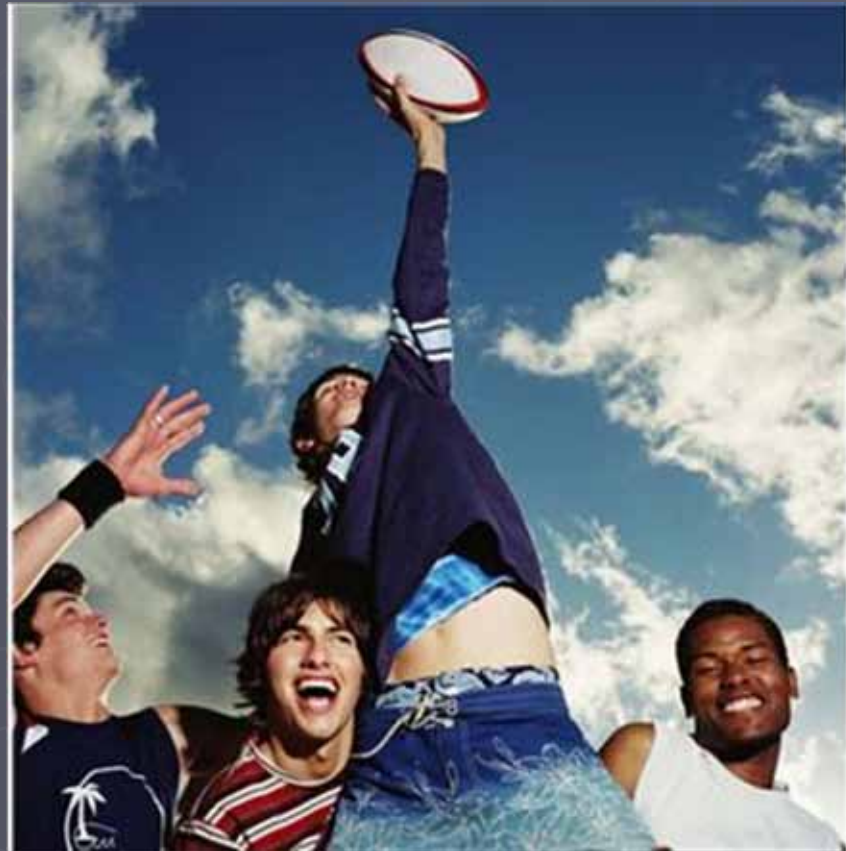


# “At least they aren’t drinking”

## The Risks of Problem Gambling in Teens of the Net Generation

Rachel Johnson,  
MS, CHES



# Net Generation

- ▶ Digital Technology Available
  - Television
  - Computers
  - Internet
  - Linked Digital Cameras
  - Instant Messaging
  - Video Chat
  - Cell Phones (can be all of the above)

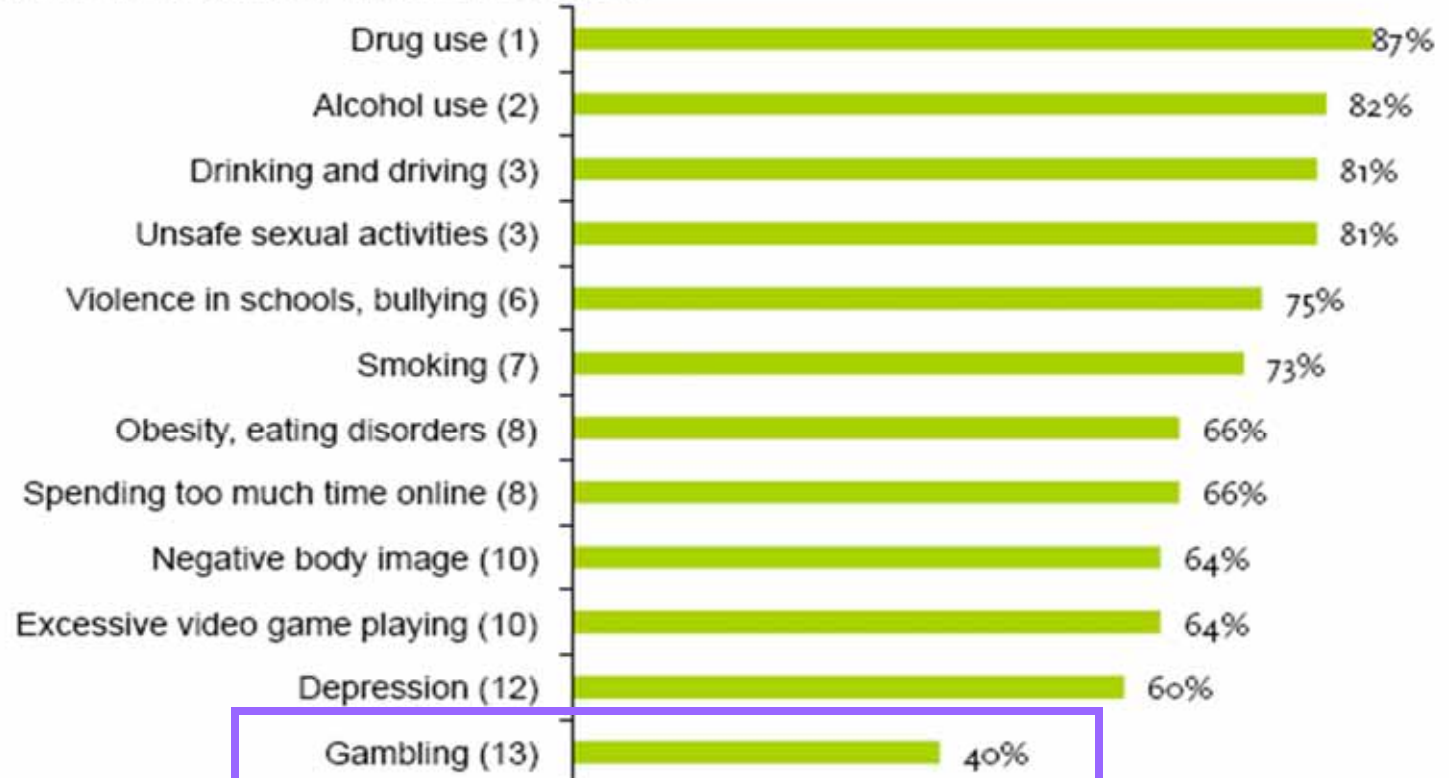
# What is Gambling?

- ▶ Gambling is any game involving risk and possible reward where money or valuables may be won or lost
- ▶ Commonly misunderstood by teens and parents



# So what, my kids not 21...

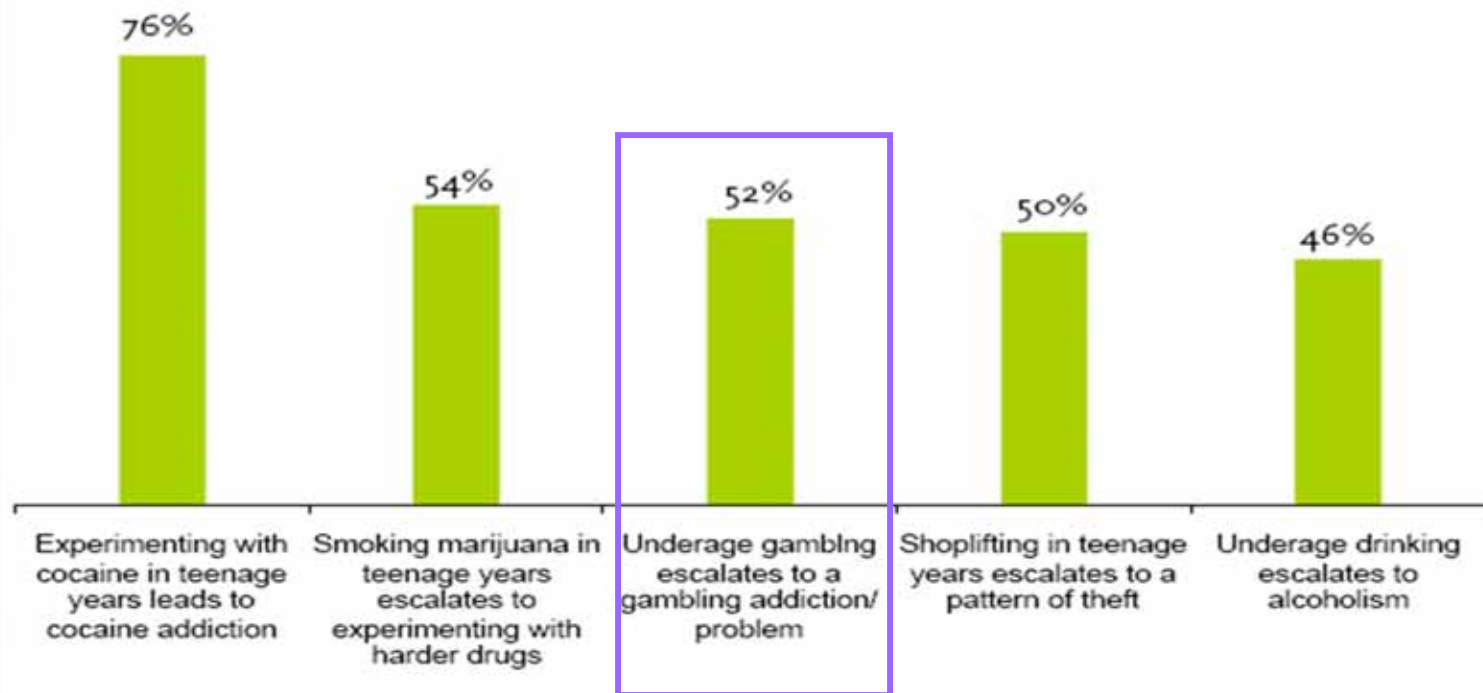
FIGURE 1: SERIOUS YOUTH ISSUES



In your opinion, how serious of an issue are the following for teens today? Note, figures represent top two box responses: "serious" and "very serious."

# ...but I know it can cause problems

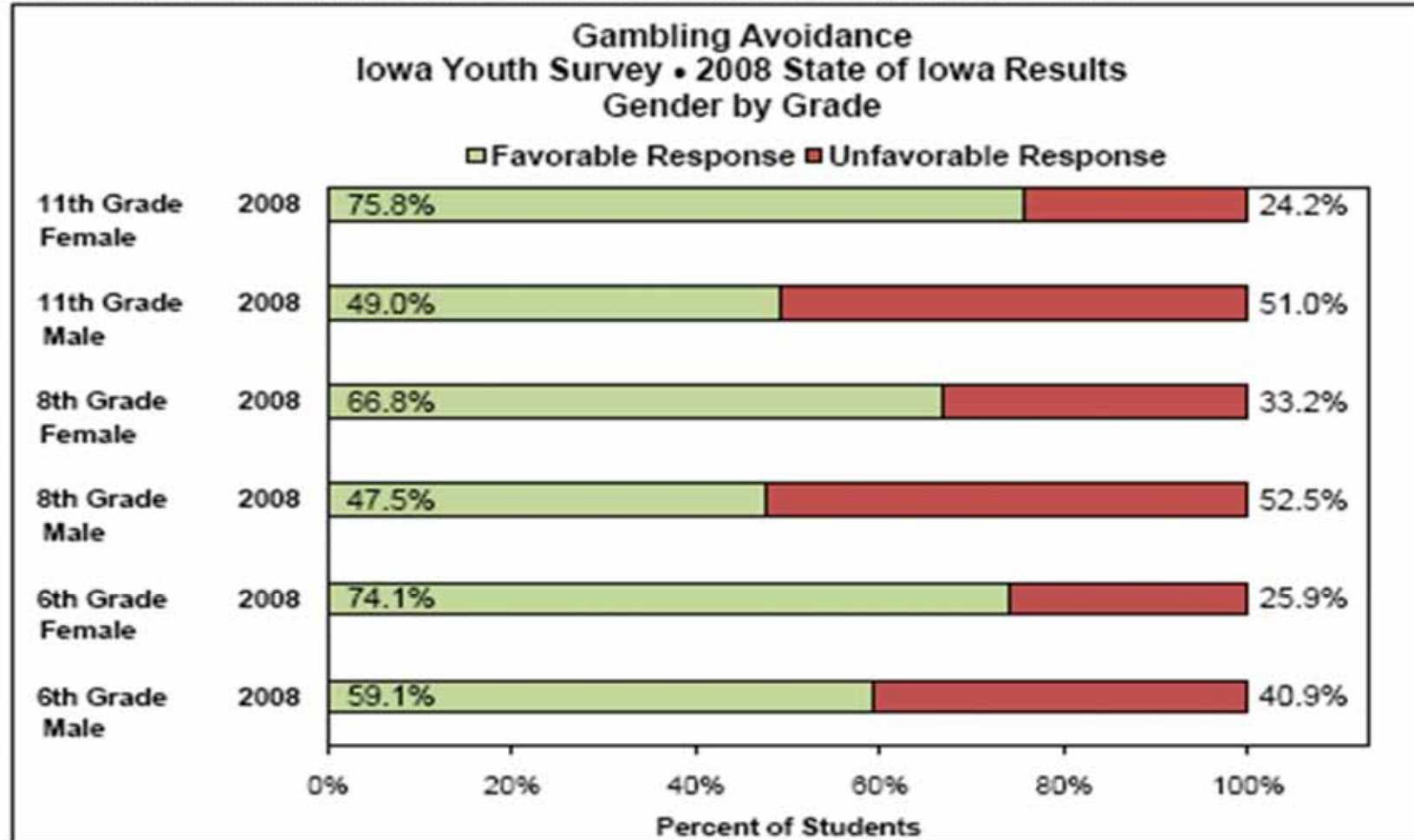
FIGURE 15: PARENTS BELIEVE EXPERIMENTATION IN TEENAGE YEARS LEADS TO SERIOUS PROBLEMS



In your opinion, how likely is the following to happen? Note, figures represent top two box responses: "likely" and "very likely."

# Iowa Teens

Figure 27d. Gambling Avoidance Construct 2008: Gender by Grade



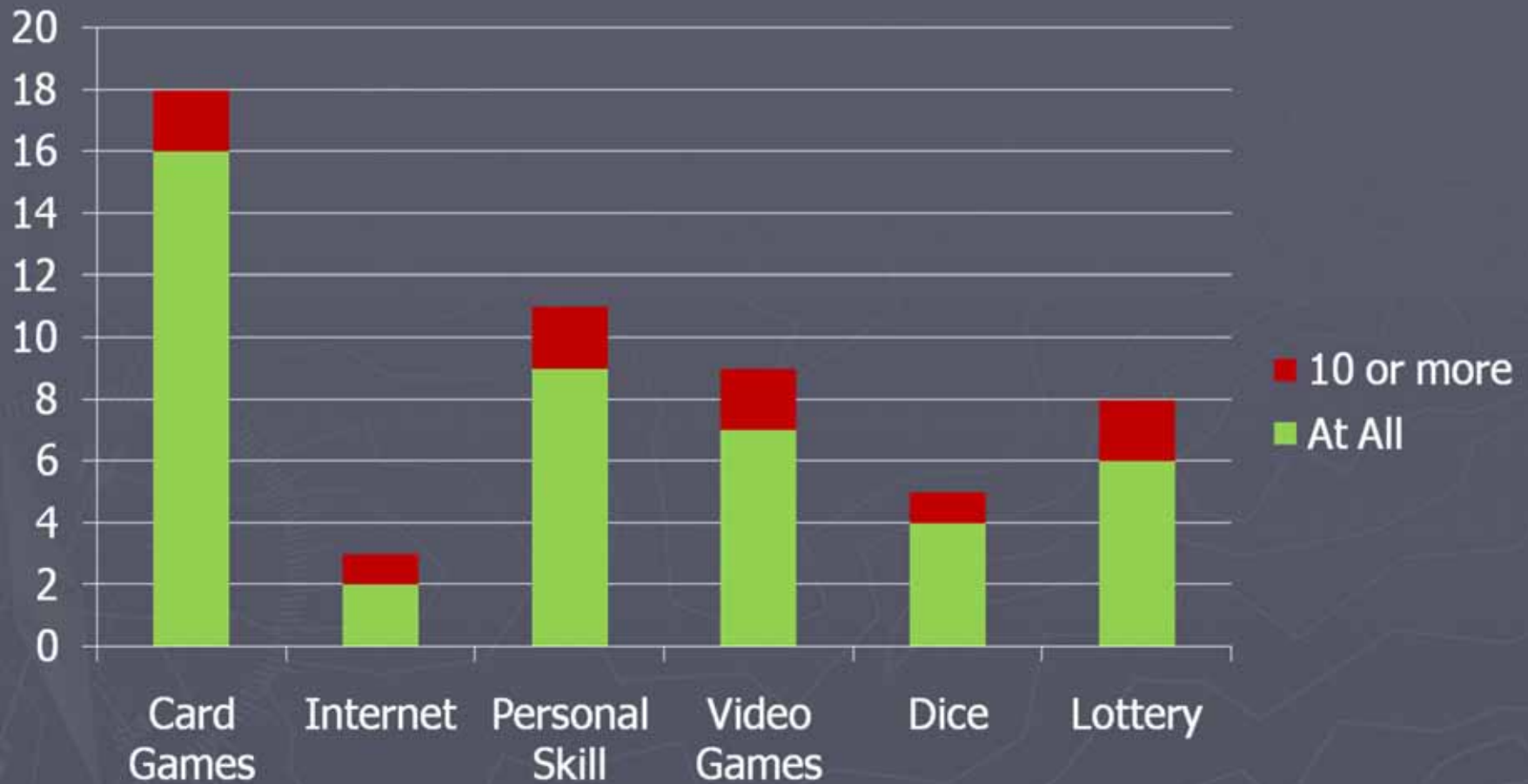
Note: Any difference of 1.6 percentage points or greater may be considered statistically significant.

# Iowa Teens

- ▶ 38% of Iowa gambled in 2008
  - 48% male
  - 28% female
- ▶ Card games with friends or family most popular
- ▶ Gambling losses increased with age
- ▶ 3% of males report losing more than \$100
- ▶ 8% showed a sign of gambling being a problem (2008 & 2010)

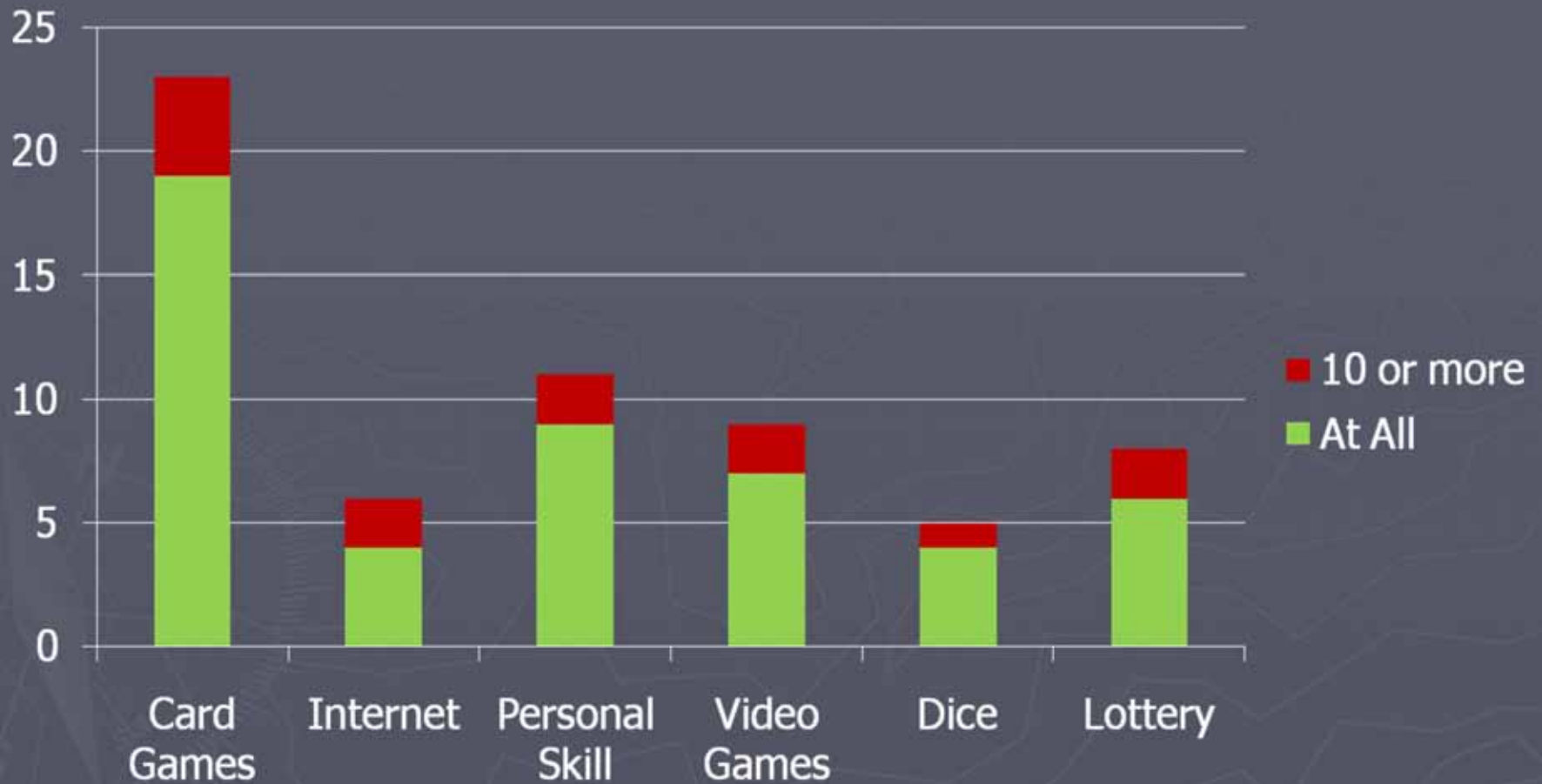
2008 Iowa Youth Survey. IDPH. Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation: University of Iowa.

# Iowa Teens





# Iowa Teen Males



# Why do teens gamble?

- ▶ Have fun
- ▶ Relieve boredom
- ▶ Prove skill
- ▶ Make “easy” money
  - Strong cognitive processing starts around age 11/12
- ▶ New athlete

Gupta, Rina, Derevensky, Jeffrey L., (1998) *Adolescent Gambling Behavior: A Prevalence Study and Examination of the Correlates Associated with Problem Gambling*. Journal of Gambling Studies. Springer Netherlands. 14. 4. 319 – 345.



Jonathan Duhamel poses for photos after winning the World Series of Poker, Monday, Nov. 8, 2010 in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Isaac Brekken)  
Won \$8.9 million

# Accessibility

- ▶ Play with
  - Friends
  - Family
  - Online Counterparts
- ▶ Increased availability of funds
- ▶ Independence

# Marketing

- ▶ Point of sale
- ▶ Cartoon or board game themed gambling
  - Joe Camel esque
- ▶ XBOX Live points exchange
- ▶ Sports sponsors / ESPN2
- ▶ Free play sites
- ▶ M-gaming

# Progression of the Slots



# Accessibility



# Social Gaming



# Teen Gambling is Nothing New

1965 – New Jersey, 16yr old hosts, one student \$192 in debt

1987 – New Jersey, 17yr old female offered “comps” and play at 5 major casinos

1991 – Florida, 16yr old taking sports bets at school, one student \$3000 debt

2002 – Illinois, 25 middle schoolers busted in school sports betting gambling ring

20 THE CALGARY HERALD Thurs., Feb. 25, 1965

## Teen-Age Gambling Casino Uncovered In New Jersey

HAWORTH, N.J. (AP)—A gambling casino operated by teen-agers for a teen-age clientele has been uncovered in this community after operating about two months.

The gambling room was in the basement of a \$40,000 private home, police said Tuesday. They said the youthful host wore a white dinner jacket and black tie to receive his patrons.

Police said the operators of the gaming room, two 16-year-old and one 17-year-old, provided limousine service for some of the players. From records seized by police, it was determined that many of the players were in debt to the house.

“One 17-year-old boy was in debt \$192,” said Police Chief Gaston Michel. “There was a big winner too—a college boy who was \$300 ahead.”



# Risks of Gambling

- ▶ Breaking the law<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Lower grades<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Abuse alcohol and drugs<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Predators
- ▶ Unhealthy money management <sup>2</sup>
  - Financial troubles of Lotto winners
- ▶ Gaming if not gambling addiction
- ▶ Suicide
  - 20% of people treated for compulsive gambling have attempted suicide and 80-90% have considered <sup>1</sup>

1. National Council on Problem Gambling (2005)  
Retrieved on 02-13-09 from  
<http://www.ncpgambling.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1>
2. MacKay. 2005. *Betting on Youth: Adolescent Internet gambling in Canada.*  
[http://www.responsiblegambling.org/articles/Terri\\_Lynn\\_MacKay\\_discovery\\_2005.pdf](http://www.responsiblegambling.org/articles/Terri_Lynn_MacKay_discovery_2005.pdf)

# Progression from Recreational to Problem Gambling

- ▶ Genetic tendency to develop addiction (father)
- ▶ Major stressor in ones life
- ▶ Social attitude or morals about gambling
- ▶ Proximity to gambling facility
- ▶ Participation on practice websites
- ▶ Highly competitive personality
- ▶ Current or former addictions to substances

# Problem Gambling

- ▶ Gambling activity that creates problems in an individual's life, and can include problems with:
  - ▶ Physical Health
  - ▶ Mental Health
  - ▶ Finances
  - ▶ School/work performance
  - ▶ Interpersonal relationships



# Pathological Gambling

## DSM IV Criteria:

312.31 “A persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior as indicated by five or more of the following:”

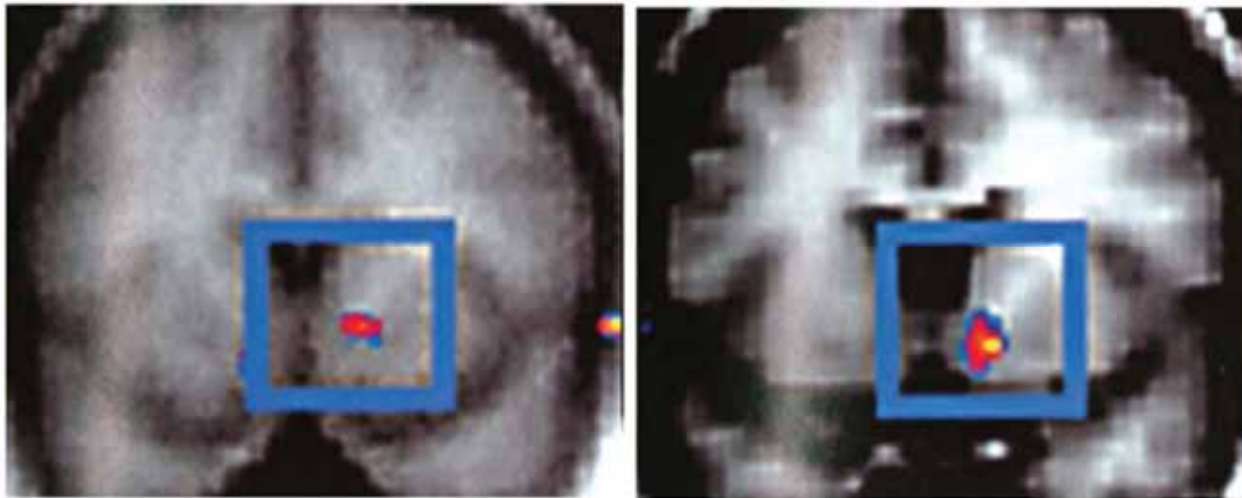
1. Preoccupation
2. Increasing amounts of money
3. Unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop
4. Restless or irritable
5. Gambling as a way to escape problems or dysphoric mood
6. After losing money, often returns to “get even
7. Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling
8. Illegal acts
9. Jeopardize or lose significant relationships
10. Relies on others to provide money to relieve financial situation

# Physiological Effects

- Naturally occurring chemicals in the brain play a role
- Serotonin, regulates mood and behavior
- Norepinephrine is connected to risk taking and arousal in compulsive gamblers
- Dopamine plays a part in developing an addiction as it makes you feel pleasure

## Expecting Dough vs. Expecting Dope

Nucleus accumbens flaring up



"Scoring" financially is almost indistinguishable from scoring a hit off an addictive drug.

Source: Your Money & Your Brain, Jason Zweig. (Courtesy of Hans Breiter, Harvard Medical School)

# What Can I Do???

- ▶ Stay informed
- ▶ Be a role model
- ▶ Monitor youth behaviors
- ▶ Talk to your schools
- ▶ Be a voice

# Teen Gambling Prevention Sites

- ▶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBH1LCq0YWo>
- ▶ [www.wannabet.org](http://www.wannabet.org)
- ▶ [www.youthbet.net](http://www.youthbet.net)

The background is a dark blue-grey color with a subtle pattern of light grey topographic map lines. In the lower-left corner, there is a faint, semi-transparent illustration of a compass rose with a needle pointing towards the top-left. The compass has markings for 'N', 'E', 'S', and 'W'.

# Questions???

Thank you for your time!