

Helpline Summary 2001

CONNECTICUT COUNCIL ON PROBLEM GAMBLING

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2001 PROBLEM GAMBLING HELPLINE REPORT

BASIC FACTS

The Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling (CCPG) operates a 24-hour Helpline¹ 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.

The data included in this report were obtained by Helpline staff utilizing a 164-item questionnaire. Information was gathered on 512 calls received between January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2001 that were specific requests for help with a gambling problem. Of the 512 callers, 423 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 beyond Table 1.²

Major Findings³

1. State of residence of the problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Connecticut	83%	85%	80%
Massachusetts	7%	7%	7%
Rhode Island	6%	3%	7%
New York	2%	2%	2%
Elsewhere	2%	2%	1%

2. Top Connecticut cities of residence of problem gamblers:⁴

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
New Haven	11%	11%	11%
Norwich	11%	7%	16%
Waterbury	8%	10%	5%
Bristol	7%	8%	5%
Hartford	6%	3%	10%

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- 1 The CCPG Helpline is supported through funding from Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mohegan Sun and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.
 - 2 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.
 - 3 Numerical information prepared by Yale University, Department of Psychiatry. No tests of statistical significance were conducted. All comparisons between categories in this report represent apparent trends as interpreted by the CCPG. Missing values and non-responses cause the numbers of respondents included in the calculations across percentages in this report to vary.
 - 4 Caution should be exercised in comparing percentages of Helpline problem gamblers across cities due to large differences in size of population across cities.

3. Callers to the Helpline:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Called about their own problem	80%	57%	43%
Spouses/relatives of the problem gambler	15%	70%	30%
Friends of the problem gambler	4%	50%	50%

- More males called about their own problem than did females (57% vs. 43%).
- More than 2 out of 3 (70%) callers who were family members were male.

4. Gender of problem gamblers:

- Of the problem gamblers identified by all callers, 60% were male and 40% were female.

5. Age of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
10-19	1%	1%	<1%
20-29	13%	18%	5%
30-39	29%	31%	25%
40-49	26%	24%	29%
50-59	23%	19%	29%
60-69	7%	5%	10%
70-79	3%	2%	3%
80-89	0%	0%	0%

- Male problem gamblers were younger than female problem gamblers: 50% of males and 30% of females were under 40 years old.
- The gender difference was most evident in two age ranges:
Age 20-29: 18% males vs. 5% females
Age 50-59: 19% males vs. 29% females

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

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Caucasian	85%	84%	86%
African-American	6%	5%	6%
Latino/Hispanic	3%	3%	3%
Asian	5%	5%	4%

7. Religious affiliations of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Catholic	58%	58%	58%
Protestant	26%	23%	29%
Jewish	3%	4%	2%
Muslim	1%	2%	0%
Other	3%	4%	1%
None	9%	10%	9%

8. Marital and child status of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Married	46%	46%	46%
Single	27%	29%	23%
Divorced	16%	15%	18%

The remaining 13% were: cohabiting (5%), separated (3%) or widowed (5%).

- About 3 out of 10 (29%) reported children under the age of 18 living at home with gambler.

<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
29%	29%	29%

9. Occupations of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Clerical	25%	20%	32%
Skilled/semi-skilled	24%	28%	19%
Administrator	17%	19%	15%
Business Manager	6%	6%	6%
Retired	5%	5%	5%
High Executive	4%	5%	2%
Unskilled	2%	2%	2%
Student	1%	2%	1%
Unemployed	13%	11%	15%

- Overall, a higher percentage of males were employed in skilled/semi-skilled occupations (28% vs. 19%) and a higher percentage of females in the clerical area (32% vs. 20%).

10. Income of problem gamblers:

<u>Earnings</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
less than \$25,000:	23%	18%	32%
\$25,000 - \$34,999:	22%	19%	26%
\$35,000 - \$44,999:	20%	22%	18%
\$45,000 - \$59,999:	17%	16%	19%
\$60,000 and more	18%	25%	6%

- Overall, females earned less than males.

11. Areas of gambling in which problems were identified *

Non-Casino Gambling

	Total	Males	Females
Lottery – Scratch Off	40%	37%	43%
Lottery - Daily	17%	18%	16%
Sports Betting	17%	28%	1%
Lottery – Powerball	13%	12%	13%
Lottery - Lotto	10%	10%	10%
Horse Racing	8%	12%	2%
Dog Racing	5%	8%	2%
Cards	5%	7%	3%
Internet	4%	6%	2%
Jai Alai	4%	7%	1%
Stock/Financial Markets	4%	6%	1%
Bingo	4%	2%	6%
Video Poker	3%	3%	3%
Dice	2%	4%	0%
Sweepstakes	2%	0%	3%
Business Speculation	1%	1%	0%
Charitable Gambling	0%	0%	0%
Dog/cock fighting	0%	0%	0%

Casino Gambling

	Total	Males	Females
Slots	55%	38%	76%
Blackjack	33%	43%	19%
Poker	12%	17%	5%
Craps/Dice	11%	17%	2%
Roulette	10%	12%	7%
Video Poker	7%	6%	7%
Bingo	3%	2%	5%
Horse Racing	2%	4%	1%
Baccarat	2%	3%	1%
Keno	2%	2%	1%

* A number of respondents selected more than one type of gambling. Percentages may be affected by the extent of availability of the Helpline number across the various sites at which gambling takes place.

Top five rankings by gender:

Males

43% Blackjack
 38% Slots
 37% Lottery – scratch offs
 28% Sports betting
 17% Craps

Females

76% Slots
 43% Lottery – scratch offs
 19% Blackjack
 16% Lottery – daily
 10% Lottery – lotto

- Females far more often than males were reported to have a problem with slot machines (76% vs. 38%).
- Males far more often than females were reported to have a problem with Blackjack (43% vs.19%), sports betting (28% vs. 1%), craps (12% vs. 2%) and horse racing (12% vs. 2%).

12. Number of different areas of gambling in which problems were identified.

<u>Number of areas</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
1	37%	32%	44%
2	22%	21%	22%
3	17%	17%	16%
4	10%	11%	8%
5	5%	5%	6%
6	2%	3%	2%
7	1%	2%	1%
8	2%	3%	1%

- 61% of problem gamblers had a problem in two or more areas of gambling.
- 64% of males and 55% of females had a problem in two or more areas of gambling.
- Problem gamblers had an average of 2.6 areas of gambling in which they had a problem.

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	81%	77%	85%
Depression	80%	75%	88%
Thoughts of suicide	26%	23%	29%
Suicide attempts	5%	4%	8%

<u>Interpersonal:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Family or spouse conflict	71%	72%	70%
Family neglect	49%	51%	48%
Family violence	13%	12%	13%

<u>Financial:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Used savings	85%	82%	90%
Problems paying bills	69%	69%	70%
Borrowed from credit cards	74%	72%	78%
Borrowed from family/friends	53%	53%	53%
Bankruptcy (previous or pending)	20%	21%	18%

<u>Substance Abuse:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Excessive use of alcohol	21%	27%	13%
Use of illegal drugs (Rx or non-Rx)	11%	12%	8%

<u>Legal:</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Arrested	10%	13%	6%
Jail or prison	3%	5%	1%
Debt owed to bookies	6%	11%	0%

- Serious consequences of problematic gambling are evident for both genders in all categories: depression, anxiety and suicidality; family conflict; family neglect; debts and bankruptcy; substance abuse; and arrests.

The following differences were noted between males and females:

- Females had higher depression and anxiety; and slightly higher suicidal thoughts and attempts.
- Males had more excessive use of alcohol; arrests and jail; 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%	44%
Gambling problem	31%	31%	31%
Abusive behavior	27%	18%	39%
Drug abuse	10%	10%	11%

- Very high rates of alcohol abuse, problem gambling and abusive behavior were reported in the families in which problem gamblers grew up.

- For females as compared to males, a family history of more alcohol abuse (44% vs. 37%), and abusive behavior (39% vs. 18%) were reported.

15. Length of gambling and problem gambling:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Age began gambling	32 yrs	27 yrs	39 yrs
Age gambling began to be a problem	38 yrs	34 yrs	44 yrs
Years of gambling before calling Helpline	4 yrs	6 yrs	3 yrs

- Females began gambling 12 years later than males.
- After starting gambling, females developed a problem an average of two years sooner than males (5 years vs. 7 years).
- After a problem developed, females called the Helpline an average of three years sooner than males (3 years vs. 6 years).

16. Financial losses of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Money lost last 12 months	\$33,793	\$ 40,047	\$25,548
Money lost during lifetime	\$95,207	\$136,937	\$39,157
Average current gambling debt	\$24,321	\$ 27,319	\$20,507

- Males had more than three times greater lifetime losses than females (\$136,937 vs. \$39,157).
- Females lost a far greater percentage of their lifetime losses during the last 12 months of gambling than males (65% vs. 29%).
- Males had about 25% larger current gambling debt than females (\$27,319 vs. \$20,507).

17. Persons or institutions to which gambling debts are owed:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Owed to credit cards	74%	72%	78%
Owed to family	53%	53%	53%
Owed to friends	42%	44%	39%
Owed to banks	25%	24%	26%
Owed to co-workers	8%	9%	7%
Owed to casinos – credit line	8%	9%	7%
Owed to bookies	6%	11%	0%

18. Reported other addictions of problem gamblers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Tobacco	55%	54%	58%
Work	29%	28%	30%
Food	24%	18%	31%
Alcohol	21%	27%	13%
Spending/Shopping	21%	17%	27%
Drugs	11%	12%	8%
Sex	8%	8%	8%

- High rates of addictive behaviors were reported for problem gamblers
- Addiction to alcohol was more frequently reported for males than females (27% vs. 13%).
- Addictions to food (31% vs. 18%) and spending/shopping (27% vs. 17%) were reported more frequently for females.

19. Ever received help for a gambling problem or other addiction:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Ever attended Gamblers Anonymous.	12%	16%	5%
Ever received professional gambling treatment.	6%	9%	2%
Ever attended other 12-step group(s) for alcohol or drugs.	11%	14%	7%
Ever received treatment for other addictive behaviors.	9%	10%	7%

- Males had more often than females previously received help for gambling and substance problems.

20. The top four sources of Helpline number:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Telephone book	28%	31%	23%
Foxwoods Resort Casino	21%	19%	25%
Mohegan Sun	15%	13%	18%
Lottery point of purchase	15%	15%	15%

21. The top four resources suggested to callers:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Gamblers Anonymous	93%	91%	96%
State sponsored gambling treatment programs	74%	72%	75%
Gam-Anon	48%	51%	44%
Literature	19%	24%	12%

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Conclusion:

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

Recommendation:

- a) Public awareness information should emphasize the relationship between problem gambling and other disorders, especially addictions.
- b) Agencies which provide services for addictive and other disorders should be alerted that problem gambling might be a co-existing disorder which will need to be addressed in order to have a positive treatment outcome.

2. Conclusion:

High rates of alcohol and gambling problems and abusive behavior were reported to have been present in the homes in which problem gamblers grew up.

Recommendation:

- a) Increase outreach efforts to families and provide more information to family counseling, medical family practice and other agencies serving families.
- b) School curricula which address substance abuse and verbally and physically abusive behavior should include gambling education components.

3. Conclusion:

Serious negative financial consequences resulted from major gambling losses, such as difficulty paying bills and a variety of gambling related debt.

Recommendation:

Intensify educational efforts about problem gambling with respect to financial lending institutions, company credit unions and financial consultants/counselors.

4. Conclusion:

People with low income are at special risk for gambling problems as almost one out of four of the problem gamblers earned less than \$25,000 and about one out of two earned less than \$40,000 a year.

Recommendation:

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

5. Conclusion:

While overall profiles of male and female problem gamblers are more similar than different, important gender differences are evident in the data. For example, as compared to males, females were older, began gambling later in life, developed a problem in fewer years and called for help sooner after the problem developed.

Recommendation:

Since less research has been conducted with female than male problem gamblers and a smaller percentage of female than male problem gamblers are in treatment, less information about female problem gamblers has been available and disseminated. Profiles of female problem gamblers should be widely distributed to groups and agencies which focus on services to women. For example, the CCPG annually distributes such a profile based upon its Helpline report.

6. Conclusion:

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

Recommendation:

Since young adults are among those least likely to seek help for a gambling problem, this segment of the population and agencies which provide services for this age group should be targeted with information about the signs of problem gambling and where help is available. Substantial research data in the problem gambling field has shown that young adult gamblers are at high risk for problem gambling. The results of the first Connecticut research on university student gambling will be released in early 2003.

7. Conclusion:

Given that 78% of the problem gamblers were employed in various levels of the workforce and that 29% were reported to be addicted to work, it is likely that signs of problem gambling are evident in the workplace.

Recommendation:

Target the workplace setting and Employee Assistance Programs for problem gambling information and prevention programs. Include 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 at the gambling sites and through the media.

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: 88% 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 increasingly reach unserved problem gamblers and their families.

10. Conclusion:

Helpline data provide a valuable picture of the characteristics, behavior patterns and gambling experiences of problem gamblers across Connecticut. However, it cannot be assumed that all the characteristics of those identified through the Helpline are identical to problem gamblers who have not sought help.

Recommendation:

In order to provide the information needed for planning services, a state sponsored prevalence study of problem gambling in the general population is needed. This research, which is scheduled by the Division of Special Revenue for 2003, should utilize a sample of sufficient size to produce reliable conclusions and should comprehensively address problem gambling.