

Youth/teens and problem gambling



New Data Reconfirm Risks Associated with Youth Gambling

Gambling and problem gambling among young people remains an important and growing issue in Oregon. In 2007 a statewide prevalence study (1,555 matched pairs parents and adolescents aged 12 to 17 years and their parents) on youth and gambling revealed the following:

- Six in 10 Oregon adolescents (63 percent) have gambled, 46 percent gambled in the past year and 3 percent gamble weekly or more.
- 1.3 percent of Oregon youth are problem gamblers; 4.6 percent are at-risk gamblers. That means there are between 1,100 and 6,300 adolescents with severe gambling-related difficulties.
- Preferred games in order: free Internet gambling-type games, cards (poker), sports bets, games of personal skill.
- Almost half report spending nothing* on gambling per month; 40 percent spend less than \$10 per month. Despite being less likely to gamble regularly, black, Hispanic and Asian adolescents report spending significantly more on gambling per month than white adolescents.
- Risk factors that increase the chances of being a problem gambler include: coming from a single-parent household, gambling on card games and sports, being male, older adolescent, household income below median, playing sports for school, having lost more than \$50 in a single month, started gambling before 8th grade.

- Adolescents in families with parents who gamble are twice as likely to be an at-risk gambler and four times as likely to be a problem gambler.
- Adolescent problem gamblers are significantly more likely to have used alcohol, tobacco or drugs in the past year; they are also more likely to have skipped school, been hurt by and to have deliberately hurt someone else, been cautioned by the police, arrested and been to court in the past year.
- High proportions of parents (regardless of whether they gamble) have inaccurate beliefs about gambling, such as thinking that gambling is harmless, and that youth who gamble are unlikely to have problems in school; they also believe that youth gambling is not associated with alcohol or drug use.

* may be due in part to “free” online gambling

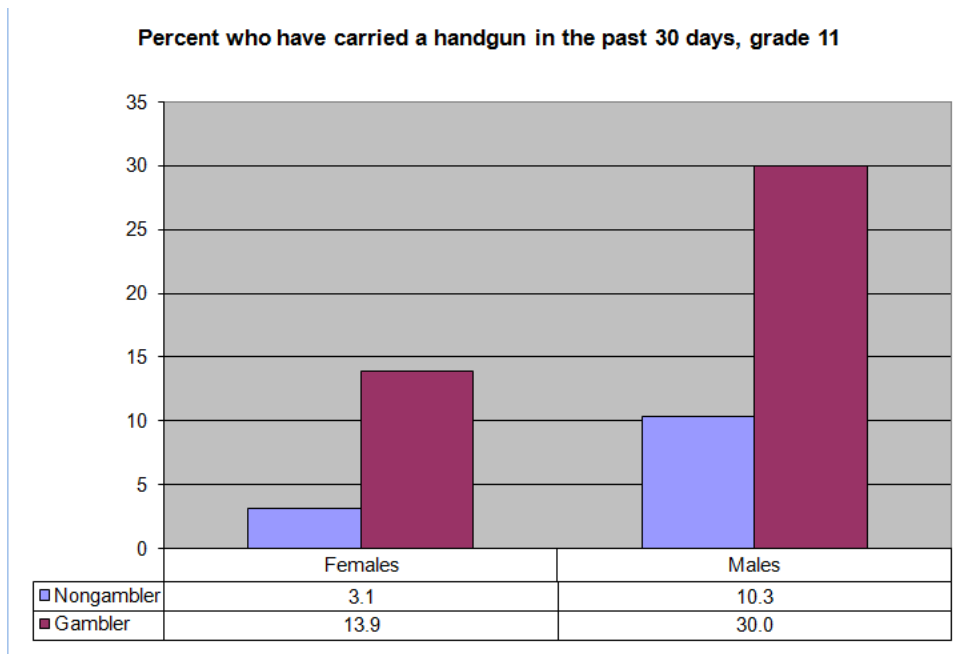
According to Oregon’s Healthy Teens Survey, the association between gambling and other risk behaviors is strong.

OREGON HEALTHY TEENS SURVEY 2008

11th graders and gambling

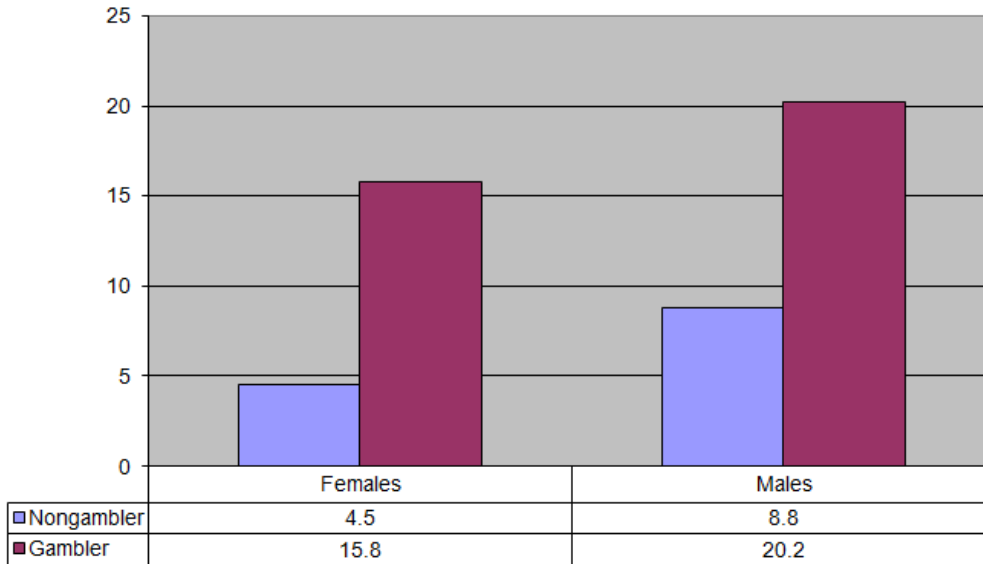
The following graphs illustrate the connection between youth gambling and other risk behaviors.

- Youth who gamble are much more likely to be involved in other risky behaviors.
- Gambling needs to be included in discussions of healthy choices and risky behaviors at school, in the community and at home.
- Gambling is not a harmless alternative activity for youth.
- Boys are more likely to gamble than girls.
- It is important to include gambling in the discussion in places or systems where high-risk youth are already engaged (alternative high schools, juvenile justice, at-risk intervention programs).



Key to Graphs
 non-gambling youth = lighter bar;
 youth who gamble = darker bar

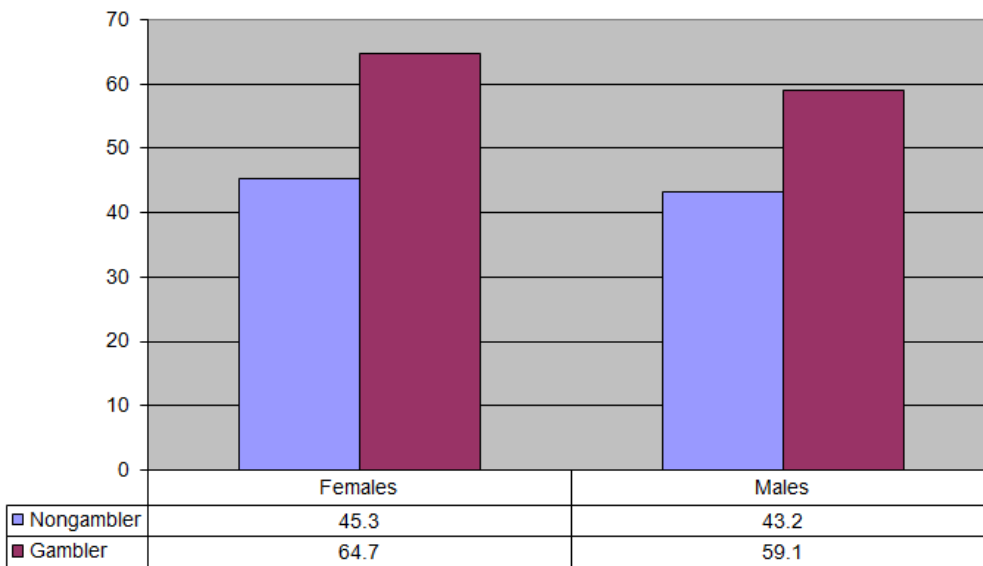
Percent who attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them in the past 30 days, grade 11



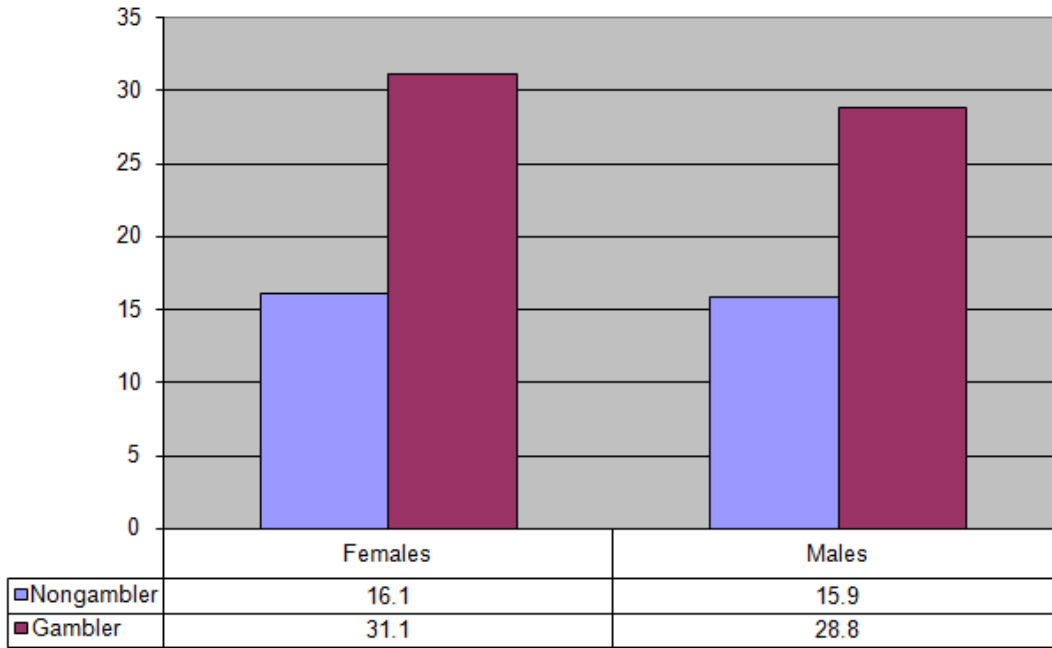
Key to Graphs

non-gambling youth = lighter bar;
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Percent who drank alcohol on one or more occasion in the past 30 days, grade 11



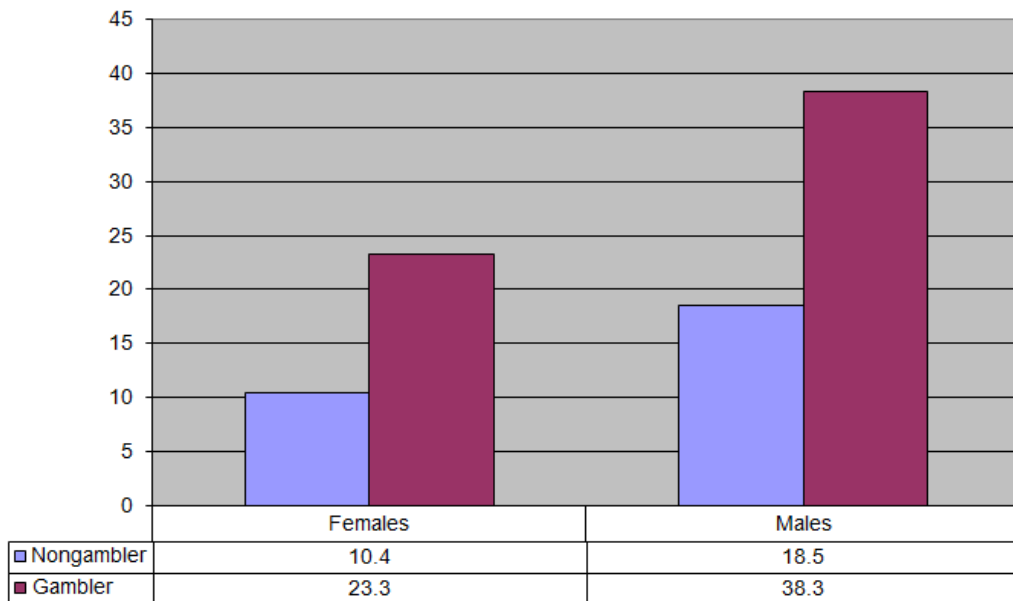
Percent who binge drank in the last 30 days, grade 11



Key to Graphs

non-gambling youth = lighter bar;
youth who gamble = darker bar

Percent who were in a physical fight in the past 30 days, grade 11



According to the preceding graphs, Oregon Healthy Teens data tell us clearly that youth gambling accompanies several other risky behaviors, yet it is rarely included in school and community prevention efforts. Youth gambling should be addressed in such prevention awareness and education programs, as illustrated below.



Oregon has a statewide system of problem gambling prevention services which can help address this need by providing information, speakers, awareness and prevention materials and even funding in some cases. Contact Wendy Hausotter at 503-945-9703 or wendy.hausotter@state.or.us for more information.