

editorial

## In this issue

This issue of the *Journal of Gambling Issues* examines the phenomenon of problem gambling through a variety of theoretical lenses and with a range of methodological tools. This issue's diversity provides a partial reflection of the scope of ideas and orientations to problem gambling that exists within the field.

In their article "An evaluation of two United Kingdom online support forums designed to help people with gambling issues," Wood and Wood examine the internet as a cutting-edge treatment medium for problem gamblers. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, we hear from problem gamblers themselves about the experience of receiving support from their peers online.

Ladouceur and Sévigny, in their article "Electronic gambling machines: Influence of a clock, a cash display, and a precommitment on gambling time," examine three responsible gambling features that have been included on video lottery terminals (VLTs) in the Canadian province of Québec. By reporting on the perceptions and behaviours of gamblers who use VLTs, they provide a much-needed contribution to the limited evidence base that concerns the preventive utility of responsible gambling features aimed at reducing the harm of VLTs.

In one of two articles related to public health in this issue, the opinion piece "Should gambling be included in public health surveillance systems?" by Blase Gambino provides a framework for future discussion on the importance of including indicators of the effects of gambling on provincial/state epidemiological surveys. In the second article, David Marshall's "Gambling as a public health issue: The critical role of the local environment," the argument is made that the circumstances unique to any given geographic place will have major implications for the way problem gambling should be addressed, prevented, and treated.

In Ferentzy, Skinner, and Antze's article, "Gamblers Anonymous and the 12 Steps," we are introduced to the mutual aid environment of Gamblers Anonymous and its divergences from other 12-Step programs; notably, we learn that GA differs from groups like Alcoholics Anonymous in the amount of attention it pays to financial issues, particularly for new members experiencing the pressures associated with a heavy debt burden. Peter Ferentzy also co-authors a second article in this issue with colleague Nigel Turner, entitled "Gambling and organized crime — A review of the literature." This article is an ambitious synthesis of the current knowledge regarding the historical and contemporary relationship between gambling and organized crime, gleaned from a wide variety of sources including law enforcement reports, governmental commission reports, the scientific literature, and film.

Harrigan and Dixon's contribution to this issue, entitled "PAR Sheets, probabilities, and slot machine play: Implications for problem and non-problem gambling", is an

examination of the game design information for several video slot machines (i.e., electronic gambling machines (EGMs)) offered in Ontario, Canada. The authors provide an inside look at the structural characteristics of video slot machines, examine the video slot machine gambling experience for infrequent and frequent gamblers, and discuss the implications that video slot game design might have for engendering and maintaining problematic gambling behaviours.

I hope the diversity and quality of the scholarship in this issue helps expand your thinking on gambling-related issues.

Daryl Boshart  
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