number of drinking days) and frequency (i.e., the number of drinking days per week). There were significant actor effects for social and enhancement motives; moreover, changes in a partner’s enhancement and social motives predicted change in the individual’s drinking quantity during any given week, but only averaged partners’ enhancement motives predicted the individual’s drinking frequency. Coping-with-anxiety motives had significant actor effects when predicting averaged quantity and frequency; moreover, changes in partners’ coping-with-anxiety motives predicted changes in drinking quantity. Enhancement and social motives of the partner influenced the drinking quantity and frequency of the actor by way of influencing the actor’s enhancement and social motives. Studies support the importance of romantic partners in emerging adult drinking. Among other things, romantic partners are similar in their drinking behaviours. Our results suggest part of the similarity found in drinking behaviours in couples may be due to the motivations behind drinking behaviours. Partners may teach each other to drink to increase positive affect and social affiliation. As such, partners may teach each other not only how to drink, but why to drink, resulting in escalations of each others’ drinking behaviour. Intervention efforts targeting both members of a romantic dyad on their reasons for drinking should be tested for preventing escalations in either member’s drinking behaviour.
Apple Changes iOS Rules for Gambling Apps
In June, Apple announced new guidelines regarding the development of real money gambling apps distributed via the Apple App Store. With these new coding requirements, real money gambling, lotteries, charitable donations or digital commerce can no longer be conducted in HTML5 games distributed in apps. All new gambling apps must be developed natively within iOS rather than using HTML wrapper programs (often referred to as containerized programs). The standard for online app gambling game development has been HTML5 with many developers re-purposing website content and HTML5 products. This method of development has been less expensive and a faster way to deploy products into the Apple App Store. These changes will impact sportsbook apps as the majority are wrapped, containerized apps. For live casino products, these new guidelines will force significant changes to the app architecture. The revised guidelines are now enforced for new apps and existing ones must comply by September 3, 2019.

UK Slated to open first Gambling Addiction Clinic for Children
In September, England’s National Health Service (NHS) will open its first gambling addiction clinic for youth aged 13-25 years. Research in the U.K. has shown that roughly 450,000 youth regularly bet with around 55,000 aged 11-16 years classified as having a serious gambling problem. Last year, the Gambling Commission report revealed that 14% of 11-16 year olds had used their own money to gamble, spending around £16 per week. Comparatively, 13% had drunk alcohol, 4% had smoked tobacco, and 2% had taken illegal narcotics. Additionally, 5% had gambled online in past 12 months, with some admitting to using a parent or guardian’s credit card. Concerns about increasing links between gambling and stress, depression and mental health issues have prompted the NHS to initiate this new treatment program for youth. As part of a move to increase the reach of face-to face gambling treatment programs, the NHS will open 14 new clinics across the country. Previously, this type of gambling specialist treatment was only available in London.

e-Cigarette usage on the rise among U.S. Youth
According to the U.S. 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), there has been an alarming increase between 2017 and 2018 in e-cigarette usage (vaping) among high school and middle school youth. The NYTS, a nationally representative survey funded by the FDA and CDC, provides data on the latest trends on tobacco product usage among American youth. This latest data shows that during this timeframe, vaping increased nearly 80% among high school students and roughly 50% among middle schoolers. These statistics have prompted the FDA to propose new measures against flavored nicotine products which are thought to be impacting the increase in usage.

Warning Labels on Lottery Products Vetoed in Florida
In Florida, a controversial bill (Bill HB269) requiring all lottery products sold in the state to bear gambling addiction warnings such as “Warning: Lottery games may be addictive”, was approved by the legislature and subsequently vetoed by Governor Ron DeSantis. The legislature passed the bill because of concerns about gambling addiction. The Governor’s decision to veto the bill was based on numerous economic concerns including funding for higher education in the state. The roughly $6 billion per year generated by the Florida Lottery sales are used to fund education and scholarship programs. Governor DeSantis stated that, “as Governor, one of my key priorities is making higher education affordable for Florida families. This bill reduces the Lottery’s ability to continue to maximize revenues for education and negatively impacts Florida students.”

Additional reasons cited for not moving forward with this bill included the possibility that the warning messages could adversely affect the state’s participation in multi-state games (e.g., Powerball) and the extra verbiage might require physically larger tickets resulting in increased production costs. Larger tickets would also impact vending machine dispensers. In 2017, former Governor Rick Scott vetoed a similar bill.
Awards and Distinctions

Raschkowan Fellowship
Ph.D. students Loredana Marchica and Jeremie Richard and MA student Emilie Fletcher received Raschkowan Fellowships. This fellowship, established in 2015 by Norman Raschkowan, is intended to support outstanding graduate students entering or in McGill’s Faculty of Education who are pursuing research at the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors. The award can be used to facilitate participation in relevant conferences, help advance research and provides ongoing student support.

FRQSC Award
Jeremie Richard was awarded a multi-year (2019-2023) Fond de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC): Bourse sur le jeu responsable grant to fund his PhD research. Jeremie’s dissertation will evaluate the pathways involved in the development of problem gambling in adolescents and young adults while clarifying the role of problem video game playing in the risk for future problem gambling.

NCPG Master’s Thesis Award
In July, at the National Council on Problem Gambling conference in Denver, Jeremie Richard was awarded the Outstanding Master’s Thesis Award. This award recognizes recipients who have completed research studies having the potential to contribute to the scientific knowledge and clinical understanding of problem and pathological gambling behavior.

Conference Presentations
Over the last several months, Centre students and staff have presented recent research at numerous conferences:

May
Recent Publications

REFEREED PUBLICATIONS


June


July


**REFEREED PUBLICATIONS (CONT’D)**


**BOOK CHAPTERS**


**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**


Presentations (Cont’d.)

INVITED ADDRESSES


Derevensky, J. (2019). Gaming, gaming, gaming: The good, the bad, the ugly. Invited talk presented to the Montreal Junior Chamber of Commerce, Montreal, April.


UPCOMING INVITED ADDRESSES

Derevensky, J. (2019). Understanding youth gambling and gaming: The good, the bad, the ugly. Invited keynote address to be presented at the Annual New Jersey Statewide Conference on Disordered Gambling, Princeton, NJ, September.

Derevensky, J. (2019). Videogame and online addictions: Cause for concern. Invited presentation to be delivered to the Canadian Paediatric Society and Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry meeting on Lifelong Learning in Paediatrics, King City, Ontario, October.

Derevensky, J. (2019). Youth gambling and gaming: Should we really be concerned and do we need more regulation? Invited address to be presented at the inaugural Responsibility in Gaming Conference, Brussels, October.

Upcoming Events

- **North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries (NASPL) Annual Conference 2019**
  September 17-20, 2019
  Little Rock, Arkansas

- **NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction**
  October 13-14, 2019
  Las Vegas, Nevada

- **Global Gaming Expo (G2E)**
  October 15-17, 2019
  Las Vegas, Nevada

- **Responsibility in Gaming Conference**
  October 23-24, 2019
  Brussels, Belgium

- **National Association for Gambling Studies (NAGS) 29th Annual Conference**
  December 4-6, 2019
  Hobart, Tasmania

Enjoy The Rest of SUMMER!

YGI Newsletter

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**Design:** Ozalid Graphik

3724, McTavish Street,
Montréal, Québec,
Canada H3A 1Y2
Phone: 514-398-1391    Fax: 514-398-3401
ygi.educ@mcgill.ca
www.youthgambling.com