



Women and Problem Gambling

(excerpted from National Council on Problem Gambling Statement to SAMHSA Advisory Committee for Women's Services: Problem Gambling Issues: May 11, 2009)

1. Women are now just as likely as men to gamble at casinos and play the lottery—a significant increase in participation over the past two decades. Women remain generally more likely to play bingo and slot machines,¹ though less likely to gamble at the track, on sports, on cards or illegal gambling.²
2. Women problem gamblers generally start gambling later in life than men and progress to pathological gambling more quickly;^{1,3} however, girls who are impulsive or sensation seeking are as likely as boys to begin gambling in adolescence.⁴ Adolescent girls who gamble are about four-fold more likely than boys who gamble to experience symptoms of depression.⁵
3. Women pathological gamblers wager more often in response to gambling cues and advertisements than men pathological gamblers.⁶
4. Women are now equally represented in treatment, a significant change in the past decade as previously men were overrepresented in treatment.⁷
5. Problem gambling is more heavily stigmatized for women than for men because of sex role stereotypes.⁸
6. Problem gambling is more prevalent in minority communities,^{9,10} and African American, Hispanic and Native American women may be particularly vulnerable because of the role that some forms of gambling (i.e. bingo) plays in the social life of these communities.
7. There is a stronger association in women problem and at-risk gamblers with the following psychiatric disorders:
 - Nicotine dependence
 - Major depression
 - Dysthymia

- Panic disorder
- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Social phobia¹¹

In addition, studies comparing male and female gamblers have reported that females were more likely to be African-American and either retired, unemployed or otherwise outside the workforce;¹ prefer lower denomination slot machines and longer sessions of play;² had fewer problems with drugs or gambling-related arrest;³ and higher rates of affective disorders⁴ and histories of physical abuse.⁵ Women with disabilities are also at greater risk for gambling problems.¹⁶

For more on women and problem gambling:

<http://lanecounty.org/prevention/pgs/women.htm>

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