

Quarterly News & Updates

Spring | 2022

Welcome to the Division on Addiction's quarterly newsletter!

Announcements



Listen to members of the Division on Addiction team, Dr. Heather Gray, Ms. Caitlyn Fong, and Ms. Nakita Sconsoni, speak about Gambling Disorder Screening Day, current gambling research, and much more on Brian Hatch's *All In: The Addicted Gambler's Podcast*.

Listen wherever you get your podcasts

The Division on Addiction is participating in National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week (March 21-March 27) by spreading awareness about substance use and prevention. Check our social media for updates.

Outreach Corner



Gambling Disorder Screening Day
TUESDAY, MARCH 8th, 2022

www.divisiononaddiction.org/outreach-resources/gdsd/

Upcoming Events

On March 24, Dr. Debi LaPlante will give a lecture for the Raschkowan Lecture Series. She will speak about "Internet Sports Betting: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow."

[Learn more and register here.](#)

Attention Massachusetts treatment providers: Do you want to learn best practices in promoting problem gambling services? Join our free training on April 14. [Learn more and register here.](#)

Did You Know?



Monitoring one's gambling spending seems like an effective way to manage one's gambling. However, new research finds that bettors have trouble

The Division on Addiction is excited to announce the 9th Gambling Disorder Screening Day on March 8, 2022. This worldwide, grassroots event supports providers in identifying Gambling Disorder among their clients. Gambling Disorder leads to financial, emotional, social, occupational, and physical harms, yet many cases go undetected and untreated. Become a host or supporter, so we can work together to spread awareness, end stigma, and detect gambling-related problems as early as possible!

[Learn more here](#)

accurately reporting on their gambling spending, even when they're given instructions. These findings suggest that we should be skeptical about responsible gambling interventions that rely on self-monitoring. [Read more](#) at The BASIS.

Research Spotlight



Research Spotlight

Evidence suggests a link between drunk driving arrests and psychiatric disorders, but programs supporting those caught driving under the influence (DUI) often lack the time and staff required to screen for psychiatric conditions. A tool that can conveniently screen for both substance use and mental health concerns would be ideal for these programs.

Together with her co-authors, Dr. Sarah Nelson, Director of Research, evaluated the sensitivity and specificity of the Computerized Assessment and Referral System (CARS). Sensitivity measures how many of the people who actually have the disorder

screen positive for it. Specificity measures how many of the people without the disorder correctly screen negative for it. High sensitivity is important to make sure that a screen doesn't miss anyone who needs help. High specificity is important to avoid intervening with people who don't need help and misallocating resources.

CARS is used to screen for mental health concerns experienced within the past year or lifetime, and once completed, it provides treatment and referral recommendations that can be used to inform the client's treatment plan. Nelson and colleagues found that CARS was both sensitive and specific when evaluating many disorders (e.g., substance use disorders, depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder); however, they reported very low sensitivity for dysthymia (5.7%), and low specificity (62.4%) for panic disorder. In both cases, CARS had acceptable sensitivity and specificity for the more general categories of these disorders (i.e., panic attacks and depressive disorders).

Overall, these findings suggest that CARS is an easy to use and reliable tool for DUI programs to screen for mental health concerns among their clients. This study was published in the journal [Substance Use and Misuse](#), and more information about CARS is available [here](#).

Meet the Team

Vanessa H. Graham

Manager of Grants and Resource Development
Division on Addiction

Ms. Vanessa Graham joined the Division in 2016. She manages the center's financial operations and fosters research development, including procuring funds for the Division. Ms. Graham is passionate about issues of **health equity** and **anti-racism** and has written op-eds for The BASIS on these issues. When not at the Division, she can often be found oil painting or romping in the Maine woods with her dog, Friday.

[Learn more about our faculty and staff here](#)

New and Notable

Here's a sample of our recent publications.

LaPlante, D. A., Whelshula, M., Gray, H. M., & Nelson, S. E. (2021). Understanding American Indian youth in residential recovery from substance use disorder: Risk and protective experiences and perceived recovery support. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, 28(1), 39–70.

<https://doi.org/10.5820/aian.2801.2021.39>

Louderback, E. R., Wohl, M. J. A., & LaPlante, D. A. (2021). Integrating open science practices into recommendations for accepting gambling industry research funding. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 29(1), 79-87.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2020.1767774>

McAuliffe, W. H. B., Edson, T. C., Louderback, E. R., LaRaja, A., & LaPlante, D. A. (2021). Responsible product design to mitigate excessive gambling: A scoping review and z-curve analysis of replicability. *PloS one*, 16(4), e0249926.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249926>

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