**Background**

In recent years the nature of gambling in British society has started to change. Traditional images of men in betting shops and at the race track, and women at bingo, are being influenced by the introduction of the National Lottery, online gambling, televised poker and gambling advertisements (Orford et al., 2003).

Internet gambling appears to be only a small percentage (6%) of betting activity, but those who gamble online participate more frequently than those who gamble elsewhere and problem gambling rates are higher than for than many forms of traditional gambling (Wardle at al., 2007).

Land gambling research indicates that men and women gamble in different ways. Women are more likely to gamble due to boredom, loneliness and to escape from problems, whereas men are more likely to gamble for excitement, risk and to make money (Potenza et al., 2001). Additionally, different players are attracted to different types of games, with different games being associated with different problem gambling risk profiles (Petry, 2002). It is not yet clear from research how similar internet gambling is to land gambling.

This research aims to investigate similarities and differences between male and female internet gamblers, between players of different games and between problem and non-problem internet gamblers. Comparisons will be made with existing land gambling research findings and theories.

**References**


Potenza, M., Steinberg, M., McLaughlin, S., Wu, R., O'Malley, S., & Rounsaville, B. (2001). Gender related differences in the characteristics of problem gamblers using a variety of online gambling modes (e.g. poker, betting, betting exchange, slots, bingo, casino games, lottery). Interviews will cover participants’ internet gambling history; how and why they started and continued gambling online and how it affects their lives, good and bad. Analysis will be undertaken using grounded theory to develop a conceptual framework enabling structured comparisons by gender, game and gambling level.

**Method**

**Phase 1**

Semi-structured interviews with 35 male and 35 female internet gamblers. These will form a sample that represents non-frequent, frequent and problem internet gamblers using a variety of online gambling modes (e.g. poker, betting, betting exchange, slots, bingo, casino games, lottery). Interviews will cover participants’ internet gambling history; how and why they started and continued gambling online and how it affects their lives, good and bad. Analysis will be undertaken using grounded theory to develop a conceptual framework enabling structured comparisons by gender, game and gambling level.

**Phase 2**

Key associations between concepts in the framework will be tested quantitatively to support the qualitative findings. A sample of approximately 200 gamblers who use the internet will be asked to complete questionnaires about their gambling levels, and other key variables, to test selected associations. Following this, theoretical comparisons with land gambling addiction models will be made.

**Findings under development**

Starting Gambling

- Friends or family
- Advertising and promotions
- Convenience
- Smoking ban
- Self exclusion from land gambling
- Debt solution

**Continuing Gambling**

- Excitement
- Enjoyment
- Socialising
- Developing a skill
- Winning
- Accessibility
- Escape from reality

Early indications suggest that women tend to respond to advertising or be introduced by friends whereas men tend to transfer their existing gambling activity online for convenience. This can be quantitatively tested in Phase 2 of the research.

**Progress**

Interviews have been analysed for 25 female internet gamblers (data from Conroy & Davis, 2008). This has resulted in a number of themes and associations between themes which are under development. Analysis is ongoing for 10 male interviews. The central concept of the research is Motivators in Gambling.

**Early interviews**

- Ruth (PG) *
  - it is strange like I don't feel depressed all the time but it is mainly at night it is worse and then I got interested - Rosemary (FG) *

Women appear to talk more about gambling providing an escape from their problems whereas men talk more about winning and skill. No firm conclusions can be drawn from this yet.

**Vulnerability**

- Lifestyle—boredom, isolation, loneliness
- Life events—relationship problems, bereavement
- Individual factors—depression, personality traits, poor health

It's when I'm a bit bored, If I am on my own, and then it's something that you can pick up anonymously...I have got one daughter that lives with me now, but if she is away, you know, if I am on my own, I will play it more - Rosemary (FG) *

I enjoyed it because it was so easy to do, it was online, I got really into it...well I wasn't really doing it for the money, I was doing it for the fun of it really the joy of gambling and taking the risks - Rebecca (FG) *

* FG = Frequent Gambler; PG = Problem Gambler

**Contact details**

Dept. of Psychology & Counselling
Janette Davis (PhD Student)
J.M.Davis@greenwich.ac.uk
0208 331 7577

Sponsored by

**Research Centre for Children, Schools and Families**

**Research in and Out of Problem Internet Gambling:**

**The Role of Gender and Type of Game Played**

Janette Davis & Rolsyn Corney
School of Health and Social Care

- **Background**

- **Method**

- **Findings under development**

- **Progress**

- **References**