

# **The influence of the online environment on risk taking:**

## **Internet gambling and Gambling Disorder**

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# Gambling Disorder

Gambling Disorder – Behavioural Addiction

(DSM-5, American Psychological Association)

Similarities with substance-related disorders

- Clinical expression
- Brain origin
- Comorbidity
- Physiology
- Treatment



# Gambling Disorder - Criteria

- Gambling increasing amounts
- Inability to stop
- Preoccupation
- Gambling when distressed
- Chasing losses
- Lying
- Jeopardizing relationship, job etc
- Desperate financial situations



# Problem gambling: A significant public health issue

Individual or significant other experiencing significant gambling-related harm

- Family breakdown & neglect
- Substance use problems
- Anxiety & depression
- Health
- Generational impact
- Workplace productivity
- Legal
- Community



# Is there a problem?

Problem gambling appears linked to Internet gambling

Sample	PG prevalence Internet gamblers	PG Prevalence non-Internet gamblers	Reference
9,003 UK	<b>3.8%</b>		Griffiths et al., 2009
7,921 International	<b>3.8%</b>		Wood & Williams, 2011
15,006 (n=1,767) Australia	<b>2.7%</b>	0.9%	Gainsbury et al., 2014
3,054 France	<b>6.6%</b>	3.7%	Valleur, 2015

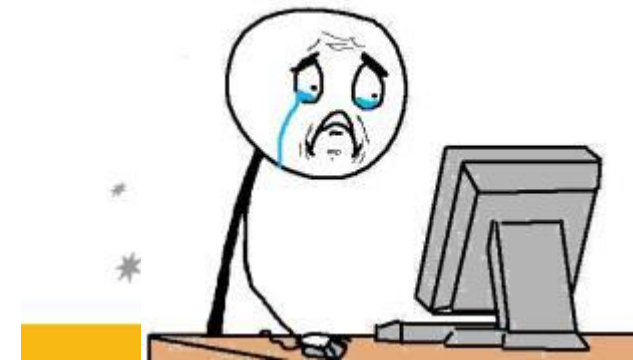
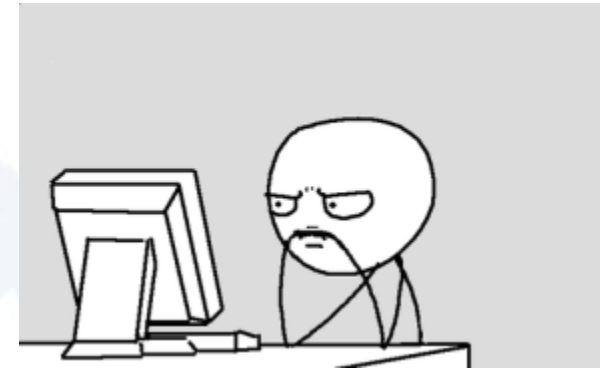
Problem gambling rates are 2-4 times higher among samples of Internet gamblers

# Internet & problem gambling

Unique features of Internet gambling pose risks for harm?

At-risk populations?

Internet → gambling problems?



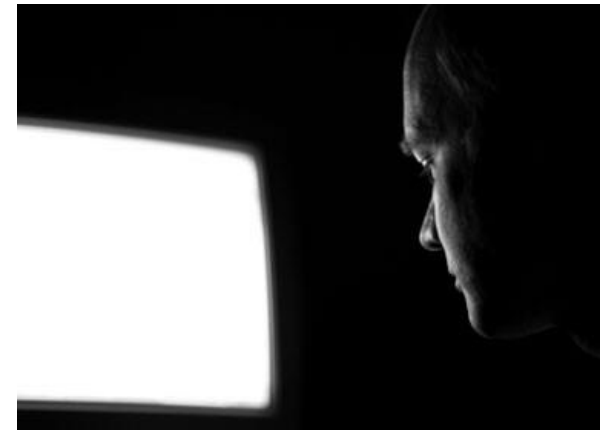
# Methodology

- Literature review
- Three large Australian studies
  1. Nationally representative telephone survey  
N = 15,006
  2. Online survey  
N = 4,594
  3. Online survey  
N = 6,682

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# Internet gambling has potentially problematic characteristics

- Convenience
- Accessibility
- Electronic payment
- High choice
- Low and high bets
- Immersive online environment
- Easy to hide
- Few disruptions





# Predictors of greater Internet problem gambling severity

- Younger age
- Male
- Culturally diverse background
- Higher psychological distress

~ alcohol & drug use

~ mood disorders



# Predictors of greater Internet problem gambling severity

- Unregulated sites
- Multiple accounts
- Multiple gambling activities
- High variability in betting
- High involvement (bets per day, active betting days, high stakes, net loss)
- Chasing losses
- Live action (in-play) betting



# Internet gambling is only one factor in gambling problems

- Mediating factors involved
- No evidence of greater problem prevalence
- Online only gamblers have *lower* risk of harm

## Research Finds Internet Gambling “Not Predictive of Gambling Problems”

Scientific study indicates online gambling may have lower rate of problem gambling.



# How does Internet gambling contribute to problems?

Among at-risk & problem Internet gamblers:

**Had problems prior to gambling online**

**53%**

**Problems started after gambling online**

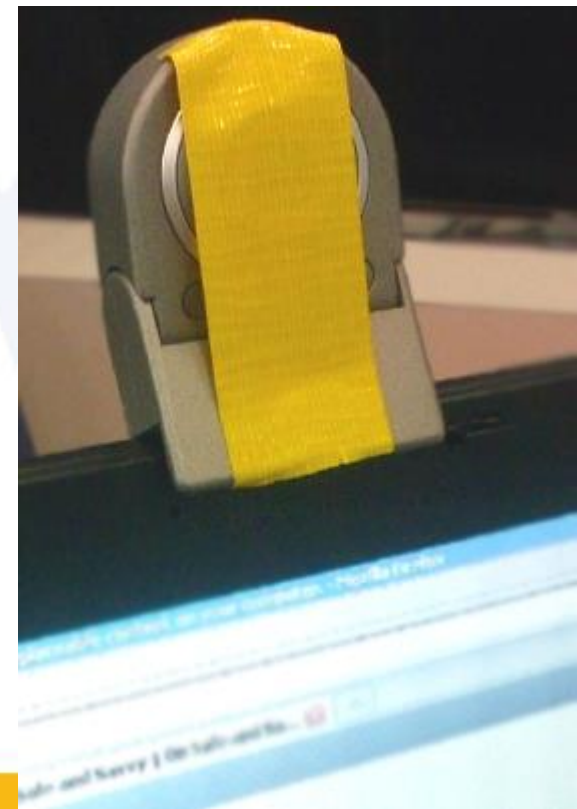
**47%**

Less than 1/5 have problems unrelated to interactive gambling

Over 1/5 have problems based on interactive gambling

# Policies to reduce Internet gambling harm

- Regulations MUST be updated
  - Stricter requirements for harm minimisation
- Internet technology to reduce harm
  - National self-exclusion
  - Dynamic, tailored messages
  - Individualized responsible gambling initiatives
  - Algorithms to detect risky gambling
- Public health campaigns
- Target at-risk groups & influencers
- Online & mobile treatment & prevention



# Next steps

- ARC DECRA USyd 2016-2019

Understanding to role of the online environment in risk taking

- Impact of social factors

E.g., anonymity, privacy, social interactions

# Thank you, questions?

## Dr Sally Gainsbury

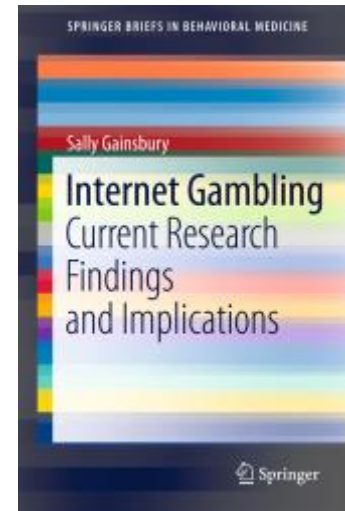
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