



MCPG

Maryland Council on Problem Gambling

OLDER ADULTS FACT SHEET

- 2006 New Jersey study indicated 23% of citizens over 55 were disordered gamblers with 17% at risk, 4 % problem gamblers and 2% pathological gamblers. Disordered gamblers spend 6 times more than safe gamblers on lottery and 3.5 times more in casinos. Slot machines most frequently listed type of gambling. 3 most cited reasons for not gambling were no fun or interest, possibility of loss and ethical/moral concerns (New Jersey Senior Gamblers Study)
- 2005 Pennsylvania study found 10.9% of elderly (over 65) patients in primary care facility were at risk gamblers (Levens et al., 2005)
- Seniors are fastest growing group of gamblers between 1974 and 1989 (Gambling Impact and Behavior Study 1999)
- Seniors gamble for social interaction, emotional escape, excitement of living on edge, independence, self esteem and monetary winning episodes (Arizona Compulsive Gambling Council)
- Older adults are considered at increased risk due to factors unique to that population, such as loneliness, isolation, physical or mental illness; additionally , in one study of older adults, the most likely reported motivations to gamble were relaxation, boredom, passing time and getting away for the day (McNeilly & Burke, 2000)
- Among adults over 65 years of age gambling is the most frequently identified social activity (McNeilly & Burke 2001)
- Some older adults may have cognitive impairment that interfere with their ability to make sound decisions

- Many older adults may not understand addiction, making them less likely to identify a gambling problem; additionally, older adults appear less willing to seek assistance for a gambling problem than younger adults

- Some studies have shown that recreational gambling may increase socialization and cognitive ability for senior gamblers