



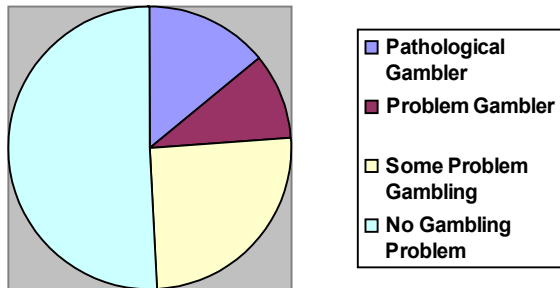
## Problem Gambling among Georgia Veterans in Drug Court

Rates of problem (PG) and pathological gambling (PAG) are much higher among veterans, military recruits and those currently in the military compared with rates in the general population<sup>1,2</sup>. Furthermore, military and veteran populations are more prone to substance abuse<sup>3</sup> which has been shown to be highly co-morbid with PG<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, previous research suggests that criminal activity is associated with gambling problems<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, a recent study was conducted which assessed PG among drug court clients who have a history of substance abuse and offending. A subsample of the participants who indicated that they had served in the military was evaluated regarding gambling issues and behaviors (n = 63). The results of this analysis indicated that drug court clients who have served in the military are at increased risk of PG compared to the general population and should be screened for PG. The identification and of those at risk of and suffering from PG provides opportunities to intervene, which may reduce the incidence and prevalence of PG, as well as alleviate associated negative impacts to public health.

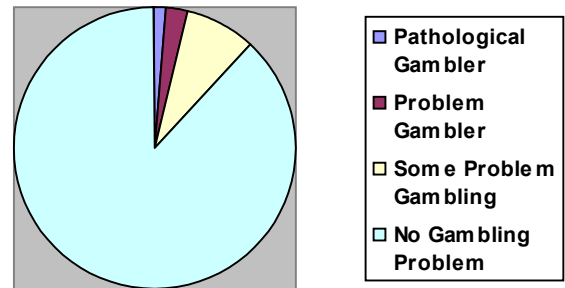
### Prevalence

Rates of PG and PAG in military and veteran populations exceed those for other adults. This is especially true among those who also have substance abuse issues and commit criminal offenses, such as drug court clients.

Types of Gamblers among  
GA Veterans in Drug Court



Types of Gamblers in  
General Population<sup>6,7</sup>



### Gambling-related Crime

- Among the sample of veterans in drug court 24% reported having committed gambling-related crime
- Of this subsample 47% were PAGs, 20% were PGs, and 30% had some problem gambling
- On average, participants who reported such activities committed 6 different gambling-related crimes
- The gambling-related crimes most often cited by these participants were assault, prostitution/pimping, hustling, drug crimes, embezzlement, check and/or credit card fraud, burglary, robbery, and shoplifting

### Gambling within Correctional Settings



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- Among the sample of veterans in drug court 27% cited having gamble within correctional settings
- Of this subsample 35% were PAGs, 6% were PGs, and an additional 29% had some problem gambling
- Roughly 60% of these participants cited gambling more when in corrections than when in the community



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## Risk factors for PG

- Over 65% of veterans in drug court cited having someone within their social network with a gambling problem
- Over 14% of participants reported at least one parent had a gambling problem
- 27% of veterans in drug court reported having considered suicide, which is a known risk factor for PG
- 24% of participants reported elevated levels of drinking and 27% reported increased drug use while gambling, both of which are significantly associated with increased problem gambling severity.

## Awareness of PG and help seeking

- Over 49% of veterans in drug court were identified as having at a minimum some problem gambling, yet only 6% reported having ever had a gambling problem
- Nearly 5% had attended gamblers anonymous
- Just over 3% had asked someone for help with a gambling problem

## Recommendations to reduce the incidence/prevalence of PG

- Contact The GSU Pathological Gambling Intervention Project for resources regarding the prevention and treatment of problem gambling, as well as for technical assistance
- Screen for PG so that interventions can be targeted at those at increased risk or experiencing problems.
  - The results of this study suggest that the LIE-BET a useful tool among this population, of those PAG the Lie/Bet correctly identified 89% as needing further assessment.

### LIE-BET TOOL TO RULE OUT PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING<sup>8</sup>

This 2-item measure has been found to be reliable and valid at discriminating between pathological and non-problem gamblers. A response of “Yes” to either question indicates further assessment is warranted.

- 1) Have you ever felt the need to bet more and more money?
- 2) Have you ever had to lie to people important to you about how much you gambled?

<sup>1</sup>Bray, R., et al.. (1992). 1992 worldwide survey of substance abuse and health behaviors among military personnel. Springfield, VA: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Technical Information Service.

<sup>2</sup>Steenbergh, T. A., Whelan, J. P., Meyers, A. W., Klesges, R. C., & DeBon, M. (2008). Gambling and health risk-taking behavior in a military sample. *Military Medicine*, 173(5), 452-459.

<sup>3</sup>Zimmerman, M., Chelminski, I., & Young, D. (2006). Prevalence and diagnostic correlates of DSM-IV pathological gambling in psychiatric outpatients. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 22, 255-262.

<sup>4</sup>Weis, D. R., & Manos, G. H. (2007). Prevalence and epidemiology of pathological gambling at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Psychiatry Clinic. *Military Medicine*, 172, 782 – 787.

<sup>5</sup>McCorkle, R. (2002). *Pathological gambling in arrestee populations* (Final report prepared for National Institute of Justice). Las Vegas, NV: Department of Criminal Justice

<sup>6</sup>Emshoff, J., Anthony, E., Lippy, C., & Valentine, L, Mooss, A., Perkins, A., & Zorland, J. (2007). *Gambling Report for the Georgia Department of Human Resources*. Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University, Department of Psychology.



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<sup>7</sup>National Opinion Research Center (1999). *Gambling Impact and Behavior Study*. Retrieved May 1, 2008 from <http://www2.norc.org/new/gamb-fin.htm>

<sup>6</sup>Johnson, E. E., Hamer, R., Nora, R. M., Tan, B., Eistenstein, N., & Englehart, C. (1988). The lie/bet questionnaire for screening pathological gamblers. *Psychological Reports, 80*, 83-88.

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