

Families suffer from problem gambling

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Many people perceive gambling to be a harmless recreational activity. However, it is estimated that six to eight million people in the United States personally suffer from a gambling related problem. This problem seems to grow tentacles, extending out to wreak havoc and can profoundly impact the physical, emotional, and financial health of the family (spouses, children, extended).

As stated in this month's issue of the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, the most common treatment models for problem gambling are focused on meeting the needs of gamblers but do not address the needs of couples and families whose lives have been negatively impacted by someone else's gambling.

In the paper, the authors provide a detailed description of how problem gambling impacts families, they explain, "Our hope in writing this paper is to raise awareness about problem gambling and the importance of developing treatment programs that meet the needs of the families of problem gamblers."

As noted by the authors, many of the people who access problem gambling treatment services are family members. It is clear that the impact of gambling on families can no longer be allowed to slip "under the radar". [Marriage](#) and family therapists are well positioned to help families cope with the impact of problem gambling on their lives.

More information: This study is published in the October 2009 issue of the *Journal of Marital and [Family](#) Therapy*.

www3.interscience.wiley.com/jo.../122564313/abstract

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