The influence of the online environment on risk taking: Internet gambling and Gambling Disorder

Dr. Sally Gainsbury
Senior Lecturer
Centre for Gambling Education and Research, Southern Cross University

Emerging Health Policy Research Conference Program
July 13, 2016
The University of Sydney
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

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

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 representation telephone survey
   N = 15,006
2. Online survey
   N = 4,594
3. Online survey
   N = 6,682

Funding provided by:
Menzies Foundation
Gambling Research Australia
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Had problems prior to gambling online</th>
<th>Problems started after gambling online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
Senior Lecturer, Centre for Gambling Education & Research,
Southern Cross University

Email: sally.gainsbury@scu.edu.au

Website: http://works.bepress.com/sally_gainsbury/

@DrSalGainsbury
References


References


