

# Wanna make a bet that women gamble?

February 18 2010

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Typical Australian gamblers are no longer just men playing poker, with more women becoming addicted, isolated and even suicidal, a researcher from The University of Queensland has warned.

UQ School of Tourism researcher and hospitality management lecturer, Dr Timothy Lee, says [gambling](#) in Australia is becoming more and more "feminised".

Dr Lee says a third of [problem gamblers](#) are [women](#) at a time when Australia leads the world in the number of poker machines and \$6 million a day is pushed through their slots.

It means measures taken to combat problem gambling need to take into account the habits of women, not just men, he says.

"The image of the typical Australian gambler should change. It has traditionally been a male pursuit. There is now a high level of women's gambling activity in Australia," Dr Lee said.

Women accounted for 64 per cent of the use of poker machines, which in turn accounted for 74 per cent of the growth in gambling in Australia in recent years.

Compared to men, women were found to have a more rapid progression into problem gambling.

Problem gambling among women resulted in family and relationship

breakdowns, child neglect, homelessness, depression, theft, fraud and serious contemplation of suicide.

Women gambled to escape relationships, trauma, loneliness, stress and boredom, with an abusive relationship, a child leaving home or the death of a close friend or family member possible triggers.

"The female problem gambler is usually withdrawn, socially isolated and is suffering from extreme feelings of guilt, shame and low self-esteem," Dr Lee said.

He did not advocate a winding back of gaming activities, but said "harm minimisation actions" were needed to stop more people becoming problem gamblers.

"With an ever-expanding gaming industry, it is likely that the participation of women will continue to increase and the number of women who become problem gamblers will continue to rise.

"It is crucial, therefore, that the impacts of women problem gamblers are assessed and recommendations put forward and acted upon to reduce these impacts."

Dr Lee's recommendations included placing cash machines away from gaming areas, installing clocks, providing information on support services, using natural light and having non-gaming activities at pubs and clubs with poker machines.

The recommendations are part of Dr Lee's paper titled *Distinctive Features of the Australian Gambling Industry and Problems Faced by Australian Women Gamblers*.

Dr Lee will have the paper published in the next issue of *Tourism*

*Analysis.*

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Wanna make a bet that women gamble? (2010, February 18) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-02-wanna-women-gamble.html>

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