

## Life Skills, Mathematical Reasoning and Critical Thinking: A Curriculum for the Prevention of Problem Gambling

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Published online: 20 December 2007  
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**Abstract** Previous studies have shown that youth are two to three times more likely than adults to report gambling related problems. This paper reports on the development and pilot evaluation of a school-based problem gambling prevention curriculum. The prevention program focused on problem gambling awareness and self-monitoring skills, coping skills, and knowledge of the nature of random events. The results of a controlled experiment evaluating the students learning from the program are reported. We found significant improvement in the students' knowledge of random events, knowledge of problem gambling awareness and self-monitoring, and knowledge of coping skills. The results suggest that knowledge based material on random events, problem gambling awareness and self-monitoring skills, and coping skills can be taught. Future development of the curriculum will focus on content to expand the students' coping skill options.

**Keywords** Prevention of problem gambling · Probability · Coping skills

### Introduction

Previous studies have shown that the prevalence of gambling problems amongst youth is two to three times higher than in the adult population (AADAC 2000; Griffiths 1995; Shaffer et al. 1997). The prevalence rate of pathological gambling for adults is about 1.5% but for adolescents it is estimated to be 5.0% (Nower et al. 2004). It has been argued that with the

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This study was funded primarily by a grant from the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre. Preliminary research and development was funded by the National Center for Responsible Gaming. The points of view expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health or our funding agencies. A partial summary of the data presented in this paper has been presented at various conferences including The National Council on Problem Gambling, Phoenix, 2004, The Responsible Gambling Council of Ontario, Toronto, 2004, International Council on Alcohol and Addiction, Toronto, 2003. A technical report from this study is available at <http://www.gamblingresearch.org> <http://www.gamblingresearch.org>

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