Male College Students are at Higher Risk for Gambling and Gambling Problems

Any college student can develop a gambling problem, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status.

Though gambling problems do not discriminate among groups, research shows that compared to female college students, male college students are more likely to have:

- Gambled in the past year\(^1\)
- Gambled with more money\(^2\)
- Reported having gambling problems.\(^3,4\)

High-Risk Gambling Prevalence Rates

Research shows that due to high risk factors, college students appear to represent the highest segment of the population with a gambling disorder.\(^5,6,7\)

Annual College Student Gambling Activity\(^1\)

- Lottery/numbers ........................................ 24.7%
- Casino gambling ........................................ 20.4%
- Cards, dice or game of chance ...................... 12.0%
- Professional sports gambling ....................... 11.4%
- College sports gambling ............................. 9.1%
- Horse/dog races ........................................ 4.5%
- Internet gambling ...................................... 2.6%
- Betting with a bookie .................................. 1.6%

College Gambling Policies

A study examining the gambling policies among a nationally representative sample of U.S. colleges and universities found that only 22% had a written policy concerning gambling, compared with 100% that has written policies for alcohol use.\(^8,1\). Less than 11% of U.S. college counseling websites mention problem gambling.\(^9\)
Signs of a Gambling Disorder*

A person shows signs of gambling disorder if he/she:

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired excitement.
- Exhibits restless or irritable behavior when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Is preoccupied with thoughts about gambling.
- Gambles when feeling distress (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- Chases one’s losses/returns another day to get even.
- Lies to conceal the extent of gambling.
- Jeopardizes a significant relationship, job, or opportunity because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

*For more information about gambling disorder, please refer to evaluation tools provided by the DSM-5.

Gambling and Other Risky Behaviors

Gambling and disordered gambling are associated with numerous negative consequences and are highly correlated with other risky behaviors in the college student population.

Compared to college students who do not gamble, college students who gamble are more likely to:

- Binge drink
- Use marijuana
- Use illicit drugs
- Smoke cigarettes
- Engage in unsafe sex after drinking

Compared to college students without gambling problems, college students with gambling problems are more likely to:

- Use tobacco
- Use alcohol, drink heavily or binge drink, get drunk
- Use marijuana or other illegal drugs
- Drive under the influence
- Be arrested for non-traffic offenses
- Binge eat
- Have a low GPA
- Experience depression and stress and consider and attempt suicide

Student Athletes and Gambling

- Student athletes may be at an even higher risk than other college students for developing serious gambling problems.
- Student athletes in major team sports like football and basketball appeared significantly more likely to gamble, gamble frequently, have high risk behaviors, gamble more money and develop gambling problems in comparison to other athletes.
- Hispanic male student athletes reported the highest problem gambling and gambling disorder rates.
- Increases in gambling problems among student athletes also appear correlated with substance abuse, gorging/vomiting, and unprotected sex.
Endnotes
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