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Card Playing Trend in Young People Continues

About 2.9 Million Young People Gamble on Cards in Average Week
Increased Use of Internet Gambling Sites Also Observed

The results of the Annenberg Public Policy Center's 2005 National Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth (NARSY) indicate that the likelihood that young men will gamble on card games continues to increase. The national survey of 900 young people, ages 14 to 22, found a 20% increase in monthly rates of card gambling compared with our previous study conducted in the summer of 2004. This large increase indicates that more young people are being drawn to this form of gambling.

Based on our latest estimates, there are approximately 2.9 million young people between the ages of 14 and 22 who are gambling on cards on a weekly basis. Over 80% of these youth are male. Card playing may also be spilling over to increased use of Internet gambling sites. Those who play cards are also more likely than other gamblers to gamble on the Internet.

The rate of gambling on cards at least once a week among 14 to 22 year old males went from 10.1% in 2004 to 12.5% in 2005, a statistically nonsignificant increase (see Table 1). However, the comparable rates for monthly card gambling jumped from 34.7% to 41.6%, a highly significant 20% increase over that time period (see Table 2). The rates for young women were considerably lower, indicating again that this phenomenon is primarily attracting young men. Only about 2.8% of young women reported gambling on cards on a weekly basis in 2005. Nevertheless, about 17.9% of young women report gambling on cards at least once a month.

As noted in last year's survey, the rate of card playing was even higher among youth who attend schools. About 14% of male high school youth reported gambling on cards at least once a week, and 15.4% of college youth reported the same activity. Monthly gambling among high school and college males was 37.0% and 50.4% respectively.

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The rate for male youth not attending schools (about 25% of 14 to 22 year olds) was lower at 8.2% weekly and 41.3% monthly in 2005. The higher rate among school-attending youth suggests that this practice is especially powerful in settings where young people spend time with each other and can arrange games with their friends.

“The rising rate of card playing and overall gambling is worrisome,” said Dan Romer, Director of the NARSY. “Young people are more prone to addiction and increased exposure to gambling during the adolescent years increases the chances of developing gambling-related problems.”

Internet Gambling

Card players are also more likely to report gambling on Internet sites. This is not surprising since most of those sites offer opportunities to wager on poker. Young men reported a statistically significant increase in weekly gambling on the Internet going from 1.1% in 2004 to 2.4% in 2005. The comparable rates for young women did not change (.7% both years). Monthly rates of Internet gambling remained stable with 19.6% of young men reporting monthly use of Internet gambling sites compared to 19.2% in 2004.

If such gambling were legally restricted, young people under the age of 21 would be prohibited from accessing these sites. Our survey indicates that about 2.5% of males between the ages of 14 and 20 use these sites on a weekly basis. This rate is no different from the overall rate for all youth in the survey. This finding supports concerns that Internet gambling sites do not adequately screen out underage players.

Based on these latest estimates, approximately 580,000 young people ages 14 to 22 gamble on the Internet on a weekly basis. Most of these young people are under age 21.

Overall Rates of Gambling Also Up

Gambling on cards also seems to be attracting more young people to gambling. Monthly rates of total gambling in young men went from 48.2% in 2004 to 57.1% in 2005. This increase appears attributable to the increased interest in card playing which accounts for about 70% of monthly gambling activity.

Weekly rates of gambling also have increased in young men going from 17.8% in 2004 to 23.9% in 2005. This increase is attributable to increased card playing with both friends and on Internet sites as well as other forms of gambling such as playing of the lottery.

Gambling Problems

NARSY asks self-identified gamblers four questions about symptoms of problem gambling: preoccupation, over-spending, tolerance and withdrawal. In 2004, 44.9% of young people who gambled weekly reported at least one of the problem symptoms. In 2005, the percentage increased to 54.5%. Card players tend to report more problem gambling symptoms than other types of weekly gamblers. If the trend toward card playing among young people continues, the overall severity of symptoms may also continue to increase.

We also asked persons who gamble at least once a month if their gambling ever led to their owing people money and if so, the highest amount they had ever owed. About 10% answered that it had. We estimated conservatively the average debt to be close to \$74. (We excluded one respondent who claimed he owed as much as \$10,000). This level of indebtedness would amount to over \$115,000,000 for the population of approximately 16 million monthly gamblers ages 14 to 22.

Table 1. Percentages of Youth (Ages 14-22) Reporting Gambling in Average Week: Years 2002 - 2005.

Type of Gambling By Gender	School Status by Year															
	High School (%)				Post High School (%)				Not in School (%)				Total (%)			
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2002	2003	2004	2005	2002	2003	2004	2005	2002	2003	2004	2005
Card Playing Total	6.2	3.9	7.2	8.2	1.4	4.3	7.0	8.4	3.1	11.5	4.4	7.7	4.4	6.0	6.3	7.9
Male	9.2	5.7	10.8	14.0	2.0	7.3	12.5	15.4	6.0	20.0	6.6	8.2	7.1	10.1	10.1	12.5
Female	3.6	1.5	3.3	1.6	0.0	1.1	2.2	1.6	0.9	2.5	2.0	8.1	1.8	1.8	2.4	2.8
Internet Total	1.8	1.4	1.3	1.3	0.5	0.7	0.7	2.4	0.9	1.3	0.3	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.6
Male	1.5	1.0	1.9	2.4	0.0	1.0	1.0	4.0	1.7	2.6	0.0	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.1	2.4
Female	2.1	2.0	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.7	2.0	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7
Other Gambling Total	10.1	9.7	7.9	9.5	7.3	8.5	9.8	9.6	18.3	17.9	12.3	14.9	12.2	11.5	9.5	10.7
Male	6.7	11.0	6.1	10.1	8.9	9.4	8.5	9.8	21.2	15.5	10.8	11.0	12.1	11.5	7.7	10.6
Female	5.7	2.9	5.1	4.9	4.3	2.2	7.0	3.9	9.9	8.5	9.4	3.1	6.7	4.5	6.8	4.4
All Gambling Total	13.2	11.4	12.9	16.7	8.3	10.6	14.7	15.5	19.7	23.5	14.6	15.9	14.6	14.4	13.7	16.0
Male	16.5	17.1	16.9	25.5	11.9	17.7	21.0	26.0	28.8	36.2	17.9	20.0	20.0	22.0	17.8	23.9
Female	9.8	5.9	8.7	6.6	5.2	3.3	9.2	5.5	10.7	11.0	10.8	12.1	9.2	6.7	9.3	7.3

Note: Other gambling includes playing the lottery, betting on sports or horse races, and use of slot machines. Shaded values indicate statistically significant change from 2004 to 2005.

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Table 2. Percentages of Youth (Ages 14–22) Reporting Gambling in an Average Month: Years 2004, 2005

Type of Gambling by Gender	School Status and Year							
	High School (%)		Post High School (%)		Not in School (%)		Total (%)	
	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005	2004	2005
Card Playing Total	21.3	24.4	34.0	38.2	29.1	34.3	26.3	30.1
Male	29.7	37.0	45.3	50.4	34.7	41.3	34.7	41.6
Female	12.0	9.9	24.0	26.6	22.8	26.5	17.6	17.9
Internet Gambling Total	10.5	8.5	20.5	20.7	17.7	19.7	14.6	14.2
Male	15.2	13.9	29.5	26.6	19.2	25.7	19.2	19.6
Female	5.7	2.2	13.1	15.0	16.1	13.3	9.9	8.5
Other Gambling Total	22.6	26.4	36.0	39.8	44.9	37.5	31.3	32.9
Male	27.9	34.6	40.3	44.7	44.9	45.0	34.9	40.0
Female	16.8	17.0	32.3	35.4	45.0	29.3	27.6	25.5
All Gambling Total	31.5	39.2	48.7	52.6	53.5	45.7	40.9	44.2
Male	40.3	53.4	59.0	65.3	55.4	56.0	48.2	57.1
Female	21.9	23.0	39.7	40.2	51.0	34.7	33.4	30.3

Note: Other gambling includes playing the lottery, betting on sports or horse races, and use of slot machines. Shaded values indicate statistically significant change from 2004 to 2005.

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Methodology

The surveys were conducted by telephone between May 8 and June 21 in 2002; between March 3 and June 30 in 2003; between April 27 and September 16 in 2004; and between April 28 and August 25 in 2005 by Shulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, Inc., using random digit dialing procedures. The survey is designed by the Adolescent Risk Communication Institute of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. The samples contain 900 (2003 and 2005) and 1501 (2004) completed interviews with young people ages 14 to 22 across the 48 contiguous states. The response rates were approximately 50% across the four years, which is comparable to the rate obtained by CDC (48.9%) in its national telephone surveys of behavioral risk factors. Results are weighted to represent national proportions for age, gender, race/ethnicity, and region of the country. Error ranges for the survey vary with the question, subgroup examined, and the year of the survey. The maximum error is +/- 3.3% for the entire samples in 2002, 2003 and 2005 and +/- 2.6% for the entire sample in 2004. When data are examined by subgroup, the maximum error is larger.

All respondents were asked questions about a range of risky activities, including the frequency of engaging in specific gambling activities "in an average month." Weekly gamblers are those who said they gambled at least once a week in an average month. Data for monthly gambling in years 2002 and 2003 are not shown since the questioning used to obtain these rates was not comparable to years 2004 and 2005.

If respondents had engaged in one or more specific gambling activities in an average month, they were asked four questions about difficulties related to their gambling. These items asked whether in the past year the respondent had (a) "often found yourself thinking about gambling," (b) "ever needed to gamble with more and more money to get the amount of excitement you want," (c) ever spent more than you had planned on gambling," and (d) ever felt bad or fed up when trying to cut down or stop gambling?"

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