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## Gambling and Young People


Dr Wayne Warburton



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### Take home messages


- Teens are actively groomed to gamble through popular video games, social networking sites and apps
- Teens are more susceptible to these messages than adults
- On average, one teen per classroom has a gambling problem
- BUT this problem is well hidden so it is important for us to be aware of the signs
- **Early detection can literally help save young people's lives**

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### Gambling


The day the fire brigade had to evacuate a club with gaming machines ...

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### In this talk

- See young adult problem gamblers
- Facts and figures, including prevalence
- Issues for youth
  - Prevalence in youth
  - Gambling within video games
  - Simulated gambling; SNS, internet, apps
  - Gambling in disguise as education
- Warning signs
- What you can do
- Resources


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### Video



*Do you remember  
your first bet?*

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### Where we are up to

- See young adult problem gamblers
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**Some facts and figures**



- Australia dubbed Gambling capital of the world; Estimated \$20billion plus PA
- Australians lose more money gambling per person than any other nation according to H2 Gambling Capital (H2GC), a British consultancy.
- Gambling venues and gambling problems are concentrated among the poorest social groups in Australia (Markham & Young, 2014)

**Some facts and figures**



- In Fairfield in Western Sydney - among the poorest 12% of local government areas in Australia, each adult resident lost an average \$2,340 on the pokies in 2010-11.
- In Ku-ring-gai and Willoughby, whose residents are among the richest 6% in Australia, poker machine losses were just \$270 per adult (Markham & Young, 2014).
- Especially high in the unemployed
- 42-75% of pokie spending Moderate Risk and Problem gamblers

**Measuring prevalence in adults**



- Most recent studies use the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI) or a 9-question sub-version, the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI)
- Three categories of gambling issues:
  - Low Risk (Score of 1-2)
  - Moderate Risk (Score of 3-7)
  - Problem Gambling (Score of 8+)

**PGSI**

0=Never 3 = Almost always



1. Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?
2. Still thinking about the last 12 months, have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?
3. When you gambled, did you go back another day to try to win back the money you lost?
4. Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?
5. Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?

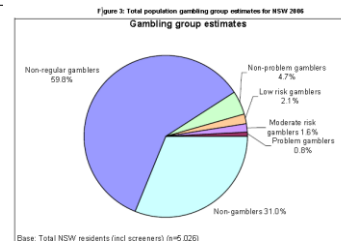
**PGSI**

0=Never 3 = Almost always



6. Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?
7. Have people criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?
8. Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?
9. Have you felt guilty about the way you gamble or what happens when you gamble?

**Prevalence in NSW (2006 Neilson Survey)**



## Prevalence of problem gambling



| Percent in each category | NSW | Vic | Qld | SA  | Tas | Over all |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Low Risk                 | 2.1 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 7.1 | 3.9 | 2.1-7.1  |
| Moderate Risk            | 1.6 | 2.4 | 1.9 | 2.5 | 1.8 | 1.6-2.5  |
| Problem Gambling         | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.5-0.8  |

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## A major public health issue



- Given an adult population of about 17.5 million this equates to somewhere between 368,000 and 578,000 Australians with substantial gambling problems
- Given that the current surveys may have under-reported prevalence, the number may be even higher.
- Either way, problem gambling is one of Australia's most serious public health issues

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## How big a social problem?



- Gambling problems: Australian social issue similar in magnitude to depressive disorder and alcohol misuse/dependence
- Years of healthy life lost annually due to gambling in Victoria alone: **101,675**
  - Damage to relationships
  - Emotional and psychological distress
  - Alcohol use
  - Health problems
  - Financial problems
- Importantly, 85% of social impact is from low risk and moderate risk gamblers (Browne et al, 2015)

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## Trends relevant to youth



### 1. Online gambling

- The i-revolution meets the gambling revolution
  - **1996:** Sports betting companies begin setting up in Australia
  - **2007:** Apple iPhone (smartphone) launched
  - **July 2007:** Zynga play poker game launched on Facebook
  - **2008:** Apple app store launched, apps for iPhone and iPod touch; First Android smartphone
  - **2008:** Betfair wins High Court case freeing gambling companies from much state imposed regulation

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## Trends relevant to youth



- **2009:** Strong growth in sports betting advertising  
Just over half of interactive gamblers first gambled this way during or after 2009 (Gainsbury 2013)
- **April 2010:** First iPad tablet arrives in Australia
- **2011:** Gambling apps made available in the Apple app store
- **Sept 2011:** Facebook allows gambling advertising
- **2012:** Facebook for the first time hosts a gambling game with cash jackpots

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## Trends relevant to youth



- **3 April 2013:** Zynga launch real money online gambling games. Partner with Bwin who offer a virtual poker party room and sports betting and are based in Gibraltar
- **2016:** Several comprehensive Australian reports detail:
  - the growth of online gambling,
  - convergence of online gaming and online gambling
  - impacts on teenagers and young adults

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## Trends relevant to youth



- What online access means for young people
  - Gambling illegal under age 18 but heaps of exposure anyway
  - Internet access 24/7 from anywhere with coverage
  - More gambling options
  - Can fit gambling episodes into smaller time windows
  - Grooming for adult gambling
  - Gambling-like games not regulated

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## Trends relevant to young adults 2. Sports betting saturation



- Sports betting has become cool
  - A new phenomenon: young, sensation-seeking (mostly) males betting online *bet365; Ladbrokes* etc.
  - Challenge to beat the bookie; masculinity
  - Better educated, better paid
  - Chase losses; remember wins
  - Some become addicted, but more getting into serious financial trouble

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## Problem gambling: Prevalence in youth



- Moore and Ohtsuka (1997).
  - 1017 young people 14-25
  - Prevalence ~3% problem gambling
- Delfabbro and Thrupp (2003).
  - South Australia yr 10, 11, 12 students
  - Prevalence ~3.5%
- **More recent Australian studies all suggest levels between 3 and 4%, with older teens more at risk.**

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## Problem gambling: Prevalence in youth



- **This rate of 3-4% is much higher than for adults**
- **On average, in a high school, there would be one child with a gambling problem in every class**

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### Problem gambling: Prevalence in youth



- One in 5 adults with problem gambling started before age 18
- Males at greater risk
- **Teenagers four times more likely to develop gambling problems than adults!**
- Thus teenagers far more vulnerable to activities that increase the risk of problem gambling

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### Problem gambling: Prevalence in youth



- **The earlier people start gambling, the greater the risk of developing gambling related problems** (Gupta & Derevensky, 2008).
- However, lots of teens are involved in gambling. Recent studies suggest that:
  - 60-80% of Australian teenagers have gambled in the previous year
  - 5-10% gambled frequently

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### Jake's story



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### Video games with gambling



- Many video games have a gambling component
  - Gamble as part of game – e.g. may play black jack or poker machines
  - Sometimes poker machines are built into the actual game so the player needs to play the pokies to progress further into the game
- Grand Theft Auto, Sims, Pokemon, Crossy Road
- No classification restrictions on such content
- Increasing convergence between games and gambling/gambling-like activities online

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### Case study: Counter Strike: Global Offensive



- Virtual weapons with textures/histories that increase their value (called 'skins' or 'finishes')
- Earned in games, traded, or purchased online in places such as Steam Market.
- Value from \$1 - >\$2,000 depending on rarity
- Use them like chips on skins gambling sites to bet on CS:GO matches, black jack, roulette, coin flip etc.
- But, as with actual gambling, the skins can be converted back to cash

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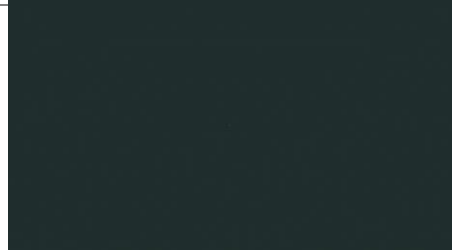
### Case study: Counter Strike: Global Offensive



- In 2015, estimated that >3 million people wagered \$2.3 billion worth of skins on e-sport matches (Brustein & Novy Williams, 2016)
- CS:GO creator Valve collects a percentage. (Brustein & Novy Williams, 2016)
- Gambling accounts can be set up in seconds
- Many sites unregulated, no age restrictions
- Children stealing parents credit cards to gamble, sometimes thousands (see ABC News story 2.6.16)

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### Case study: Counter Strike: Global Offensive



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### Gambling games in arcades



- Many arcade games now simulate gambling activities



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### Gambling games in arcades



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### Gambling games in arcades



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### Social networking, apps, online



- Up to 99% of 12-17 year olds use social media
  - 87% Facebook; 70% You Tube, 49% Instagram
  - 82% use daily (Gainsborough et al. 2015)
- Majority of Australian teens are strong consumers of internet (ACMA 2013; 2014)
- **SNS, Internet and apps are all popular platforms for 'simulated' gambling games**

### Social networking, apps, online



- **Simulated gambling games**
  - These games look and sound just like real gambling apps, but because you can't collect cash, they're available to anyone over 12.
  - Fastest growing area in social media gaming, with casino-style games such as *Heart of Vegas*, *Slotomania* and *Big Fish Casino* accounting for three of the top 10 iPhone gaming apps.



### Social networking, apps, online



- Simulated gambling games
  - **Unregulated** because not 'gambling'
  - Play for points and tokens instead
  - Can usually pay as well to progress
  - Making these '**micropayments**' increases chances of progressing to actual gambling markedly – **maybe up to eightfold.**



### Social networking, apps, online



- Side note: In-app purchases
  - Game design increases engagement, making it hard to leave a game
  - Then introduces limiting factor – time limit; very hard level etc. – and the only way to keep playing is with an in-app purchase
  - Candy Crush and Clash of Clans make about a million dollars a day from in app purchases

### Social networking, apps, online



- **Typically 30-50% of teens have used simulated gambling apps**
- 10-20% in previous 12 months
- King et al 2014 in Australia: 32%; 13%
- Hard for teens to ignore
  - **Pop ups, banners and side bars are constantly offering these games on popular sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Google+**

### Social networking, apps, online



- **Advertising has a disproportionate impact on children and teens**
- In particular, children and teens may struggle to identify advertising as advertising in the SNS, online, gaming and app environment, especially those under 12
- Kids may be exposed to over two hours of gambling advertising per week.  
Calculated by AdQuest eXtreme (Nielsen Media Research, August 2013)(from KidBet)

## Social networking, apps, online



- The use of sports stars or media celebrities to promote gambling has more impact on teenagers than on male sports viewers



## Social networking, apps, online



Bono, Shane Warne, Paris ...



## Social networking, apps, online



- **Simulated gambling prepares youth for actual gambling**
  - Gainsborough et al 2015. Australian teens
  - 23% play social casino games
  - Of these, **79% play 1-3 times per day**
  - **Most often via Facebook**
  - Amongst actual gamblers
    - 72% played social casino games
    - 12% did not
    - 40% of players made micropayments

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## Social networking, apps, online



- How does simulated gambling increase likelihood of actual gambling?
  - Normalisation of gambling
  - Micro-transactions encourage migration
  - Encourage gambling skill building
  - Increase confidence in gambling
    - **Payouts are inflated in simulated gambling to give the impression that wins in real games are larger and more frequent than is true**

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## Social networking, apps, online



- The chance of winning top prize at the pokies is 9.7 million to 1
  - The chance of winning first division Powerball is 55 million to 1
  - The chance of being killed by lightning is 1.6 million to 1
  - The chance of dying from a venomous bite or sting is 1 million to 1
- Centre for Gambling Research, 'Fact Sheet – Gambling Odds', 2003

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### Gambling disguised as education



- Some games which appear educational, or have educational benefits such as puzzle solving, developing motor skills, strategic thinking, time management etc. sometimes use gambling-like elements or have linked advertisements to simulated gambling.
  - *Home Boov Pop!*
  - *Cooking fever*
  - *Cut the rope*
  - *Scribblenauts remix*
- See ACCM site for thorough reviews

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- **Warning signs and risk factors**
- What you can do
- Resources

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### When is it a problem?



- Gambling is considered to become a problem when it harms:
  - mental or physical health
  - work, school and other activities
  - finances
  - reputation
  - relationships with family and friends.

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### Impact on youth



- Teenagers and young adults who gamble
  - can suffer depression and become suicidal;
  - may miss or drop out of school;
  - can experience tensions in friendships and family relationships;
  - may resort to criminal behaviour to bankroll their gambling;
  - Can get into serious financial difficulty.

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### Risk factors



- Gambling behaviours in youth are strongly influenced by:
  - Home environment
  - Peers
  - Media influences

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### Risk factors



- Key risk factors
  - Positive attitude to gambling
  - Peer gambling and substance use
  - Sub-optimal family environment
  - Parent(s) gamble
  - Access to gambling services and products
  - In my experience, often a history of trauma

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### Risk factors



- Within person risk factors
  - Male
  - Low self esteem
  - Impulsive
  - Risk taking in other areas
  - Delinquent behaviours
- Similar risk factors as for internet gaming disorder and screen addiction

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### Warning signs



- Pathological gamblers are also often pathological liars
- Many have an extraordinary memory for their lies
  - Clark's nutcracker
    - 30,000 pine nuts in 5000 caches across 15 miles. Recover most even when covered in snow!
- Gamblers seem to have a similar capacity to remember hundreds/thousands of lies and how each relates to the others.

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### Warning signs



- **Tend to present to psychologists, counsellors and others with depression, not with gambling**
  - Just because the person presents as depressed or suicidal, do NOT assume they also want to stop gambling. This is very often not true.

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### Warning signs



- Seems flat or down and spends less time with friends or doing things they normally enjoy
- Moodiness, unexplained anger
- Decreased contact with friends
- Family/friends complain about being 'shut out'
- Avoidance of social events
- Control or manipulation by threat, lies or charm

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### Warning signs



- Secretiveness about activities; lying
- Spends lots of time talking about betting
- More concerned with betting/odds than the sport when watching a game
- Has arguments at home about money and betting
- Unexplained loans or debts; Borrows or asks for money from family and friends
- Money just 'disappears'

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### Warning signs



- Unpaid bills
- 'Losing' wallets or money regularly
- Disappears for amounts of time that cannot be accounted for
- Has no time for everyday activities
- Overusing sick days and days off
- Misses school, starts to fall behind
- Takes an unusual amount of time for tasks (for example, taking two hours to get milk from the corner store).

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### Co-morbid mental health and relationship problems



- Disordered gambling and internet gaming disorder have similar neurochemical bases, behavioural markers and paths of co-morbidity.
- Internet gaming disorder co-occurs with and predicts severity of disordered gambling (King et al. 2013)
- Co-morbidity with alcohol and substance use

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### Barriers to seeking help



- There are often barriers to young gamblers seeking help:
  - Gambling is illegal for minors; may fear disclosure to authorities
  - Ashamed
  - May have committed crimes
  - Want to keep gambling
  - Don't know how to raise it
  - Afraid of rejection or reprisals
- Thus, sensitivity needed in raising the issue

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### Strategies



- Key: Talk to the child
  - Several excellent guides. I particularly like those on the Kidbet website (see resources) esp. "*What's the big deal? Talking to teens about gambling*"
- Look at web resources together
- Know which games have gambling content. Australian Council for Children and Media – gambling information on hundreds of popular apps

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### Strategies



- Gambling counselling (free)
  - Self-exclusion programmes, including from reputable online sites
  - Exercise
  - Help client find ways to avoid cues from environment
  - Social Support
  - Treatment for depression
- Financial counselling (free)
- Many helplines; also online sites (see Resources section)

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### Strategies



- Money options:
  - suggest setting a weekly spending limit
  - help them set up a budget; direct debits for bills
  - plan together how to temporarily limit their access to money
    - e.g. only enough money for food and essentials once bills are paid.
  - look after their credit and EFTPOS cards for them.

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## Strategies



### Money options:

- You may also need to protect your own money. If necessary:
  - set up separate bank accounts
  - remove your name from shared credit cards or bank accounts
  - don't share your PINs
  - don't leave credit cards or money lying around.

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## Strategies



- Access strategies:
  - Limit access to app store
  - Turn off in-app purchase options
  - Use web gambling filters
    - [Gamblock](#)
    - [Betfilter](#)
  - Use Internet monitoring software:
    - [Cyberpatrol](#)
    - [CYBERSitter](#)
    - [Net Nanny](#)

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## Strategies



- Remove other avenues of temptation and triggers to gamble (including peers)
- Find pleasurable alternatives to gambling
- Work towards an identity where masculinity is not linked to gambling

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## Resources



- Gambler's Help **1800 858 858**
- Gambler's Help Youthline **1800 262 376**
- Gambling Help Online:  
<http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/>
- Australian government site (w- fact sheets):  
<http://www.problemgambling.gov.au/>
- Financial Counselling – Financial Counselling Australia:  
[http://www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.a  
u/Home](http://www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au/Home)

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## Resources



- Gambler's Help (24/7) **1800 858 858**
- Gambler's Help Youthline (24/7) **1800 262 376**
- Gambling Help Online:  
<http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au/>
  - **Not just for kids with a problem – parents and kids whose parents gamble can call too**
- Kids Helpline (kids 4-25) **1800 551 800**

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## Resources



- KidBet (resources) [www.kidbet.com.au](http://www.kidbet.com.au)
- <http://www.responsiblegambling.vic.gov.au/getting-help/young-people>
- Australian government site (w- fact sheets): <http://www.problemgambling.gov.au/>
- Financial Counselling – Financial Counselling Australia: <http://www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au/Home>

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## Resources



- Popular internet gambling filters are:
  - [Gamblock](#)
  - [Betfilter](#)
- Internet monitoring software:
  - [Cyberpatrol](#)
  - [CYBERsitter](#)
  - [Net Nanny](#)

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## Resources



- ACCM app reviews with clearly labelled gambling information: <http://childrenandmedia.org.au/app-reviews/>

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## Take home messages



- Teens are actively groomed to gamble through popular video games, social networking sites and apps
- Teens are more susceptible to these messages than adults
- On average, one teen per classroom has a gambling problem
- BUT this problem is well hidden so it is important for us to be aware of the signs
- **Early detection can literally help save young people's lives**

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## THANK YOU



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