

Helpline Summary 2000

CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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2000 Problem Gambling Helpline Summary*

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) operates a 24-hour Helpline service for callers seeking help with a gambling problem for themselves or someone they care about.

The Helpline received 1066 calls about a gambling problem from different states. This report summarizes the results of the 704 Connecticut callers.**

Highlights of the 2000 Report

Helpline Call Completion rate:

- Helpline Staff were able to complete calls for Eighty-five (85%) of all Connecticut callers and 99% of Connecticut gambler callers.

Who are the problem gamblers?

- Seventy-four (74%) percent of callers called about their own problem and 26% called about someone else's problem.
- Fifty-three (53%) percent of problem gamblers were male and 47% female.
- More than half (51%) of problem gamblers were between the ages of 30-49, with 10% age 60 or over and 1% under 20.
- Thirty-six percent of the gamblers worked in skilled or semi-skilled trades.
- Sixty-four (64%) percent earned less than \$35,000, 18% earned between \$35,000-\$44,999 and 29% earned \$45,000 or more.

What is the impact of problem gambling on the financial status of the problem gambler?

- Average current debt due to gambling was \$21,017.
- Average lifetime losses due to gambling were \$64,129.41.
- Sixty-six (66%) percent of the problem gamblers used savings to gamble.
- Sixty-one (61%) percent of the problem gamblers had difficulty paying bills due to gambling.
- Sixty-three (63%) of the problem gamblers borrowed from credit cards and over half (52%) borrowed from family/friends to gamble.

- Ten (10%) percent of the problem gamblers had previously experienced bankruptcy or bankruptcy was currently pending due to gambling.*

What is the emotional and social impact of problem gambling on the gambler?

- High levels of emotional problems were reported for gamblers: anxious/worried, 80%; depression, 76%; thoughts of suicide, 23%.
- Problem gamblers excessively used substances: alcohol (21%) and illegal drug use (10%).
- Other addictions reported for problem gamblers include: work_ (22)%, food (15%), and spending/shopping (11%). Half of the problem gamblers reported to be addicted to tobacco.
- Seven (7%) percent of problem gamblers were arrested due to gambling.

What are the other major direct impacts of problem gambling on the family?

- For over half of the problem gamblers (64%), spouse or family conflict was reported to have resulted from a gambling problem.
- Family violence as a result of problem gambling was reported for 9% of the problem gamblers.
- Almost one third (27%) of the problem gamblers had children under the age of 18 living at home.

Did problem gamblers have specific problems in the families in which they grew up?

- Forty (40%) percent of the problem gamblers grew up in a family where alcohol abuse was present and 9% grew up in a family where there was drug abuse.
- One quarter (25%) of problem gamblers grew up in a family where there was a gambling problem.
- Twenty-one (21%) of the problem gamblers experienced abusive behavior.

What are the primary types of gambling causing problems for the problem gambler?

- Casino gambling: Slot Machines (48%), Blackjack (25%) and Poker (8%).
- Non-casino gambling: Lottery Scratch-off (38%), Daily Lottery (17%) and Sports Betting (16%).

Are there differences in male and female problem gamblers?

After starting gambling, female problem gamblers developed a problem three years sooner than male problem gamblers (5 years vs. 8.0 years) and after a problem developed, females called the Helpline two years sooner than males (5 years vs. 3 years).

- Male problem gamblers were younger than female problem gamblers: 48% of females and 34% of males were 30 or younger.

* For further statistics, conclusions and recommendations, consult the 1999 Helpline Report by logging on to www.ccpq.org or by calling 203-453-0138.

** Since Helpline statistics reported in previous years have included calls from other states, direct comparison of percentages in this report with previous years cannot be made.

- Females earned a lower annual income than males: 17% fewer females than males earned \$40,000 or more; 9% more females than males earned less than \$25,000. However, in the \$25,000-\$34,999 income range, females outnumbered males by seven (7%) percent (21% vs.28%)
- Female problem gamblers more often than male problem gamblers had a problem with slot machines (72% vs. 35%).
- Male problem gamblers more often than female problem gamblers had a problem with Blackjack (31% v. 14%) and Sports Betting (23% vs. 2%).

2000 PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE REPORT

BASIC FACTS

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) operates a 24-hour Helpline* service for callers seeking help with a gambling problem for themselves or someone they care about. Callers seeking more general information about problem gambling are referred to the CCPG's office.

Helpline staff to obtain the data included in this summary utilized a 184-item questionnaire. Information was gathered on 1066 calls received between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2000 that were specific requests for help with a gambling problem. Of the 1066 callers, 704[†] resided in Connecticut. In order to provide a more accurate picture of the impact on problem gambling in the state of Connecticut, only Connecticut information is included in this report.[‡]

Major Findings[§]

1. State of residence of the problem gamblers:

- 76% resided in Connecticut.
- 12 % resided in Massachusetts.
- 7% resided in Rhode Island.
- 3% resided in New York.
- 2% resided elsewhere.

2. Top Connecticut cities of residence of problem gamblers:^{**}

Cities

New Haven	6%
Hartford	5%
Norwich	5%
Bridgeport	3%
Bristol	3%

3. Callers to the Helpline:

- 3 out of 4 callers (74%) called about their own problem.

* The CCPG Helpline is supported through funding from Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mohegan Sun and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

[†] In calculating percentages the actual number of respondents vary due to adjustments to the data for missing values and non-responses.

[‡] Since Helpline data reported prior to 1999 included calls from other states, direct comparison of percentages in the current report with years prior to 1999 cannot be made.

[§] Numerical information prepared by Yale University, Department of Psychiatry.

^{**} Percentages relate to Helpline calls and do not take into account the great differences in population across cities.

- 1 out of 5 callers (20%) were spouses/relatives of the problem gambler.
- 1 out of 20 (5%) of the callers were friends of the problem gambler.

4. Gender of callers and problem gamblers:^{††}

- 53% of callers to the Helpline were male and 47% were female.
- 69% of all males called about their own gambling problem and 77% of all females called about their own gambling problem.
- Of those callers who were the gamblers, 62% were male and 38% female.

5. Age of problem gamblers:

	Total	Male	Female
10-19	1%	2%	<1%
20-29	16%	19%	11%
30-39	25%	27%	22%
40-49	26%	26%	27%
50-59	22%	18%	28%
60-69	7%	6%	7%
70-79	3%	2%	4%

- Females tended to be older than males:
66% of females were age 40 or older
52% of males were age 40 or older.
- The gender difference was most evident in two age ranges:
Age 20-29: 19% male vs. 11% female
Age 50-59: 18% male vs. 28% female
- Youth (10-19 years) were under represented in Helpline problem gambler (1%) calls as compared to Census 2000 data for Connecticut's general population (14%) for this age group.
- Helpline problem gamblers age 60 years and older (10%) is similar to Connecticut's population (16%) census for this age group.

6. Top three ethnic/racial groups of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Caucasian	85%	86%	83%
African-American	8%	7%	11%
Latino/Hispanic	4%	4%	6%
Asian	2%	3%	<1%

^{††} All comparisons between categories in this report represent apparent trends. No tests of statistical significant were conducted.
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7. Religious affiliations of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Catholic	56%	60%	50%
Protestant	27%	22%	36%
Jewish	3%	3%	3%
Muslim	1%	2%	0%
None	10%	11%	8%
Other	3%	3%	4%

8. Marital and child status of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Married	46%	46%	46%
Single	28%	28%	28%
Divorced	14%	14%	14%
Children under 18 years living with gambler	27%	19%	25%

- The remaining 13% were: cohabiting (4%), separated (4%), widowed (4%), or unknown (1%).
- More than 1 out of 4 (27 %) reported children under the age of 18 living at home with gambler.

9. Top four occupations of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Skilled/semi-skilled	36%	38%	34%
Clerical	21%	19%	25%
Administrator	16%	18%	11%
Business Manager	9%	8%	12%

- Overall, differences between males and females in level of occupation were relatively small.

10. Employment status of problem gamblers:

	Total	Male	Female
Full time	68%	73%	59%
Part time	13%	10%	18%
Pension	1%	1%	2%
Retired	5%	5%	6%
Disability	5%	4 %	6%

- While males were only slightly more likely to be employed (83% vs. 79%), males were more often employed full time (73% vs. 59%) and more females were employed part time (18% vs. 10%).

11. Income of problem gamblers:

<u>Earnings</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
less than \$25,000:	30%	30%	40%
\$25,000 - \$34,999:	24%	21%	28%
\$35,000 - \$44,999:	18%	19%	15%
\$60,000 and more	10%	15%	5%

- Overall, females earned less than males.

12. Areas of gambling in which problems were identified^{##}

Non-Casino Gambling

Casino Gambling

	Total Percent	Male Percent	Female Percent
Lottery – Scratch Off	38%	35%	42%
Lottery - Daily	17%	17%	19%
Sports Betting	16%	23%	2%
Lottery - Lotto	13%	12%	14%
Jai Alai	6%	8%	3%
Horse Racing	9%	13%	1%
Dog Racing	4%	5%	1%
Bingo	3%	1%	8%
Cards	4%	5%	1%
Video Poker	1%	1%	1%

	Total Percent	Male Percent	Female Percent
Slots	48%	34%	72%
Blackjack	25%	31%	13%
Poker	8%	10%	4%
Craps/Dice	7%	9%	3%
Roulette	7%	8%	3%
Bingo	3%	2%	4%
Video Poker	4%	5%	3%
Horse Racing	3%	3%	0%
Baccarat	1%	1%	0%
Keno	1%	1%	0%

- Areas of problems for females: slots (72%); Lottery-scratch off (42%); Lottery-daily (19%); Lottery-Lotto (14%) and blackjack (13%).

^{##} A number of respondents selected more than one type of gambling.
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- Areas of problems for males: Lottery-scratch off (35%); slots (34%); blackjack (31%); sports betting (23%) and Lottery-daily (17%).
- Females far more often than males were reported to have a problem with slot machines (72% vs. 35%).
- Males far more often than females were reported to have a problem with Blackjack (31% vs.14%), sports betting (23% vs. 2%) and horse racing (13% vs. 1%).

13. The following problems are reported to have resulted from gambling:

<u>Emotional:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Anxious/worried	80%	79%	81%
Depression	76%	75%	78%
Thoughts of suicide	23%	22%	26%
Suicide attempts	4%	3%	6%

<u>Interpersonal:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Family or spouse conflict	64%	68%	58%
Family neglect	39%	42%	33%
Family violence	9%	11%	5%

<u>Financial:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Used savings	66%	64%	69%
Problems paying bills	61%	60%	62%
Borrowed from credit cards	63%	61%	65%
Borrowed from family/friends	52%	53%	50%
Bankruptcy (previous or pending)	10%	10%	12%

<u>Substance Abuse:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Excessive use of alcohol	21%	24%	15%
Use of illegal drugs	10%	9%	11%
<u>Legal:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Arrested	7%	7%	3%
Jail or prison	2%	3%	0%
Debt owed to bookies	8%	11%	2%

- Serious consequences of problematic gambling are evident in all categories: depression, anxiety and suicidality; family conflict; family neglect; debts and bankruptcy; substance abuse; and arrests. Overall, both males and females had serious consequences related to problem gambling. The following differences were noted between males and females:

- Females had slightly higher suicidal thoughts and attempts.
- Males more than females were reported to have more of the following problems: family conflict, neglect and violence; excessive use of alcohol, arrests and debt owed to bookies.

14. In the family in which the problem gambler grew up, there was a history of the following problem behaviors:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Alcohol abuse	40%	37%	45%
Gambling problem	25%	26%	22%
Abusive behavior	21%	18%	26%
Drug abuse	9%	10%	6%

- Very high rates of substance abuse, problem gambling and abuse were reported in the families in which problem gamblers grew up.
- For females as compared to males a family history of more alcohol abuse (45% vs. 37%), and abusive behavior (26% vs. 18%) were reported.
- For males as compared to females, a family history of drug abuse (10% vs. 6%) and problem gambling (26% vs. 22%) were reported.

15. Characteristics of problem gamblers by gender:

Callers Age	41 yrs	44 yrs
Gamblers Age	41 yrs	45 yrs
Age began gambling	28 yrs	37 yrs
Age gambling began to be a problem	36 yrs	42 yrs
Money lost last 12 months	\$20,471	\$17,335
Money lost in a lifetime	\$73,980	\$54,278

- The average age of the Helpline caller was 41 years for males and 44 years for females.
- At the time of the Helpline call, the average age of the gambler was 41 years for males and 45 years for females.
- On average females started gambling at an older age (males 28 years vs. females 37 years) than males.
- After starting gambling, female problem gamblers developed a problem three years sooner than male problem gamblers (5 years vs. 8 years) and after a problem developed, females called the Helpline two years sooner than males (5 years vs. 3 years).

16. Financial losses of problem gamblers:

- Average lifetime losses due to gambling was \$64,129
- Males had substantially larger lifetime losses than females (\$73,980 vs. \$54,278).

17. Debts of problem gamblers:

- Average current debt due to gambling was \$21,017.
- Females had a slightly larger current gambling debt than males (\$21,523 vs. \$20,510).

18. The top four persons or institutions to which gambling debts are owed:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Owed to credit cards	69%	69%	68%
Owed to family	51%	48%	55%
Owed to friends	36%	35%	36%
Owed to banks	21%	23%	17%

19. Reported other addictions of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Tobacco	50%	48%	55%
Food	15%	13%	19%
Alcohol	21%	24%	15%
Spending/Shopping	11%	9%	13%
Drugs	10%	9%	11%
Work	22%	23%	21%
Sex	3%	3%	2%

- High rates of addictive behaviors were reported for problem gamblers
- Addiction to alcohol was more frequently reported for men (24% vs. 15%).
- Addictions to smoking (55% vs. 48%) and food (19% vs. 13%) were reported more frequently for females.

20. Previous help for a gambling problem:

- 11% of the problem gamblers had previously attended Gamblers Anonymous.
- 4% had received professional treatment for a gambling problem.

- 13% of problem gamblers had been in treatment for other addictive behaviors.

- The four primary resources suggested to callers were:

Gamblers Anonymous	91%
State sponsored gambling treatment programs	74%
Gam-Anon	55%
Literature	36%

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Conclusion: The racial and ethnic composition of Helpline callers closely parallels that of Connecticut's general population. However, the percentages of minorities identified by the Helpline are higher than that of members of these groups at gambling treatment programs and Gamblers Anonymous.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that underserved racial/ethnic groups and the agencies that serve them be targeted with problem gambling information.

2. Conclusion: High rates of emotional distress and other addictions were found for Helpline gamblers.

Recommendation:

a) Public awareness information should emphasize the interrelationship between problems gambling with other disorders, especially addictions.

b) Agencies, which provide services for addictive and other disorders, should be alerted that problem gambling might be a primary cause of personal distress or a co-existing disorder.

3. Conclusion: Problem gamblers during childhood were at risk of developing a problem due to high rates of alcohol and gambling problems and abuse in the homes in which they grew up.

Recommendation:

Increase outreach efforts to families and provide more information to organizations serving families including family counseling and medical family practices. School curricula, in particular, need to include gambling education components.

4. Conclusion: People with low income are at special risk for gambling problems as almost one third of the problem gamblers earned less than \$25,000.

Recommendation:

Substantial resources are needed to reach low-income families and the organizations that serve them. Families with low-income are most seriously economically impacted when a family member has a gambling problem.

5. Conclusion: Females are equally, if not slightly more, impacted by problem gambling as males with regard to emotional distress and family and financial disruptions. Although females start gambling later, they tend to develop problems much sooner than males.

Recommendation:

Target information about problem gambling to those females who are at highest risk and to the appropriate service providers. .

6. Conclusion: There was an under-representation of younger problem gamblers compared to the percentage of this group in the general population.

Recommendation:

National research findings indicate that young adults have a high rate of problem gambling. Also, older adults are at risk for problem gambling. These groups are among those least likely to seek help for a gambling problem. It is recommended that these segments of the population and agencies which provide services for these age groups be targeted with information about the signs of problem gambling and where help is available.

7. Conclusion: The workplace is seriously impacted by problem gambling as 87% of the callers to the Helpline indicated that they work either full or part time and that more than 1 out of 5 problem gamblers were reported to be addicted to work.

Recommendation:

Target the workplace setting and employee assistance programs for problem gambling information and prevention programs including information about the relationship of problem gambling and work addiction.

8. Conclusion: The areas of gambling in which problem gamblers were reported to have the most difficulty were slot machines, lottery games and blackjack.

Recommendation:

Increase efforts to reach casino and lottery gamblers through the media and at the gambling sites.

9. Conclusion: The Helpline is successful in reaching unserved problem gamblers and their families. Most identified problem gamblers had not previously received help for a gambling problem: 89% had not attended Gamblers Anonymous and 96% had not received professional treatment for a gambling problem.

Recommendation:

Increase efforts to publicize the Helpline number and inform social service providers about the signs of problem gambling in order to reach unserved problem gamblers and their families.

Helpline data provide a valuable picture of the characteristics, behavior patterns and gambling experiences of Helpline callers and those that they are concerned about. However, caution is necessary in generalizing the characteristics of those identified through the Helpline to those problem gamblers and their families in the larger society who have not sought help.