

Quarterly News & Updates

Winter | 2024

Welcome to the Division on Addiction's Winter Quarterly Newsletter!

New Grant Funding!



The Division on Addiction is pleased to announce three new grant awards from the [International Center for Responsible Gambling \(ICRG\)](#)!

Drs. Seth McCulloch and Eric Louderback received ICRG Gambling Advertising Research Large Grant funding to study the impact of responsible gambling (RG) messages developed by gambling operators and public health organizations. Their studies will analyze the content of RG advertisements and assess how exposure to these messages affects gambling behaviors and thoughts. Additionally, they will analyze factors that could influence how gamblers respond to RG messages.

Dr. Timothy Edson will use ICRG Online Gambling and Potential Harms Research Large Grant funding to study the multidimensional aspects of loss chasing in online gambling. This research will assess how loss chasing might predict gambling harm outcomes using actual betting records, with a focus on determining the best way(s) to measure loss chasing and whether loss chasing effects differ based on initial betting activity.

Upcoming Events



[The MA Technical Assistance Center for Problem Gambling Treatment \(M-TAC\)](#) is hosting several upcoming trainings, including “Gambling Disorder Treatment in Practice” on April 3 from 11:00am-1:00pm. Click [here](#) to view our training calendar and learn more. Additionally, Project Build Up (PBU) is hosting a 2-day, 6-hour Learning Academy on March 5 and 7 that will educate clinicians and medical providers working in the field of addiction on the topic of sports betting. Participants will receive a stipend for attending. Click [here](#) to learn more and submit an application.

We are proud to partner with Health Resources in Action to produce M-TAC and PBU trainings and resources, which are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Office of Problem Gambling Services.

Did You Know?

Drs. Debi LaPlante and Heather Gray will use ICRG Lottery Research Seed Grant funding to learn how participants respond to a digital gambling screening and targeted feedback intervention. They will study how participants respond during and after this intervention in terms of gambling behaviors, intentions, and help-seeking. In addition, they'll explore how a gambling operator, the Hoosier Lottery, might be involved in promoting this intervention.

Outreach Corner



The Division on Addiction is excited to announce the 11th Gambling Disorder Screening Day on March 12, 2024. This worldwide, grassroots event is designed to increase awareness of gambling harm and encourage providers to screen for Gambling Disorder in a variety of settings. 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! To learn more about Screening Day and how to participate, click [here](#).

Exciting news! The Division is now on Threads! Follow us [@div_addiction](#) to stay informed about current, addiction-related topics, updates on research projects and community outreach activities, access to resources, and much more!



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More than half of women who smoke will quit either just before or during pregnancy, but many of them resume smoking after giving birth. A recent study explored the patterns of returning to smoking within the first year postpartum among those who quit during pregnancy. The findings revealed that 50% of participants reported minimal smoking in the year following delivery. Twenty-one percent resumed smoking around 100 days after delivery, 13% remained smoke-free for approximately 6 months, and 16% had inconsistent patterns, starting and stopping at various times throughout the year. Returning to smoking, especially within three months after delivery, poses significant risks. It is crucial for healthcare providers to inquire about pregnant patients' smoking history to identify those who may benefit from targeted interventions after childbirth. Read more at [The BASIS](#).

Research Spotlight

Lower-risk guidelines could potentially reduce the negative impacts of gambling. [Dr. Eric R. Louderback and colleagues](#) investigated the applicability of guidelines derived from land-based researches to online gambling. Analyzing a decade of electronically recorded betting data, the researchers proposed six lower-risk limits for various measures of gambling

Research Spotlight



engagement, such as the amount a person gambling wagered per month, the percent of their yearly household income they wagered online, and the frequency of gambling per month. The study examined whether these limits could predict a positive screen for Gambling Disorder and other potential signs of gambling-related harm, such as closing one's gambling account.

The 6 potential limits varied in how well they predicted the outcomes. The limit with the strongest support was the percent of yearly household income wagered online: people who spent 6.71% or less of their annual income on online gambling were less likely to screen positive for Gambling Disorder than those who exceeded this limit. The study identified three other lower-risk limits: (1) wagering €168 or less per month, (2) losing €26 or less on online gambling per month, and (3) variability in daily amount wagered of €35 or less during one's active duration. While people who gamble might have trouble tracking whether they're staying below these limits, gambling operators could incorporate them into predictive algorithms designed to identify and intervene with high-risk customers. If you'd like a full copy of this article, contact us at info@divisiononaddiction.org.

Dr. Eric Louderback says "I was impressed by the consistency with which exceeding these four limits predicted a positive screen for Gambling Disorder, as they are measuring different facets of gambling engagement. The findings suggest that thinking about one's financial means available for gambling is important, and they also show that both money and time spent gambling are key considerations. Since this paper was published, other scholars have issued lower-risk gambling guidelines based on research across multiple countries, which are available [here](#)."

Meet the Team

Dr. Matthew Tom

Research Data Analyst

Associate in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

Dr. Matthew A. Tom joined the Division on Addiction in 2012. As a Research Data Analyst at the Division and an Associate in Psychiatry at Harvard

Medical School, he contributes to our work in a variety of ways. He collaborates on studies of gambling and problem gambling, develops and optimizes code for use in his own and others' data analyses, writes and assists with grant applications, and presents research findings at conferences. His research has appeared in a number of peer-reviewed scientific journals, covering topics such as [the role of expected value](#) in examining gambling results, ways to think about [big wins](#) and windfalls, and the [state of online poker](#). Dr. Tom is the Section Editor of [The DRAM](#) newsletter, a



part of the weekly [Brief Addiction Science Information Source \(BASIS\)](#) newsletter, which provides summaries of recent published research in the addiction sciences. He also serves as website administrator and curator for [The Transparency Project](#), the Division's public-facing research data repository. In his free time, he practices the martial art of aikido and enjoys poker, chess, and other strategy games.

Faculty & Staff Updates

Join us in congratulating [Dr. Seth McCullock](#), Research and Evaluation Scientist, on his promotion to Instructor in Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School! Dr. McCullock joined the Division on Addiction in 2022 after earning his PhD in Communication from Purdue University. Click [here](#) to learn more about Division on Addiction staff members.



Our Latest Publications

Edson, T. C., Louderback, E. R., Tom, M. A., McCullock, S. P. & LaPlante, D. A. (2023). Exploring a multidimensional concept of loss chasing using online sports betting records. *International Gambling Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14459795.2023.2276741>

LaPlante, D. A., Lee, T. G., Slabczynski, J. M., Shaffer, H. J., & Gray, H. M. (2023). Five barriers to defining responsible drinking. *Addiction Research & Theory*, 31(4), 231-238 <https://doi.org/10.1080/16066359.2022.2135703>

McCullock, S. P. & Scrivano, R. M. (2023). The effectiveness of mental illness stigma-reduction interventions: A systematic meta-review of meta-analyses. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 100, 102242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2022.102242>

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