

In 1992, we embarked upon our very first gambling study examining the link between children's gambling behavior and video game playing in an attempt to try to better understand youth gambling behaviors. Along with Dr. Rina Gupta (one of my graduate students at that time), we became interested in trying to understand why youth were gambling, what were some of the risk factors, and how we could prevent and/or minimize gambling problems among young people. We had read much of the existing research at that time from some of the giants in the field; Dr. Henry Lesieur, Dr. Durand Jacobs, Dr. Mark Griffiths, Dr. Howard Shaffer, Dr. Sue Fisher, Dr. Rachel Volberg, Dr. Michael Walker, amongst others.

After our initial studies were completed, we were anxious to present our findings and receive feedback as to whether or not we were on the right path. As we searched for conferences to attend, it became obvious that the International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking, hosted by Dr. Bill Eadington and his center at the University of Nevada-Reno, was the preeminent research conference focused on gambling. Participating in such a conference afforded us the greatest opportunity to potentially hear from the international research community about the most recent developments in the field.

Held every three years, Rina and I submitted two paper proposal abstracts, and to our amazement both were accepted for the 1994 conference, which was held in Las Vegas. To my great surprise this was the ninth such international conference in this burgeoning field. Attending the first luncheon, we randomly sat a table, only to find we were sitting with some of the great figures in our field (this was pre-Internet so we had no idea as to what individuals looked like). We were privileged to not only sit next to Sue Fisher and

Mark Griffiths but were able to share in their excitement as they accepted research awards presented by Bill Eadington for their many invaluable contributions to the field.

There is little doubt that attending and presenting at this conference represented a major turning point in our careers. Bill, Judy Cornelius, and the conference organizers were wonderful hosts, and especially inviting of new researchers in the field. We quickly were assimilated into the field and have developed many

long-lasting lifetime friendships, research partners and collaborators. Rina, myself, or both of us have attended every single one of Bill's conferences ever since the ninth meeting. Travelling to Las Vegas, Lake Tahoe, Vancouver or Montreal (not far for us to travel), it has always been a treat to hear the latest research findings presented by esteemed international researchers.

The field of gambling studies has grown dramatically during the past twenty years since we completed our first studies. Rina, my graduate students and I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to publish our work and present at many, many conferences all over the globe. The International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking is still looked upon by many as the place where new and old (old is used figuratively) researchers can get together to share ideas, establish collaborations and hear about innovative research paradigms. Bill, Judy and their staff have been instrumental in fostering an open atmosphere where all opinions can be freely expressed, evaluated based upon their merits, and appreciated.

As some of the giants in the field are phasing out their research and clinical work

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we can be reassured that the field eagerly welcomes new researchers. Whether taking a neurobiological, cognitive, psychodynamic, biological, psychosocial, sociological, economic or legal perspective, the ability to openly discuss our ideas in an unrestricted forum remains essential. The International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking was, and still remains, the preeminent research conference in the field of gambling. We eagerly look forward to the next conference where we can be inspired, share ideas, meet colleagues and old friends, foster new relationships, and help stimulate a new generation of eager researchers.

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