Gambling and Young People

Presented by
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Gambling and Young People

What do you need to know?
1. What types of gambling are young people using?
2. How do young people become involved in gambling?
3. What is problem gambling?
4. What can you do?

Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

- My travel costs for this presentation were covered by Generation Next.
- My research is applied and often involves real-life settings to understand gambling with the aim of enhancing the provision of responsible gambling strategies.
- Research is only conducted with formal ethics approval.
- I have received research funding, honorariums, and travel costs from gambling industry bodies, government departments, and organisations that are funded indirectly from taxes and/or contributions from the gambling industry.

Context: Gambling in Australia

- Gambling losses almost $24 billion (2015-16)

Gambling in Australia

Australia's next generation is high-risk gamblers

Young people are gambling

50-70% Australian adolescents have gambled
- Cards & informal
- Lotteries & scratch cards

Participation in sports betting and online lottery games is increasing
Is gambling appealing?

Top reasons for gambling (11-15 year-olds)
1. To make money
2. Fun/entertainment
3. Excitement

New technology and gambling: Internet gambling

11% of adolescents gambled online (past year)
- Offshore sites may have no age gates
- Multiple payment options

New technology and gambling

- Virtual reality
- Augmented reality
- Skill-based gambling
- Fantasy sports

Esports, Professional Gaming Tournaments:
213.8 million viewers, US$696 million

New technology and gambling: Esports betting

- $5.5 billion wagered in 2016
- 8.5% UK adults
- 16% past-month Australian Internet gamblers
- More highly educated
- Younger (28% aged 20-29 years old)
- Culturally diverse

New technology and gambling: Skins betting
New technology and gambling: Skins betting

- Skins = virtual items
- Can be bought, sold, and traded
  - Used as currency
  - Used for gambling
- No regulation
- $7.4 billion worth of skins bet 2016

Why are you telling me all of this?

- Young Australians are gambling
- Many irrational beliefs
  - “I am a skilled gambler”
  - “I can beat the house”
  - “My luck is due”
- Early engagement is highly formative
  - Big win the worst outcome
  - Early engagement predictive of later problems

Why are you telling me all of this?

What can I do?

- Talk & listen
- Teach about the industry, how gambling works, the house advantage

How do young people become involved in gambling?

Advertising

Social media

75% 11-15 year-olds seen gambling ads on SNS
9% follow gambling companies on SNS
Self-reported impact of ads:
- Twice as likely to gamble online
- 20% increased desire to gamble
- 11% increased gambling
Social media marketing does not include warnings
- 60% of social media users had never noticed responsible gambling messages

Video, online, & mobile games

Young Australians play gambling-themed games
- 1,287 Australian high school students
  - 13% played simulated games last year
  - 32% at least once
- 561 Australian adolescents
  - 23% played social casino games
  - 22% played practice games

King et al., 2014; Gainsbury et al., 2015

Concerns about gambling-themed games
- Inflated payouts
- Normalisation
- Favourable attitudes
- Migration to gambling
- Contribute to gambling problems
- In-game spending
- 33% thought games increased chance of winning in gambling
- 28% stated games increased their gambling

Why are you telling me all of this?
- Young Australians are aware of gambling
- But, they may not understand it
- May be learning misconceptions
- Need assistance learning critical appraisal

Problem gambling
Difficulty limiting time & money gambling and experiencing adverse consequences
- Around 1% of Australian adults have severe gambling problems
- Around 7% have at least some gambling problems
- Around 6 people affected by every problem gambler
Problem gambling

**Harms**
- Psychological and health impacts
- Relationship damage
- Education & employment disruption
- Debt
- Crime
- Continued problems into adulthood

Which youth are at greatest risk?

**Risk factors**
- Male
- Cultural diversity (Asian, Indigenous, foreign students)
- Early gambling involvement (& wins)
- Family gambling involvement & environment
- Historical trauma
- School & social difficulties
- Risk-taking
- Delinquent behaviours
- Poor psychological functioning (depression, substance use)
- Low self-esteem
- Impulsivity

Which youth are at greatest risk?

**Warning signs**
- Mood: Flat, anger, moodiness
- Decreased activities: social and leisure
- Secretiveness
- School absences
- Preoccupation with sports, Internet
- Money: missing, borrowing, stealing, selling/losing possessions, having large amounts

Impact of familial gambling problems

- Abuse (physical, verbal, emotional)
- Neglect
- Family breakdown
- Loss of trust
- Financial (poverty, doing without)
- Modelling

Why are you telling me all of this?

- Talk to young people
- Be open & non-judgmental
- Share how to access resources
- Not all youth are problem gamblers
  - But, some may benefit from help & education

Why are you telling me all of this?

**Strategies for gambling (18+)**
- Critical thinking
- You can't beat the house
- Only gamble what you can afford to lose
- Set a limit, stay within it
- Look after mates
- Keep it fun
Thank you!

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References & resources