

# Gambling and Young People

## Did you know?

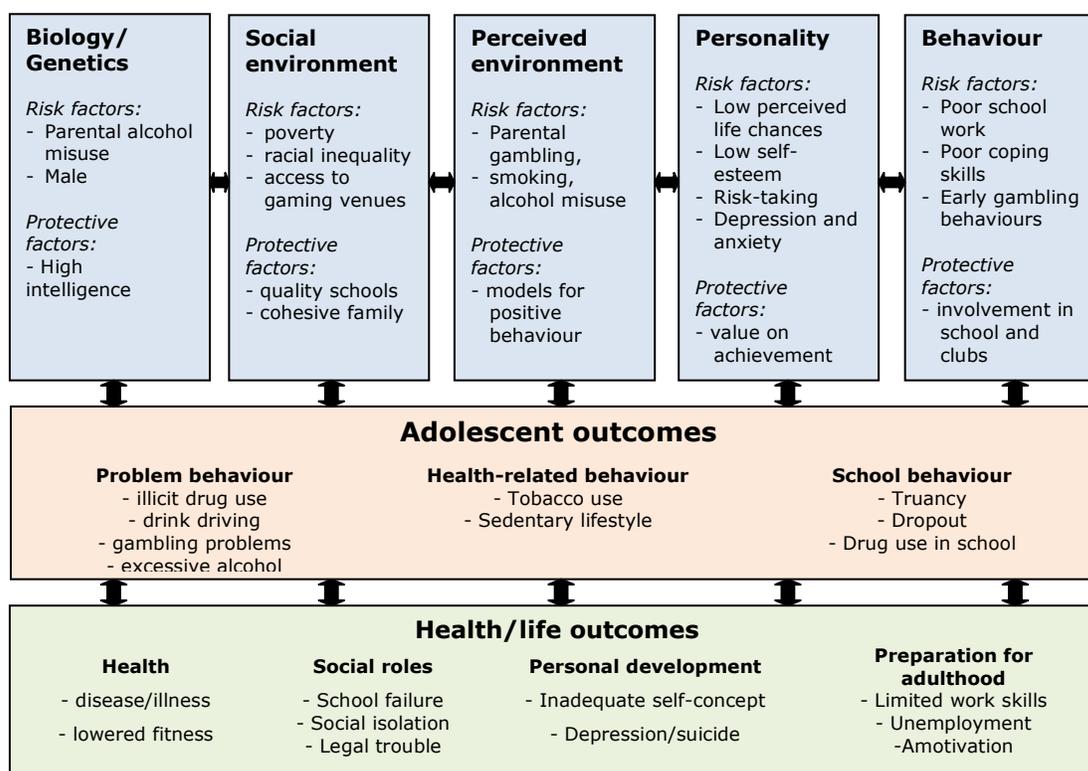
- Prevalence of problem gambling in young people (12-18 years) is higher than in adults (18-60 years)
- Problem gambling can have significant impacts on the lives of young people
- Problem gambling in young people is associated with illicit drug use, underage drinking and other risky behaviours.

## How common is gambling in young people?

- In Australia between 40-60% of young people aged 13-17 years gamble each year.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Around 5% of young people between 13-17 years of age gamble weekly.<sup>4</sup>
- Problem gambling in adolescents is thought to be between 2-5%<sup>5</sup>, and possibly as high as 8%.<sup>6</sup> Problem gambling in adults over 18 years is estimated at 0.7-1.7%.<sup>7</sup>

## What are the influences and outcomes of gambling in young people?

A variety of elements influence a young person's decision to gamble, as well as their risk of developing gambling problems. The diagram below outlines the factors that contribute to or are a consequence of adolescent gambling.<sup>8</sup>



## What are young people's attitudes and understanding of gambling?

Young people tend to view gambling as a positive form of entertainment, as long as it is not done too often.<sup>9</sup> However, many young people also view gambling as a way to make money.<sup>10</sup> Many also hold erroneous beliefs, such as skill can improve a player's likelihood of winning on chance-based games, and that certain outcomes and number sequences can be used to predict when a player is likely to win.<sup>11</sup>

### What are some health promotion actions that target young people and gambling?

- Incorporate information on probability into curriculum
- Increase understanding and awareness of chances of winning
- Provide local alternative leisure and recreation opportunities
- Provide budget/financial literacy programs in education and vocational training courses.

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### Are there other issues?

#### *Impact of parental problem gambling*

Parental problem gambling can have a significant effect on children and young people. As well as increasing the risk of children becoming problem gamblers as adults<sup>12</sup>, children of problem gamblers are more likely to:

- Exhibit stress-related illnesses, such as allergies and asthma
- Show poor school performance
- Indulge in risky behaviours, such as smoking, drinking and illicit drug use
- Attempt suicide
- Be part of a single-parent family.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, children of problem gamblers identify feelings of loss of trust and loss of security, as well as a loss of material goods, as the impact of parental problem gambling.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Online gambling*

Research into online gambling and use by young people is limited, however available studies suggest that online gambling by young people is a concern given their high rates of internet usage.<sup>15</sup> Online gaming is mostly prohibited in Australia, however Australians are able to access overseas online gaming sites. While sites are restricted to people over 18 years of age, the ability of these sites to stop underage gamblers from accessing games is limited.<sup>16</sup> In its recent report, the Australian Productivity Commission recommend the regulation of online gaming in order to increase harm minimisation features, such as restricting access to underage gamblers.<sup>17</sup>

### Want to know more?

Contact James Dunne, Project Officer Problem Gambling Prevention, HealthWest Partnership on 9313 5080 or at [james.healthwest@isispc.com.au](mailto:james.healthwest@isispc.com.au) or visit [www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au](http://www.problemgambling.vic.gov.au).

<sup>1</sup> Jackson, A., Patton, G., Thomas, S., Wyn, J., Wright, J. and Bond, L. (2000), *The impacts of gambling on adolescents and children*, Victorian Department of Human Services, Melbourne.

<sup>2</sup> Lambos, C. and Puglies, S. (2007), *Adolescent Gambling in South Australia*, Department of Education and Children's Services, Adelaide.

<sup>3</sup> Hayatbaksh, M., Najman, J., Aird, R., Bor, W., O'Callaghan, M., Williams, G., Shuttlewood, G., Alati, R., Heron, M. (2006), *Early life course determinants of young adult's gambling behaviour – a longitudinal study*, Office of Gaming Regulation, Queensland Treasury, Queensland.

<sup>4</sup> Lambos et al (2007)

<sup>5</sup> See Lambos et al 2007:19 for a full selection of literature

<sup>6</sup> Victorian Government Department of Justice (2006), *Problem gambling: a guide for Victorian schools*, Victoria

<sup>7</sup> Productivity Commission (2010) *Gambling*, Report No.50, Canberra.

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from Deguire, A., and Derevensky, J., (2004), *Preventing youth gambling problems*, Symposium, 20 April, McGill University: International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High Risk Behaviours, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Lambos et al (2009)

<sup>12</sup> Victorian Government Department of Justice (2006)

<sup>13</sup> Jacobs, D, Marston, AR, Singer, RD, Widaman, K, Little, T, Veizades, J 1989, 'Children of problem gamblers', *Journal of Gambling Behavior*, vol. 5, pp. 261-8.

<sup>14</sup> Darbyshire, P, Oster, C, Carrig, H 2001, 'Children and young people living in a family where parental gambling is a problem', *Journal of Gambling Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 23-45.

<sup>15</sup> Wood, R. and Williams, R. (2009), *Internet gambling: Prevalence, patterns, problems and policy options*, Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Productivity Commission (2010)