CollegeGambling.Org: Bridging Research and Practice

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Established as a nonprofit in 1996 to help individuals and families affected by gambling disorders by:

- Supporting the finest peer-reviewed, scientific research into pathological and youth gambling
- Encouraging practical applications of research findings to improve prevention, diagnostic, intervention and treatment strategies
- Advancing public education about gambling disorders and responsible gaming
Unprecedented Support

Since 1996, more than $22 million has been committed to the NCRG through contributions from commercial casinos and related companies for research on gambling disorders.
Firewalls: Preserving the Integrity of the Research
Ensuring the Integrity of NCRG-Funded Research

Since its founding in 1996, the NCRG has mandated stringent firewalls in a multistep process to separate the gaming industry’s contributions from the research it funds. This process, detailed in the diagram below, ensures the NCRG and its funders have no influence over which research projects receive funding, nor over the findings of the research that is funded. In this way, the NCRG serves as a model for other industries and institutions interested in learning how to safeguard the integrity of the research they fund.

- **Gaming Industry**
  - The NCRG’s funders – mostly gaming companies and suppliers – make contributions to the NCRG.

- **National Center for Responsible Gaming**
  - The NCRG keeps a portion of the funds to use for education and outreach initiatives, while the bulk of the funds are distributed to research projects as directed by the independent Scientific Advisory Board and peer-review panels.

- **Scientific Advisory Board and Peer-Review Panels**
  - Researchers interested in obtaining funding submit proposals through the NCRG’s competitive grant-making process. This process is overseen by the Scientific Advisory Board, an independent committee of some of the field’s leading experts. A peer-review panel is assembled to evaluate the proposals, based on criteria modeled after those used by the National Institutes of Health. The Scientific Advisory Board makes final funding decisions.

- **NCRG Centers of Excellence**
  - Using substantial research grants awarded by the NCRG, the NCRG Centers of Excellence in Gambling Research conduct dynamic, ongoing research programs on gambling disorders.

- **Individual Research Projects**
  - The NCRG also awards grants to researchers from around the world for individual research projects on gambling disorders.

- **Peer-Reviewed Scientific Journals**
  - After the research has been completed, the researcher usually submits a report on the project and its findings to an independent, peer-reviewed journal. NCRG-funded studies have resulted in the publication of more than 170 articles in such journals. The NCRG board and its funders learn about the research findings after they have been published.
Scientific Advisory Board

- Linda B. Cottler, Ph.D., MPH, chair
  - University of Florida
- Tammy Chung, Ph.D.
  - University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- Jeff Derevensky, Ph.D.
  - McGill University
- Mark S. Gold, M.D.
  - University of Florida
- Miriam Jorgensen, Ph.D.
  - University of Arizona
- Lisa Najavits, Ph.D.
  - Boston University
- David Takeuchi, Ph.D.
  - University of Washington
- Ken C. Winters, Ph.D.
  - University of Minnesota
Peer Review

- Independent study sections modeled after the NIH
- Reviewers must have:
  - Experience in grant review, preferably NIH
  - Expertise in subject matter of proposals
  - Distinguished publications record
- Strong Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policies
Grant Recipients

- Boston University
- Duke University
- Harvard Medical School
- Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts General Hospital
- McGill University
- University of California-Davis
- University of Iowa
- University of Florida
- University of Michigan
- University of Missouri
- University of Washington, Seattle
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Washington University School of Medicine
- Yale University
• Publication in a peer-reviewed journal provides independent confirmation of scientific merit

• NCRG-funded research has yielded more than 210 publications, most in quality scientific journals
NCRG Research Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals

- Psychology of Addictive Behaviors
- Harvard Review of Psychiatry
- Biological Psychiatry
- Neuron
- Annual Review of Public Health
- Addiction
- Journal of American College Health
- American Journal of Public Health
- Psychological Medicine
- Neuropsychopharmacology
- Psychopharmacology
- American Journal of Psychiatry
- Archives in General Psychiatry
- Canadian Journal of Public Health
Key Findings

• First reliable estimates of prevalence of disorder
• First significant evidence of a genetic component for gambling disorders
• First significant evidence for naltrexone as a treatment strategy
• Pioneering research on CBT and brief interventions
• First study to frame gambling as a public health issue
• New model for understanding addiction as a syndrome
• First study of health risks of casino employees
• First national study of college gambling
NCRG Educational Initiatives

Through a variety of programs and activities, the NCRG strives to:

- Raise public awareness of gambling disorders and responsible gaming
- Provide meaningful, research-based education for health care providers
- Promote a lively exchange of ideas within the field of gambling research
- Develop practical applications for research findings
Treatment Provider Workshop Series

- Learn best practices directly from researchers who translate their findings about gambling disorders into real-world applications

NCRG Webinar Series

- Earn free online continuing education units without leaving your home or office.
- Archived sessions at www.ncrg.org/public_education
Get CEUs from the NCRG

The National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) is approved by the following certifying organizations to offer continuing education:

- NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals (provider # 737)
- The California Board of Behavioral Sciences (Approval # PCE 4619)
- National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) (Provider # 6474)
- The NCRG also is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The NCRG maintains responsibility for this program and its contents.
Increasing the Odds – NCRG Monograph Series

- Concise, easy-to-understand summaries of seminal peer-reviewed research on gambling disorders, as well as implications for future research and prevention efforts.
- Topics include:
  - Youth and College Gambling
  - Gambling and Public Health
  - Self-Exclusion
  - Neurobiology of Gambling Disorders
  - NEW What Clinicians Need to Know about Gambling Disorders
What is Disordered Gambling?

- “Persistent and Maladaptive” gambling behavior
- Proposed change: Categorize as “Addiction and Related Disorders” in the DSM-5
- Disordered Gamblers face serious negative consequences particularly in family/friend relationships, employment, and financial resources
- They experience many of the same problems as people with other addictions: increasing tolerance, withdrawal symptoms when attempting to stop, preoccupation, cravings

American Psychiatric Association, 1994
How many Americans experience Disordered Gambling?

• Pathological Gambling: About 1%
• “Problem Gambling”: About 2-3%

Kessler et al., 2008
What defines a Gambling Disorder?

(1) is preoccupied with gambling
(2) needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement
(3) has repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop gambling
(4) is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling
(5) gambles as a way of escaping from problems
(6) after losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even
(7) lies to family members or others to hide the extent of involvement
(8) has committed illegal acts such as forgery to finance gambling
(9) has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling
(10) relies on others to provide money to relieve a financial situation caused by gambling

American Psychiatric Association, 1994
Three Important Characteristics of Disordered Gambling

**Comorbidity**: 96% of people with disordered gambling have another psychological condition.

**Fluidity**: People frequently move between levels of disordered gambling, and are just as likely to experience both less symptoms as more symptoms.

**Natural Recovery**: About 30% of people who recover from disordered gambling do so without treatment, only about 12% of disordered gamblers attend formal treatment.  

*Kessler et al., 2008, Slutske 2006*
Research on College Gambling
Harvard College Alcohol and Gambling Study

Dr. Henry Wechsler
Howard J. Shaffer, Ph.D., CAS
Richard LaBrie, Ed.D.
75 Percent of College Students Gambled During the Past Year

By gambling activity:

- Lottery/numbers.......................................................... 43%
- Card Games................................................................ 38%
- Office Pools/Raffles.................................................. 38%
- Sports betting.............................................................. 23%
- Games of Skill (bowling, pool, etc.)............................. 20%
- Casino gambling......................................................... 15%
- Internet gambling....................................................... 3%

Barnes et al., 2010
Disordered Gambling in College Students

- All college students: 6%
- Men: 11%
- Women: 2%

- This study reported problem and pathological gambling rates together as disordered gambling.

Barnes et al., 2010
Compared to their non-gambling counterparts, students who had gambled in the past year had higher rates of:

- Binge drinking
- Marijuana use
- Cigarette use
- Illicit drug use
- Unsafe sex after drinking

LaBrie et al., 2003
Compared to students without gambling problems, students with gambling problems are more likely to:

- Use tobacco
- Use alcohol, drink heavily or binge drink, and get drunk
- Use marijuana or other illegal drugs
- Drive under the influence
- Have a low GPA

LaBrie et al., 2003
College Students and Mental Disorders

- Increase in psychiatric disorders among college students in recent years
- Dramatic advances in antidepressants and other drugs during the past 30 years have enabled more students with depression, anxiety and other psychiatric disorders to attend college

Kadison, & DiGeronimo, 2004; Gallagher, 2004
Gambling Disorders & Co-occurring Psychiatric and Addictive Disorders

Among pathological gamblers:
- 75% had an alcohol disorder
- 38% had a non-alcohol, drug-use disorder
- 60% were nicotine dependent
- Nearly 50% had experienced a mood disorder
- 41.3% experienced an anxiety disorder
- 60.8% experienced a personality disorder

Petry, Stinson, & Grant, 2005
Prevention & Treatment

• Screening:
  – BBGS

• Finding Treatment:
  – Primary Care
  – Helplines

• Treatment Options:
  – Self-Help
  – Gamblers Anonymous
  – Formal Treatment
Formal Treatment Options

- Self-Exclusion
- Brief Treatment
  - Your First Step to Change
  - Change Your Gambling Change Your Life
  - Motivational Feedback Intervention
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Drug Treatments
  - Opioid Antagonists
  - Glutamatergic agents
CollegeGambling.org

An online resource for administrators, campus health professionals, college students and parents
Expanding Online Resources

- www.ncrg.org/resources
- Gambling Disorders 360°: blog.ncrg.org
- @theNCRG
- www.facebook.com/theNCRG
Questions?
Reference List


For More Information

www.ncrg.org

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THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING

Advancing Research, Education and Awareness