“WHO REALLY WINS?”
Scientific evaluation, implementation and dissemination challenges of Croatian youth gambling prevention program

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5th International Conference on Pathological Gambling and Behavioural Addictions
20-21 November 2017, Warsaw, Poland

Topics - strengths and challenges

1. Background and social context / gambling market in Croatia
2. Development of the Program
3. Pilot implementation & evaluation
4. Dissemination of the Program
1. Background & social context

Pilot research on youth gambling among high-school students in the City of Zagreb (N=261)

- SOGS-RA: 62.90% social, 25.70% at risk, 11.40% problem
- DSM-IV-J: 72.60% social, 19.80% at risk, 7.50% problem

boys > girls
1. Zagreb (p. 790.017)
2. Split (p. 167.121)
3. Rijeka (p. 128.384)
4. Osijek (p. 84.104)
5. Slavonski Brod (p. 53.531)
6. Vinkovci (p. 32.029)
7. Koprivnica (p. 23.955)

N=2.702

⇦ 81.6% gambled at least once in lifetime (lifetime prevalence)
⇨ most frequent = sports betting
⇨ around 20% high-school students regularly betting
⇨ around 35% male adolescents regularly betting
⇨ no differences with regards to age and legal possibilities
⇨ CAGI - GPSS subscale results
  ⇐ 12.9% high-severity of psychosocial consequences
  ⇐ 17.3% low to moderate
  ⇐ 69.8% no problems

Abstract

The main aim of this study was to explore the frequency of gambling and gambling-related problems among Croatian high school students. The specific objectives have been to explore gender differences, and differences in the frequency and severity of gambling problems regarding workplace and type of school program. The study included n=2,702 high school students from all five grades and all three types of high school programs (8th and 9th vocational/professional schools, and grammar schools) from 7 cities (Zagreb, Split, Rijeka, Vukovar, Slavonski Brod and Karlovac) with equal representation of boys (n=1,325, 49.2%) and girls (n=1,377, 50.8%). The respondents’ mean age was 19.11 (SDage = 1.77).

Official number of gambling venues in Croatia

- 12-15 times more gambling venues
- sports betting - the biggest expansion
- prohibited for minors (<18 years)
- very liberal market
- all games available on-line
- no regulation of advertising

* based on National Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2010
** based on Ministry of Finance official data, 2016
Development, pilot implementation, scientific evaluation, modification and re-piloting, finalizing the youth gambling prevention program „Who really wins?”

Dissemination and national implementation of the youth gambling prevention program “Who really wins?”
- The development of Gambling Treatment Program for the Justice System (prisons & probation service)

OTHER RESEARCH (national) STUDIES:
1. Parental perception of youth gambling (with McGill Univ.)
2. Mental-health professionals’ perception of youth gambling (with McGill Univ.)
3. Evaluation of treatment in Clubs for Gambling Addicts
4. Attitudes and Stigma towards Gambling in Different Social Context - an International Comparison
2. The development of the youth gambling prevention program “WHO REALLY WINS?”
Multidisciplinary approach - different expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team member</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prof. Neven Ricijaš, PhD</td>
<td>Adolescents risk behavior and gambling + treatment interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Prof. Dora Dodig Hundrić, PhD</td>
<td>Prevention science + preventive interventions in educational setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prof. Valentina Kranželić, PhD</td>
<td>Social &amp; cognitive psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Prof. Aleksandra Huić, PhD</td>
<td>Mathematician</td>
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<td>5. Toni Milun</td>
<td>Treatment counselor in daily clinic for gambling disorder</td>
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<td>6. Ana Rakić</td>
<td>Counselor in high-school</td>
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Theoretical and scientific framework

- universal psycho-educational program
- comprehensive (knowledge & skills)
- implemented in schools
- wide range of topics
- different teaching methods
- adequate length
- based on theory and empirical research
- positive relationships
- matched with age of participants
- socio-culturally sensitive
- evaluated

*Williams, 2002*
*Davis, 2003*
*Nation et. al., 2003*
*Najavits, Grymala, George, 2003*
*Ferland, Ladouceur, Vitaro, 2005*
*Derevensky et. al. 2006*
*Williams, West, Simson, 2006*
*St-Pierre, Derevensky, 2016*
Description & Implementation of the Program

- **program of universal youth gambling prevention**
  - general population of adolescents (14-16 years of age)
  - ones who don’t have experience in games of chance
  - ones who have experience, but didn’t develop significant problems

- **pilot implementation in 2 high-schools**
  (2 classes in each school)
  - one gymnasium program
  - one 3-year vocational program

General Aims of the Program

- prevention of youth gambling (minors)
- development of ‘right’ attitudes towards games of chance
- development of personally responsible gambling in the future
PARENTS
- 2 hours of lectures
- informative materials

HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS
- 9 weeks
- 9 x 45’
- active participation
- interactive

SCHOOL STAFF
- 2 hours of lectures
- informative materials

SKILLS
- CRITICAL THINKING
- PROBLEM SOLVING
- DECISION MAKING
- RESISTING PEERS
- UNDERSTANDING GAMES
- CHANCES
- RISK & CONSEQUENCES
- SPORTS BETTING
- MYTHS & FACTS
3. Pilot implementation and evaluation of the Program

Framework of evaluation - 3 major questions

- **Process evaluation**
  - What was the quality of program implementation?

- **Subjective wellbeing and evaluation of usefulness**
  - Do participant perceive personal gains?

- **Evaluation of effect**
  - Did we achieve the aim of the program?
Evaluation research design

- pretest – posttest design with control group

2 groups

- intervention (participated in the program)
- control (did not participate in the program)

2 time points

- before the program
- after the program

short-term evaluation


Abstract This paper reports on the development and pilot evaluation of a Croatian school-based youth gambling prevention program “Who really wins?”. The program is aimed at minimizing risk and enhancing protective factors related to youth gambling. A short-term evaluation of the program was conducted with a sample of 190 first and second year high-school students (67.6% boys, aged 14-17 years; average age 15.61). An experimental design with two groups (Training vs. No Training) and two measurement sessions (pre-test and post-test sessions) was used to evaluate change in problem gambling awareness, cognitive distortions, knowledge of the nature of random events as well as in social skills. Results showed significant changes in the post-test sessions, which can be attributed to changes in the Training group. We observed a decrease in risk factors, namely...
Evaluation Results

6 weeks IMPLEMENTATION

I = C

Effects can be attributed to the Program

knowledge about gambling
- cognitive distortions - illusion of control
- cognitive distortions - probabilistic reasoning and superstitious thinking

I > C

I < C

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM
4. Dissemination of the Program on a national level

Training of Trainers (ToT)

- **Length:**
  - 21 hour training = 3 days

- **School - training pair/team**
  - high-school counselors + teacher (training team)

- **Methods:**
  - lectures (theory)
  - workshops
  - interactive discussion
  - role-playing

- **Educational package**
  - Manual for trainers
  - Workbooks for students
Implementation 2016-2017

- 84 participants
- 42 high-schools
- >1,200 students

- financial and organizational support by major stakeholders
- very positive feedback and evaluations
Major challenges

- Iatrogenic effect
- Problem gambling
- Long-term effect?
- Quality of trainers
- Age/experience
- Liatrogenic effect

Thank you for your attention! 😊

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