

# Association Between Employment and Gambling Disorder

W. Seymour, M.P.H.<sup>1</sup>, C. Scheele, M.A.<sup>1</sup>, L. Levy, J.D., M.P.H.<sup>1,2</sup>, A. Monaghan<sup>1</sup>, J.E. Swanberg, Ph.D.<sup>3</sup>, J.K. Tracy, Ph.D.<sup>1,2,4</sup>

1. Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD. 2. Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling 3. University of Maryland School of Social Work, Baltimore, MD. 4. Department of Medicine, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD

## BACKGROUND

- Relatively little research has been conducted to examine the relationship between employment and gambling behavior.
- Problem gambling is estimated to cost the U.S. economy \$5 billion per year in direct costs from job loss and unemployment benefits.<sup>1</sup>
- There are significant additional indirect costs related to increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, employee theft and fraud, errors in judgment, among others.<sup>2</sup>

## OBJECTIVE

- To examine the relationship between employment status and gambling behavior.

## METHODS

- Participants (n=1090) were enrolled in the PEGASUS (Prevention and Etiology of Gambling and Substance Use in the US) study, an ongoing longitudinal study of gambling behavior in Maryland.
- Demographic information was collected via self-administered questionnaire.
- Gambling behavior was assessed using the Alcohol Use Disorder and Associated Disabilities Interview Schedule (AUDADIS-IV)
- Participants who identified as transgender were not included in the final analysis (n =2) and listwise deletion was used to correct for missing data. The final analytic dataset included 1056 participants

## SAMPLE

Table 1. Demographics

|                                   | Range        | Mean (SD)      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Age                               | 18-78 years  | 43.4 (14)      |
|                                   | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| <b>Gender</b>                     | 1086         |                |
| Female                            |              | 51.8           |
| Male                              |              | 48.2           |
| <b>Race</b>                       | 1083         |                |
| White                             |              | 41.8           |
| African-American                  |              | 47.9           |
| American Indian/Alaska Native     |              | 0.5            |
| Asian                             |              | 4.6            |
| Other or Mixed Race               |              | 5.2            |
| <b>Employment Status</b>          | 1076         |                |
| Employed                          |              | 50.7           |
| Unemployed                        |              | 25.3           |
| Non-Working                       |              | 24             |
| <b>Disordered Gambling Status</b> | 1087         |                |
| Disordered Gambler                |              | 37.8           |

## RESULTS

- In bivariate analyses, gambling disorder was significantly associated with:
  - Employment status (p <.001)
  - Race (p < .001)
  - Age (p = .006)
- Disordered gamblers were older than individuals who did not exhibit disordered gambling behavior gamblers (M = 46.63 ± 12.4 years and 41.4 ± 14.7 years, respectively, p < .001).
- The association between gender and disordered gambling status was not significant.

## RESULTS

Table 2. Adjusted Odds Ratios of ever having problem gambling disorder

| Variable                      | Odds Ratio  | 95% CI     | P Value |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|---------|
| Age                           | 1.02        | 1.00-1.03  | .006    |
| <b>Gender</b>                 |             |            |         |
| Female                        | 1           |            |         |
| Male                          | [Reference] |            | -       |
| Female                        | 0.76        | 0.57-1.01  | .06     |
| <b>Race</b>                   |             |            |         |
| White                         | 1           |            |         |
| African American              | 5.27        | 3.84-7.23  | <.001   |
| American Indian/Alaska native | 2.06        | 0.32-13.15 | .443    |
| Asian                         | 1.02        | 0.41-2.56  | .963    |
| Other/Mixed                   | 3.87        | 2.07-7.23  | <.001   |
| <b>Employment Status</b>      |             |            |         |
| Employed                      | 1           |            |         |
| Unemployed                    | 2.14        | 1.54-2.99  | <.001   |
| Non-working                   | 0.6         | 0.41-0.88  | .009    |



## RESULTS

- African Americans were 5.27 (95% CI: 3.84-7.23) times more likely to have a gambling disorder, controlling for age and employment status.
- For each year of a participant's age, the odds of lifetime gambling disorder increased by 1.5% (95% CI: 1.00-1.03).
- Being unemployed was associated with 2.14 (95% CI: 1.54-2.99) times higher odds of ever having a gambling disorder compared to the odds of ever having a gambling disorder for someone who is employed.
- Non-working participants were significantly less likely to have ever had a gambling disorder (OR 0.60, 95% CI: 0.41-0.88)

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Employment status correlates significantly with problem gambling disorder, even after controlling for other factors.
2. Results suggest gambling disorder disproportionately affects the unemployed and African-Americans.
3. Our preliminary findings suggest a need for outreach programs on problem gambling to concentrate on unemployed persons.

## REFERENCES

1. National Opinion Research Center, *Overview of the National Survey and Community Database Research on Gambling Behavior: Report to the National Gambling Impact Study Commission*, Chicago, IL: National Opinion Research Center, 1999.
2. Hawley CE, Glenn MK, Diaz S. "Problem gambling in the workplace, characteristics of employees seeking help" 2007. *Work* (29) 331-340.

## FUNDING

Funding for this project was provided by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Behavioral Health Administration [#M00B4400404; PI: JK Tracy].