



The Massachusetts Council
ON GAMING AND HEALTH

Gambling Among College Students FACT SHEET

What is gambling?

Gambling is risking something of value on the outcome of an event when the probability of winning is less than certain.¹³

What is problem gambling?

Problem gambling is characterized by gambling behavior which leads to adverse consequences for the person who gambles, others, and the community.¹

What constitutes social gambling?

Social gamblers gamble for entertainment, typically will not risk more than they can afford, often gamble with friends, chase losses briefly, gamble for limited periods of time, and are not preoccupied with gambling.¹⁵

See DSM-5 for clinical definitions

The Massachusetts Council on Gaming and Health: A Resource For Help

The Council's Helpline provides live, confidential, and compassionate support 24-hours a day, 7-days a week:

800-426-1234.

Helpline workers provide:

- Information about problem gambling
- Referrals to self-help groups, treatment providers, and other community resources.

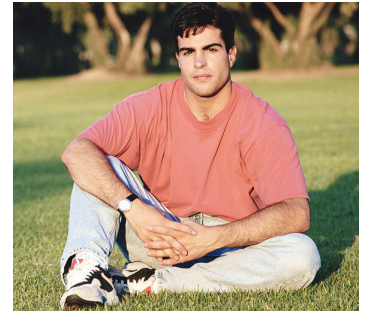
For more information, visit macgh.org or contact us at info@macgh.org or 617-426-4554.

Male College Students are at Higher Risk for Gambling and Gambling Problems

Any college student can develop a gambling problem, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or socio-economic status.

Though gambling problems do not discriminate among groups, research shows that compared to female college students, male college students are more likely to have:

- Gambled in the past year¹
- Gambled with more money²
- Reported having gambling problems.^{3,4}



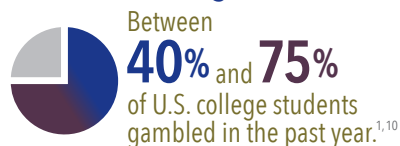
High-Risk Gambling Prevalence Rates

Research shows that due to high risk factors, college students appear to represent the highest segment of the population with a gambling disorder.^{5,6,7}

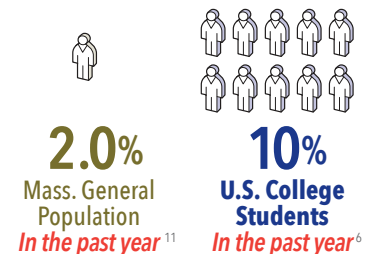
Annual College Student Gambling Activity¹

• Lottery/numbers	24.7%
• Casino gambling	20.4%
• Cards, dice or game of chance	12.0%
• Professional sports gambling	11.4%
• College sports gambling	9.1%
• Horse/dog races	4.5%
• Internet gambling	2.6%
• Betting with a bookie	1.6%

Gambling Rates



Problem Gambling Rates



macgh.org
Helpline: 800-426-1234

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College Gambling Policies

A study examining the gambling policies among a nationally representative sample of U.S. colleges and universities found that **only 22% had a written policy concerning gambling, compared with 100% that had written policies for alcohol use.**^{8, 1}

Less than 11% of U.S. college counseling websites mention problem gambling.⁹

Gambling and Other Risky Behaviors

Gambling and disordered gambling are associated with numerous negative consequences and are highly correlated with other risky behaviors in the college student population.

Compared to college students who do not gamble, college students who gamble are more likely to:

- Binge drink
- Use marijuana
- Use illicit drugs
- Smoke cigarettes
- Engage in unsafe sex after drinking¹

Compared to college students without gambling problems, college students with gambling problems are more likely to:¹⁶⁻¹⁸

- Use tobacco¹⁶⁻¹⁸
- Use alcohol, drink heavily or binge drink, get drunk¹⁶⁻¹⁸
- Use marijuana or other illegal drugs^{16, 18}
- Drive under the influence¹⁷
- Be arrested for non-traffic offenses¹⁸
- Binge eat^{16, 18}
- Have a low GPA¹⁸
- Experience depression and stress and consider and attempt suicide¹⁷

Student Athletes and Gambling

Student athletes may be at an even higher risk than other college students for developing serious gambling problems.^{5, 19}

Student athletes in major team sports like football and basketball appeared significantly more likely to gamble, gamble frequently, have high risk behaviors, gamble more money and develop gambling problems in comparison to other athletes.²⁰

Latino male student athletes reported the highest problem gambling and gambling disorder rates.²⁰

Increases in gambling problems among student athletes also appear correlated with substance use disorder,

bulimia and unprotected sex.^{18, 21}

62% of **MALE** student-athletes gambled within the prior year²¹



4.3% appear to exhibit a gambling disorder²¹

43% of **FEMALE** student-athletes gambled within the prior year²¹



0.4% appear to exhibit a gambling disorder²¹



Student athletes are more likely to be frequent gamblers and carry more gambling debt compared with **nonstudent-athletes**²²



Athletes in **GOLF** and **LACROSSE** appear more likely to wager on sports than other athletes²¹





Signs of a Gambling Disorder

A person shows signs of gambling disorder if he/she:

- Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money to achieve the desired excitement.
- Exhibits restless or irritable behavior when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
- Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling.
- Is preoccupied with thoughts about gambling.
- Gambles when feeling distress (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
- Chases one's losses/returns another day to get even.
- Lies to conceal the extent of gambling.
- Jeopardizes a significant relationship, job, or opportunity because of gambling.
- Relies on others to provide money to relieve desperate financial situations caused by gambling.

For more information about gambling disorder, please refer to evaluation tools provided by the DSM-5.

Endnotes

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