

# **Behavioral Addictions: Not All Addictions are Substance Use Disorders! Gambling Disorder**

**Timothy Fong MD, UCLA Gambling Studies Program**

55<sup>th</sup> Annual ASAM Conference, April 5, 2024



# Disclosure Information

## Behavioral Addictions: Not All Addictions are Substance Use Disorders!

April 5, 2024; 1:15 -2:30

Timothy Fong MD

☀ Research Support:      Connections in Recovery



# Learning Objectives

- ☀ Name three emerging trends in gambling behavior
- ☀ Review DSM-5 criteria for gambling disorder
- ☀ Strengthen screening and assessment skills to identify risky gambling behavior
- ☀ Name three evidenced-based treatment strategies for gambling disorder

# Gambling Trends in 2024

- ✱ Traditional Forms of Gambling
  - ✱ Sports Betting Explosion (38+states)
  - ✱ Casino gambling expanding
  - ✱ Internet Gambling Options – nearly unlimited
- ✱ Blurring lines between gaming and gambling
  - ✱ Social Casinos (gambling or gaming?)
    - ✱ In-App Purchases
  - ✱ Video Games
    - ✱ Loot Boxes
  - ✱ Financial Trading Software and Apps

# DSM-5 Gambling Disorder

- ☀ Formerly known as:  
pathological gambling, compulsive gambling,  
problem gambling
- ☀ Formerly housed in Impulse Control Disorder (DSM-IV)
- ☀ Currently housed in Substance Related and Addictive Disorders (2013)
- ☀ Supported by biopsychosocial research (1990-2010)

# DSM-5 Gambling Disorder

A. Persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior as indicated by four (or more) of the following in a 12-month period:

Preoccupation

Tolerance

Chases

Can't stop

Lying

Withdrawal

Bailed Out

Lost opportunities

Gambles when  
distressed

# Prevalence (California)

n=7,121 respondents, 18 years and older

Lifetime:

Problem gambling	2.2%
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Pathological gambling	1.5%
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Past-Year:

Pathological Gambling	1.3%
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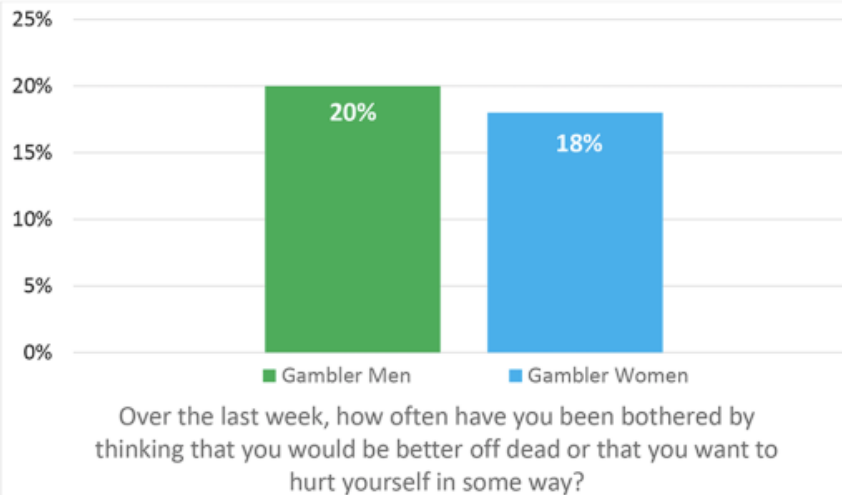
Highest Risk:

African-Americans, Disabled, Unemployed, Men

# Consequences of Gambling Disorder: Suicide

## CalGETS Fast Facts

### Problem Gamblers' Depression and Suicidal Thinking is a Public Health Concern



Source – *Outpatient Gamblers*: CalGETS Fiscal Year 2019-20 dataset, prepared for the California Department of Public Health, Office of Problem Gambling by the University of California Los Angeles Gambling Studies Program. *CA Depression*: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2019. [accessed Jan 26, 2021]. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>. *US Gambler Suicidal Ideation*: Séguin, M., Boyer, R., Lesage, A., McGirr, A., Suissa, A., Tousignant, M., & Turecki, G. (2010). Suicide and gambling: psychopathology and treatment-seeking. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 24(3), 541. *CA Suicidal Ideation*: Grant, D., Caldwell, J., Padilla-Frausto, D. I., Aydin, M., & Aguilar-Gaxiola, S. (2012). More than half a million California adults seriously thought about suicide in the past year. Policy brief (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research), (PB2012-4), 1–8.

January 2021

Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, 606 problem gamblers entered CalGETS outpatient treatment.

At intake, 24% of these clients scored in the moderately severe to severe depression range as measured by the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) compared to 15% of adult Californians reporting *any* depression diagnosis.

Among U.S. gamblers seeking treatment, between 20% and 40% report suicidal ideation and/or suicide attempts in the past year.

Among gamblers entering CalGETS outpatient treatment, 19% report suicidal thoughts in the *past week*, which is 10 times higher than adults in California reporting suicidal thoughts in the past year (1.8%).

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call 1-800-GAMBLER. ☎ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, call 1-800-273-8255 (TALK).



# Physical Consequences of Gambling Disorder

## ☀ Review of NESARC Data

- Focus on older adults (55+)

## ☀ GD status was associated with elevated odds for incident arteriosclerosis and heart conditions.

- Increased risk beyond established risk factors
- Increased incidence of cardiovascular conditions among older adults with pathological gambling features in a prospective study

J Addict Med. 2013 Nov-Dec;7(6):387-93. doi: 10.1097/ADM.0b013e31829e9b36.

Pilver CE1, Potenza MN.



# Physical Consequences of Gambling Disorder

- ☀ National Epidemiological Survey: (N=3412)
  - Prevalence 0.9% (n=31) for pathological gambling behavior and 2.5% (n=85) for problem gambling behavior
  - GDs were almost 3.5 times more likely to experience a sleep problem compared to individuals who did not have a gambling problem
- ☀ Community Survey: (N=120)
  - GDs experience significantly poorer sleep quality and increased daytime sleepiness relative to those that recreationally gamble.

Parhami, Iman, et al. "Pathological gambling, problem gambling and sleep complaints: An analysis of the National Comorbidity Survey: Replication (NCS-R)." *Journal of Gambling Studies* 29.2 (2013): 241-253.

Parhami, Iman, et al. "Sleep and gambling severity in a community sample of gamblers." *Journal of addictive diseases* 31.1 (2012): 67-79.

# Screening Tools

## Brief Biosocial Gambling Screen

**(BBGS)** *A “yes” answer to any of the questions means the person is at risk for developing a gambling problem.*

- |  |                                 |                                |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. During the past 12 months, have you become restless, irritable or anxious when trying to stop/cut down on gambling?   | YES<br><input type="checkbox"/> | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. During the past 12 months, have you tried to keep your family or friends from knowing how much you gambled?   | YES<br><input type="checkbox"/> | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. During the past 12 months did you have such financial trouble as a result of your gambling that you had to get help with living expenses from family, friends or welfare? | YES<br><input type="checkbox"/> | NO<br><input type="checkbox"/> |



NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMING

[www.ncrg.org](http://www.ncrg.org)

[www.divisiononaddiction.org](http://www.divisiononaddiction.org)

# Treatment Approaches

- ☀ Medications (No FDA-Approved)
- ☀ Brief Interventions
  - Helplines, Self-Help Workbooks,
- ☀ Psychotherapy
  - CBT, MI, Psychodynamic, Supportive
- ☀ Gambler's Anonymous
- ☀ Intensive Outpatient and Residential Treatment Programs

# Medication Approaches

## ☀ Strongest Research Evidence for:

- Naltrexone
  - ☀ PO, not IM
- Nalmefene
- Lithium (BP Spectrum)

*“Pharmacological treatments in pathological gambling”* (British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology 2014)

# Gambling-Specific Treatments

- ✱ Blocking software / apps (GamBan)
- ✱ Self-Exclusion Programs
  - ✱ Brick / Mortar and Online
- ✱ Financial literacy / debt management
- ✱ “If gambling is 24/7, then treatment should be 24/7”
- ✱ Gambling Helplines
  - ✱ 1-800-GAMBLER

# Final Takeaways/Summary

- ☀️ Gambling disorder is hidden and more common than suspected
- ☀️ Screening and asking questions about gambling behavior should be standard of care
- ☀️ Most cases do not present for treatment until consequences are severe
- ☀️ Treatment strategies work, alignment with addiction and mental health best practices
  - ☀️ Get to know your state's gambling treatment resources

# uclagamblingprogram.org

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Dr. Fong discusses the rise of paid fantasy sports  
Sacha Feinman and Josh Isreal interview Dr. Timothy Fong for an article on fantasy sports betting for Think Progress

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### Freedom from Problem Gambling

The UCLA Gambling Studies Program (UGSP) is a non-profit organization within the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles. Our mission is to reduce the individual, familial, and societal harm caused by pathological gambling. Since 2005, we have been engaged in conducting research, providing cost-effective prevention and treatment services, and offering education and training opportunities to healthcare providers and the community at large.

Research	Treatment	Education
UGSP is committed to the advancement of research. We use a wide range of research methods to continually investigate the biological, psychological, and	UGSP has a number of outpatient treatment options available for problem gamblers and their families. Our team of experts understand and treat problematic	UGSP provides educational and training opportunities for mental health providers across Southern California. We also welcome local and international volunteers,



# Contact Information

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**Deadline is March 18, 2024.**

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2024

35th Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium

November 14 - 17  
NAPLES, FLORIDA

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry



# References (Required)

Kraus, S. W., Etuk, R., & Potenza, M. N. (2020). Current pharmacotherapy for gambling disorder: a systematic review. *Expert Opinion on Pharmacotherapy*, 21(3), 287-296.

Ribeiro, E. O., Afonso, N. H., & Morgado, P. (2021). Non-pharmacological treatment of gambling disorder: a systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *BMC psychiatry*, 21(1), 1-15

Di Nicola, M., De Crescenzo, F., D'Alò, G. L., Remondi, C., Panaccione, I., Moccia, L., ... & Janiri, L. (2020). Pharmacological and psychosocial treatment of adults with gambling disorder: A meta-review. *Journal of Addiction Medicine*, 14(4), e15-e23.