



Gambling and College Students: Literature Review

Introduction

Today's college students live in a culture more accepting of gambling than any previous generation. Poker on campus has experienced an unprecedented popularity as has betting over the Internet. For most college students, gambling is a social or recreational activity. However, it is not without risk. Prevalence rates of problem and pathological gambling among college students are among the highest of any segment of the population. Gambling problems threaten academic success, financial well-being and overall health. Out of the variety of harms that college students are at-risk for, problem gambling is perhaps the most overlooked.

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) has stated that problem gambling should be a concern for all students, not just student athletes. NASPA urges college officials to increase their awareness of the potential health risks associated with gambling and further recommends that materials related to problem gambling be integrated into student prevention and treatment programs.

Selected Research in Chronological Order

Kerber, Cynthia Sullivan. (2005) *Problem and pathological gambling among college athletes*. *Annual of Clinical Psychiatry*. 17 (4); 243-7.

This study identifies a profile of college students athletes who are at the most risk of problem or pathological gambling. The SOGS and the GAS were administered to 636 students. 57 percent of respondents were male; age range from 18-27 years, with a mean age of 20; and 97 percent were single. 29 percent were freshman, 25 percent sophomores, 29 percent juniors, and 18 percent were seniors.

Information collected from the SOGS found that while nearly one-quarter (24.1%) of the college athletes claimed never to have gambled, SOGS scores indicate that 15% have either problem or pathological gambling problem. Additionally, SOGS suggest that about one-third of the respondents who had engaged in some form of gambling indicated that they had gambled more than they had intended. The results of the study recommends that methods need to be developed to enhance education about the hazards of gambling for college students.

Shaffer, h., Donato, A., Labrie, R., Kidman, R., and LaPlante, D. (2005). *The epidemiology of college alcohol and gambling policies*. Harm Reduction Journal. 2 (1).

This article reports the first national assessment of patterns of drinking and gambling-related rulemaking on college campuses. College policy information was collected from handbooks, Web sites and supplemental materials from 119 colleges in the U.S.

The results found that although all schools had a student alcohol use policy, only 26 schools (22%) had a gambling policy. Research suggests that gambling on college campuses is commonplace. Despite the frequency with which college students engage in gambling activities, some evidence suggests that administrators are unaware of the dangers associated with excessive gambling among students. Since there are few college gambling-related policies, schools might be missing an opportunity to inform students about the dangers of excessive gambling.

Card playing trend in young people continues. The Annenberg Public Policy Center. University of Pennsylvania. (September 2005).

The results of the Annenberg Public Policy Center's 2005 National Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth indicate that the likelihood that young men will gamble on card games continues to increase. 900 young people were surveyed in 2005 and compared to the results of the 1501 young people that were surveyed in 2004. The 2005 survey found a 20 percent increase in monthly rates of card gambling compared with the previous study. According to the latest estimates, approximately 2.9 million young people between the ages of 14 and 22 are gambling on cards on a weekly basis. Over 80 percent are male. Those who play cards are also more likely than other gamblers to gamble on the Internet.

Monthly card gambling increased from 34.7 percent to 41.6 percent, a 20% increase. The rate of card playing was found to be higher among youth who attend schools. 14 percent of male high school youth reported gambling on cards at least once a week and 15.4 percent of college youth reported the same activity. Monthly gambling among high school and college males was 37 percent and 50.4 percent. Gambling on cards also seems to be attracting more young people to gambling. Monthly rates of total gambling in young men increased from 48.2 percent in 2004 to 57.1 percent in 2005. Based on the latest estimates, approximately 580,000 young people ages 14 to 22 gamble on the Internet on a weekly basis. Most of these young people are under age 21.

Engwall, D., Hunter, R. and Steinberg, M. (2004). *Gambling and other risk behaviors on university campuses*. *Journal of American College Health*. 52 (6); 245-255.

The author surveyed 1,350 undergraduate students at the 4 campuses of Connecticut State University in 2000. 64 percent women and 36 percent men responded to the survey. Most respondents were in the 18-20 year age bracket and either lived with parents or spouse or in a residence hall.

Using the South Oaks Gambling Screen, they found that 18 percent of men and 4 percent of women reported that gambling had led to at least 3 negative life consequences, commonly defined as problem gambling. Students who were identified as problem gamblers, compared with other students, were significantly more likely to be heavy drinkers, report negative consequences of alcohol consumption, and be regular tobacco and marijuana users. Problem gambling was related to binge eating and greater use of weight-control efforts. University athletes were also found to have significantly greater problem gambling rates than non-athletes.

NCAA 2004 National Study on Collegiate Sports Wagering and Associated Health Risks, Executive Summary.

The goal of this study is to provide baseline information related to the level of gambling behavior with the student-athlete population. A total of 20,739 surveys were received from Division I, II and III schools. 61 percent of respondents were male and 37 percent were female. The study found that males consistently reported engaging in gambling or sports wagering

activities in much higher proportions than their female counterparts. The proportion of males reporting participating in any gambling behavior was 63.4 percent. Less than 5 percent of males at any division were categorized as a problem or pathological gamblers. The gambling activities that student-athletes engaged in most frequently during the last 12 months include: playing cards or board games for money, betting on games of personal skill, lottery tickets, slot or electronic poker machines, sports cards, football polls or parlays, or some other type of gambling.

LaBrie, R., Shaffer, H., LaPlante, D., and Wechslet, H. (2003). *Correlates of college student gambling in United States*. Journal of American College Health. 52 (2); 53-62.

The author reports findings from the first national survey of gambling among college students. Information was collected from 10,765 students attending 199 colleges. The study found that 42 percent of responding students gambled in the last school year and 2.6 percent gambled weekly or more frequently. The behaviors and characteristics of people who choose to gamble matched those of people who binge drink. Gamblers compared with nongamblers were more likely to binge on alcohol, use marijuana, smoke cigarettes, use illicit drugs, and engage in unprotected sex after drinking.

The study found that the rate of college students that gambled within the last year (42%) was lower than adults. Through the findings reported in this article do not indicate a large national gambling problem among college students, the promotion of gambling directed at college students and a greater acceptance of Internet gambling could change the current situation. The current rates are related to the number of available gambling venues. Should those increase, as has been the case thus far, the rates may very well increase.

Slutske, W., Jackson, K., & Sher, K. (2003). *The natural history of problem gambling from age 18 to 29*.

When the study began, there were 468 participants who were first-time college first year students. The sample was 94% white and 54% female. The researchers surveyed the participants, either in person or by telephone, in 1987-1988 (Year 1), 1990-1991 (Year 4), 1993-1994 (Year 7), and 1998-1999 (year 11). Participant retention was 84% at year 11.

Results showed that the full sample lifetime prevalence rates observed at each wave of the college years were 3.2% - 3.8%. Past –year rate of gambling problems was relatively steady throughout the 11 years (2%-3%); however, sequence mapping showed that different subjects contributed to these rates through the progression of the study. This finding suggests that very few individuals exhibited long-term or recurring gambling problems.

Neighbors, C., Lostutter, T., Crouce, J., and Larimer, M. (2002)
Exploring college student gambling motivation. Journal of Gambling Studies. 18 (4); 361-370.

This research was designed specifically to examine gambling motivation among college students with a long term goal of determining why gambling is so prevalent in this population. Participants included 184 undergraduate college student gamblers, enrolled in introductory psychology classes at a northwestern university in the United States. The average age of participants was 19.4 years, 123 males and 59 females. Participants were asked to list in rank order their top five reasons for gambling.

The results revealed that most college students gamble to win money, for fun, for social reasons, for excitement, or just to have something to do. Over 40 percent of this sample reported monetary gain as their primary motivation for gambling.

Browne, B., and Brown, D. (2001). Predictors of Lottery Gambling Among American College Students. The Journal of Social Psychology. 134 (3); 339-47.

In this study lottery gambling behavior of 288 American college students was examined at a state university in the Northwest. 111 women and 177 men ranging in age from 18-38 years were surveyed. 89 percent were college juniors and seniors.

The results found that almost 80 percent of the sample had purchased lottery tickets. 63 percent were occasional lottery gamblers. 31 percent of the college students reported that they had played lotteries illegally before the age of 18 years. 61 percent of respondents played at the same frequency as they did before they came to college, 24 percent played less and only 16 percent increase participation. The study concluded that having parents and peers who gambled could predict student gambling. Because parent

influences occur earlier than peer influences, parent influences may exert the more prominent effect. Having friends who gamble had a stronger effect for men than for women and was related to both gambling and more frequently and spending more money on lottery play. Students are likely to find friends among those who engage in similar activities. If these activities include gambling, there may be an increase in gambling behavior

Shaffer, H. & Hall, M. (2001). Updating and refining meta-analytic prevalence estimates of disordered gambling behavior in the United States and Canada. Canadian Journal of Public Health, 92(3), 168-172.

A meta-analysis of published studies of college students estimated the prevalence rate of lifetime problem gambling at 5.6% - approximately three times the rate found in the adult population.

Sahffer, H., Forman, D., Scanlan, K., and Smith, F. (2000). Awareness of gambling-related problems, policies and educational programs among high school and college administrators. Journal of Gambling Studies. 16 (1); 93-101.

This report summarizes a survey of high school and college representatives and their awareness toward gambling-related problems. The survey was administered via telephone interview to representatives of 20 high schools and 10 colleges in the Massachusetts area. Only 9 percent of high school and community colleges were aware of gambling problems among students, while 60 percent of four-year colleges recognized this area of concern. 80 percent of college-level schools reported having a gambling policy in place, while only 26 percent of high schools had a gambling policy.

The results suggest that there is an important discrepancy between the prevalence of gambling-related problems among young people and the awareness of these problems among educators. High school and colleges are not sufficiently prepared to deal with gambling problems given the paucity of existing regulations or policies. There is little opportunity for students and educators to learn within the school setting about gambling and its potential hazards.

Oster, S., and Knapp, T. (1998). Sports betting by college students: Who bets and how often? College Student Journal. 32 (2).

A sample of 544 students, divided almost evenly among males and females, voluntarily participated in a study conducted in Introductory Psychology classes at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The mean age was 22 years and 86 percent of the sample was residents of Nevada.

The lifetime prevalence of any form of gambling was 97 percent for males and 91 percent for females. 37 percent of males and 16 percent of females gambled weekly or more frequently. The more frequent form of gambling for females and males was video-poker machines.

The lifetime prevalence for betting on any kind of sports events was 64 percent. 13 percent wagered within the past year, 8 percent within the past month, and 7 percent once a week or more. Males (50%) bet on sports more often than females (23%). Sports wagering by college students appears largely, though not exclusively, a male activity.

Ladouceur, R., Dube, D. and Bujold, A. (1994). *Prevalence of pathological gambling related problems among college students in the Quebec Metropolitan area. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. 39; 289-293.*

This survey sample was composed of 1,471 college students attending three colleges in the Quebec city metropolitan area. 53 percent of the sample was female and 44 percent male, with the average age of 18.9 years. The study found that 90 percent of the students had gambled and 21.7 percent engage in this behavior once a week or more. The prevalence of pathological gamblers was found to be 2.8 percent for the entire sample and much higher among males. Gambling behaviors were found to be linked to alcohol abuse, drug abuse and criminality.

Results of the study indicate that gambling practices are widespread among college students and the incidence of pathological gambling is twice as high in this population as in the general adult population of Quebec. Additionally, the results indicated that pathological gambling is associated with economic, professional and interpersonal problems. The study was conducted prior to the establishment of casinos in this province