

Suicide and Problem Gambling

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Problem Gambling and Suicide Questions

Do people who have problem gambling disorder have a higher rate of suicide?

Do people who die by suicide have a higher rate of problem gambling?



Prevalence of Gambling

Most adults have gambled

Approximately 85% of U.S. adults have gambled at least once in their lives

60% having gambled within the past year

1-2.4% of people who gamble have gambling disorder

<https://www.ncpgambling.org/help-treatment/faqs-what-is-problem-gambling/#:~:text=About%2085%25%20of%20U.S.%20adults,gambling%20are%20Hawaii%20and%20Utah>. Gabellini E, Lucchini F, Gattoni ME. Prevalence of Problem Gambling: A Meta-analysis of Recent Empirical Research (2016-2022). J Gambl Stud. 2023 Sep;39(3):1027-1057. doi: 10.1007/s10899-022-10180-0. Epub 2022 Dec 31. PMID: 36586057.



Core Symptoms of Gambling Disorder

Longstanding pattern of

- Gambling more and more to get the same excitement
- Can't stop
- Thinking about it all the time
- Gambling to relieve distress
- Lying to cover up
- Causing problems with money, people and work

•*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision.* (DSM-5-TR) 2022. American Psychiatric Association. American Psychiatric Association Publishing.



Common Issues People with Problem Gambling may Face

Negative attitudes (Stigma)

Problems with finances

Intimate partner strain

Difficulty with Relationships

Poor work or school performance

M. van der Maas, R. DiMeglio, L. Nower, (2024). Gambling as a precipitating factor in deaths by suicide in the National Violent Death Reporting System. Public Health, 235: 180-186, ISSN 0033-3506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2024.07.005>



Gambling and Suicidal Ideation and Behavior

Among people with gambling problems

31% suicidal ideation

17% suicide plans

16% suicide attempts

Among people who died by suicide

4.4% were reported to have had problem gambling

Armoon, B., Griffiths, M.D., Mohammadi, R. *et al.* Suicidal Behaviors and Associated Factors Among Individuals with Gambling Disorders: A Meta-Analysis. *J Gambl Stud* **39**, 751–777 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-023-10188-0>. M. van der Maas, R. DiMeglio, L. Nower, (2024). Gambling as a precipitating factor in deaths by suicide in the National Violent Death Reporting System. *Public Health*, 235: 180-186, ISSN 0033-3506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2024.07.005>.



What may connect PGD and suicide?

Barriers to help-seeking: indebtedness and shame

Negative impact for those with problem gambling: Social and occupational problems

Confounders: Psychiatric co-morbidity, alcohol and drug use disorders but not all, family history of suicide, trauma, childhood and adulthood abuse

There is never one cause of suicide, it is a complex and dynamic behavior

Marionneau V, Nikkinen J. Gambling-related suicides and suicidality: A systematic review of qualitative evidence. *Front Psychiatry*. 2022 Oct 26;13:980303. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2022.980303. PMID: 36387006; PMCID: PMC9645554. Giovanni, M., Fabiola, S., Federica, F., Mariangela, C., Nicola, P., Ilaria, T., ... & Massimo, D. G. (2017). Gambling disorder and suicide: an overview of the associated co-morbidity and clinical characteristics. *Int J High Risk Behav Addict*, 6(3), e30827.



Factors Associated with PGD & Suicide

Substance use

Impulse control disorders

Mood Disorders: Major Depression, GAD, Bipolar Disorder

Impulsive or reckless behavior

Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Personality Disorders

Trauma and ACES



Did you know?

Military and Veteran populations have increased risk for both pathological gambling and suicide

We need to increase focus on Military and Veterans, PGD and suicide

- Research

- Treatment

- Access to health care



Research is Needed: Not Well Studied

What factors contribute to PGD

Treatment development and implementation for PGD

Connection between PGD and suicide

How to help Service Members and Veterans who have greater risk

**To save lives we need commitment to address
PGD and suicide**



Problem Gambling and Suicide

Do people who have problem gambling have a higher rate of suicide?

Yes

Do people who die by suicide have a higher rate of problem gambling?

No? Unknown? Higher than what?

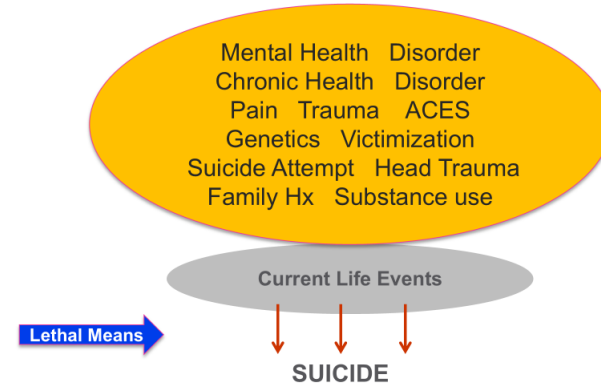


Summary

PGD has been associated with suicide within the context of other contributors to suicide:

Mental health & substance use conditions, chronic physical illness and pain, ACES, head trauma, genetics, family Hx.

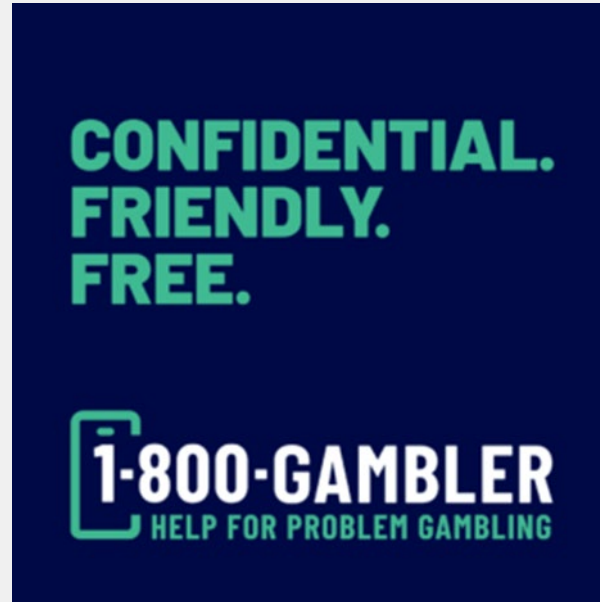
Interacting Risk and Protective Factors



Harkavy-Friedman, JM, Moutier, CY (2019) presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Suicidology, Washington, DC.



Support for Crisis Services



Thank You!





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