



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic

August, 2017

New Directions at the GTRC

by Kirsten Shanon, Clinic
and GTRC Manager

On the 20th of April, the GTRC convened a meeting to review our progress since the publication of our 2012-2015 Strategic plan and set new directions for the next three years. The day involved the participation and collaboration of all clinical and research team members and was highly productive. We acknowledged the advances we have made in the areas of innovation, treatment, training, and research. They include a 47.6% increase in client numbers, a broadening of our internship programs, the establishment of an Aboriginal treatment program, dissemination of high quality research and a substantial increase in research funding which included a \$1.43 million major deed of gift from ClubsNSW to conduct policy and translational gambling research over three years.

These and other advances have set the stage for a number of new challenges and strategic goals for 2017-2020. As a result, our team are moving to address a number of strategic research and clinical priorities which include:

1. New technology

a. Understanding how new technology is transforming gambling and other potentially harmful activities.



b. Understanding online risk taking and the role of the online environment and online social cues in facilitating risky online behaviour.

c. Incorporation of new technology into gambling treatment, interventions, and harm-minimisation strategies.

2. Defining gambling-related harms

a. Establishing best practice metrics to measure gambling-related harm so that policies can be designed and evaluated to reduce harms.

3. Recovery

a. Investigating new ways of conceptualising recovery from gambling and other behavioural addictions.

4. Prevention

a. Strategies to prevent gambling problems including educational programs, in-venue (e.g., player information displays, chaplaincy care), and online strategies.

5. Treatment and interventions

a. Establishing the efficacy of a purely cognitive approach to the treatment of problem gambling.

b. Evaluating the effectiveness of a multi-venue self-exclusion program.

These priorities were established after a careful consideration of the opportunities and challenges that we face, particularly those imposed by dynamic changes in the gambling environment characterized by a range of emerging technologies, offshore online wagering, virtual reality, and eSports.

It is with great energy and enthusiasm that we look forward to implementing and achieving the next step in our evolution as described in this 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.

(Photo front row, left to right: Dr. Christopher Hunt, Dr. Sally Gainsbury, Professor Alex Blaszczynski, Clinic Manager Kirsten Shannon, Kerri MacAlister. Back row, left to right: Janine Bleakley, Jessica Lam, Hanna Kallenberg, Michelle Beckett, Sara Rees, Brittany Keen, Jennifer Molinari, Martin Wiecaorek, Dr. Fadi Anjouli)

Our Clinic by Dr. Christopher John Hunt



Progress is continuing at a pleasing rate with our clinical operations at the GTRC. Client numbers continue to increase year-on-year, including in our very popular Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) groups. This therapy stems from cognitive behavioural approaches and are used for individuals experiencing difficulties in regulating their emotions. These groups, which focus on teaching mindfulness, emotion regulation and distress tolerance skills to both gambling clients and others in need, have been extended to run throughout the year. Our clinical intern programme also continues to move from strength to strength,

with three new clinical interns with a strong interest in gambling starting in the clinic this winter. We are currently in the process of hiring new clinical interns for our Parramatta and Campbelltown location.



Outreach Programs

Clinicians of the GTRC are often involved in projects and organisations in the broader community. Psychologist Martin Wieczorek provides counselling support and collaborates with the Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation in northwest Sydney. The centre is designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities and focusses on providing guidance and support on various life matters, including mental and social health, financial and employment skills, and alcohol and substance misuse. In spring of 2016, Martin Wieczorek began offering Dialectical Behaviour Therapy to the community of Marrin Weejali. As a structured psychological support group, individuals seeking to gain mental health management skills have the opportunity to partake in introductory and advanced programs. The group atmosphere helps individuals learn emotional and cognitive regulation skills on mood disorders and substance abuse, including problematic gambling. Martin recognises that offering DBT sessions coincides with the centre's efforts in building relationships within the community by increasing greater variety in mental health services accessible to individuals. The valuable connections Martin has established have not passed unnoticed. Currently the Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation and the GTRC are looking to expand the DBT services to other Aboriginal communities such as Macquarie Field, Emerton, and Ngalluwal. For more information on this outreach program, please check out the link on our [website](http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/gambling_treatment_clinic/getting_help/indigenous_programs.shtml).



(http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/gambling_treatment_clinic/getting_help/indigenous_programs.shtml)

Recent publications

1. **Gainsbury, S., & Blaszczynski, A.** (2017). Virtual reality gambling: Implications for regulation and gambling disorders. *Gaming Law Review & Economics*, 21(4), 314-322. DOI: [10.1089/glr.2017.2145](https://doi.org/10.1089/glr.2017.2145)
2. Langham, E., Russell, A.M.T., Hing, N., & **Gainsbury, S.M.** (2017). Sense of coherence and gambling: Exploring the relationship between sense of coherence, gambling behaviour and gambling-related harm. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 33(1), 661-684. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10899-016-9640-8>
3. Thorsten, R., **Gainsbury, S.M.**, & Muehlbach, C. (2017). Positioning of online gambling and gaming products from a consumer perspective: A blurring of perceived boundaries. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 757-765. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.06.025>
4. **Blaszczynski, A.** (2017). Psychosexual and gender identity disorders. In Bloch, S., Green, S.A., Janca, A., Mitchell, P.B. & Robertson, M. (Eds). *Foundations of clinical psychiatry*, fourth edition. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Opportunities for involvement

For more detailed information, collaboration opportunities, or if you are interested in participating in any of our research, please let us know! Here are some current opportunities available:

Research and Supervision

Dr. Gainsbury is interested in working with students who wish to conduct research on the topics of disordered gambling and online risk taking and is available as a **PhD Supervisor** (sally.gainsbury@sydney.edu.au).

Open Call for Research Interns and Student Exchange

The GTRC is accepting applications to the Research Interns and Student Exchange program for early career researchers. The new program has seen highly motivated interns and exchange students pass through its doors from various institutions, thus far, and encourages candidates interested in learning about gambling research to apply. Successful applicants will be involved in all aspects of research and clinical work and contribute to peer-review publications under the supervision of world leading researchers. Our aim is to provide the most promising early career researchers with experience that would aid in developing an independent research career.

To be eligible, the candidate must have a minimum of a 4-year undergraduate degree in psychology, which includes a significant independent research project and training in statistics. Applicants may be currently enrolled in a Masters or PhD program, or intending to enrol in a postgraduate program and seeking further research and clinical experience. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but please note there are a limited of placement available for 2017 and 2018.

For more information please take a look at our [website](http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/gambling_treatment_clinic/) (http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/gambling_treatment_clinic/), or contact either **Professor Alex Blaszczynski** (alex.blaszczynski@sydney.edu.au), GTRC Director, or **Dr. Sally Gainsbury** (sally.gainsbury@sydney.edu.au), GTRC Deputy Director.

Visiting Scholarship Awarded

We are very pleased to announce the successful applicant for our Visiting International Collaborator Support scheme – Dr. Stephanie Baggio. Dr. Baggio will travel to spend time at the GTRC in February 2018 and will be supported by a \$10,000 grant following her successful competitive application for this program. Dr. Baggio is a senior researcher

at the Division of Correctional Medicine and Psychiatry, Geneva University Hospitals and the University of Geneva in Switzerland. Although she has only been conducting gambling research since 2012, she has an impressive track record of publications. In particular, Dr.

Baggio has expertise in epidemiology, clinical trials, and addictive behaviours. She has already co-authored a publication with Dr. Gainsbury examining Internet gambling and Problematic Internet Use among youth. Her collaborative research will include using existing Swiss and Australian datasets and developing new projects, including investigating online behavioural addictions and the influence of peers.

Our thanks are extended to the School of Psychology for supporting the GTRC VICS scheme and in particular Professor Frans Verstraten.

We hope to be able to offer another round of support for visiting scholars in 2018. Researchers interested in visiting and collaborating with the GTRC are encouraged to contact **Dr. Sally Gainsbury** (sally.gainsbury@sydney.edu.au) and **Professor Alex Blaszczynski** (alex.blaszczynski@sydney.edu.au) to discuss options.



Current Interns and Exchange Students

Currently the GTRC is lucky to have five interns and one exchange student from various backgrounds:

Zhenzhen (Sunny) Nong from China is currently a student in the Master of Management at the University of Sydney and has been a research intern under the supervision of Dr. Sally Gainsbury and Prof. Alex Blaszczynski since November 2016. She is involved in several research projects, including examining social cues' impact in online environments, understanding user perspectives in a gambling multi-venue self-exclusion program, and a scoping review of



gambling behavioural feedback tools. Her research interests include: the role of

cultural and psychological effects in consumer decision-making when consumption involves risks or negative consequences and their implication in harm minimisation and prevention, and influences of digital and social media marketing on consumer decision making in hospitality and gambling industries. Coming from the University of Macau, her experience studying the gambling and hospitality industry aligns well with the research being conducted at the GTRC.

Lora Khatib was recently an international exchange student at the University of Sydney and is from California, USA. While at the GTRC she conducted a literature review on gambling and criminal justice with Prof. Alex Blaszczynski, Dr. Sally Gainsbury, and Dr. Celine van Golde. The experience gained while working for the clinic will assist her application to Masters program where she plans to become an occupational Therapist

Christina Rash is a Psychology Master's student from the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada under the supervision of Assistant Professor



Dan McGrath. Her research interests include: antisocial behaviour and its correlates. Christina's work at the GTRC focuses on regrets resulting from risky social media posts.

Austin Ware is a second-year student at the University of Sydney. Originally from California, USA, he is now pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Austin is completing a literature review on match fixing, and appreciates that it combines his passion for sports with his new skills in researching.

Anna Dawczyk is a Ph.D. Candidate from the University of Guelph, Canada. Her dissertation research involves a mixed method evaluation of self-exclusion ban-lengths and compliance



with problem gambling intervention. Anna has been a research intern at the GTRC from March 2016 – August 2017. Through this opportunity, Anna has had the opportunity to contribute to existing research projects and advance her own research. In 2017 Anna was awarded the MITACS Globalink Partnership Award to develop an evidence-based third-party exclusion model for problem gamblers aimed at reducing problem gambling. This research project is in collaboration with the University of Guelph, the GTRC, and ClubsNSW.

Jessica Lam is from Hong Kong and started her research internship with the GTRC in March 2017. Her research interests are online risk taking and interventions for family members affected by problem gambling. Jessica is collaborating with Dr. Rebecca Pinkus and Dr. Sally Gainsbury on internet privacy concern and privacy behaviour, as well as a collaborating with Prof Richard Velleman from the University of Bath, and Prof Alex Blaszczynski on



the Five-step intervention program for family members of problem gamblers. Jessica recently became a

registered provisional psychologist.

Ashley Adolphe recently graduated from University of Sydney with a Bachelor of Psychology. Currently, as an intern working with Prof. Alex Blaszczynski, Dr. Sally Gainsbury and Dr. Celine van Golde, Ashley is assisting Lora Khatib complete a systematic review of the relationship between criminal behaviour and problem gambling. The project is intended to engage legal professionals in identifying those most at risk of criminal behaviour



and reducing incarceration and recidivism rates. This research combines Ashley's primary

interests in forensic and clinical psychology. He also plans to pursue a Masters in Clinical Psychology in future.

Recent Conferences

New Innovation and Gambling and their Impact on Regulation and Practices

Dr. Gainsbury was invited to present to the Victorian Gambling Ministerial Advisory Council on the topic of new innovations and gambling and their impact on regulation and practices. This follows Dr. Gainsbury's recent publications on topics related to innovations in gambling, including virtual reality gambling, blockchain gambling, secondary lotteries and current research on esports betting and recognises her expertise in new innovations. The presentation was received with great interest from the Council members and Dr. Gainsbury gave a similar presentation to the Victorian Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing.



New Innovation and Gambling and their Impact on Regulation and Practices



GTTC Deputy Director, Dr. Sally Gainsbury, was invited to give the plenary address at the 11th Nordic Gambling conference (SNSUS) held in Odense, Denmark. The conference was attended by treatment providers, gambling industry operators, researchers, and regulators, mostly from the Nordic countries. The theme of the conference was 'Changes and challenges in the field of gambling – New perspectives, new directions. Dr. Gainsbury's opening presentation embraced this theme by talking about the impact of new technology on gambling and included discussion of augmented and virtual reality, blockchain and cryptocurrency, the convergence of gaming, and skill and gambling, and social media. Implications for policy, prevention, and treatment were discussed. Dr. Gainsbury also presented on the topic of youth gambling and focused on the convergence of gambling and gaming as well as the role of social media in introducing young people to gambling.

Responsible Gambling Framework Application to Chinese Lotteries

Dylan Pickering was invited to be a presenter at the Asia Lottery Forum and 7th China Lottery Industry Salon which is part of the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) Asia held at the Venetian casino in Macau, China. The purpose of the conference was to bring together professionals in the Asian lottery industry and gambling scholars to discuss strategies on how best to serve the recreational needs of Chinese people while promoting a socially responsible industry. Pickering's presentation outlined a responsible gambling framework based on the Reno Model and applied relevant aspects to the unique Chinese gaming environment. Following the presentation, Pickering was presented with the China Lottery Industry Salon & Asian Responsible Gaming Alliance Honorable Scholar & Member Certificate by Professor Guojing Su. He also accepted the Honorary President of the China Lottery Industry Salon & Asian Responsible Gaming Alliance Certificate on the behalf of Alex Blaszczynski.



Attending the conference in Macau was an excellent opportunity to experience the Chinese gaming environment first-hand, to learn from and develop relationships with key stakeholders in the lottery industry. Hopefully this can lead to future collaborations and funding opportunities.



Our Research

The GTRC is always active conducting high quality research. There are various projects underway, currently, examining themes in gambling and decisional processes. Here is an update on our current research:

The influence of features of the online environment on risk taking: Unravelling the impact of social cues

Dr. Sally Gainsbury is researching how websites use features and social cues to encourage risky decisions. This research will inform policy makers on how sites can be made safer for the public. It is funded by the Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award.

Online gambling – the use of domestic and offshore websites by Australians

Dr. Sally Gainsbury and Professor Alex Blaszczynski are analysing results of a survey that reviewed 1,000 Australian past-month online gamblers to investigate the use of online gambling sites. Two journal articles on e-sports betting have been accepted for publication and the use of offshore gambling will be the topic of further publications.

Electronic gaming machines (EGM)

Professor Alex Blaszczynski and PhD student Brittany Keen are investigating the extent of the decline in EGM users and its causes. They are also identifying why expenditure is not declining relative to EGM use. Funded by ClubsNSW.

Problem gambling prevention in young adults and adolescents

PhD student Brittany Keen, under the supervision Professor Alex Blaszczynski and Dr. Fadi Anjoul,



is developing and evaluating an education program aimed at preventing gambling-related misconceptions that potentially lead to problems. A systematic review on school-based education program has been published thus far, and Brittany is starting recruitment of first-year psychology students. This study is funded by Gaming Technologies Association.

What does it mean to recover from a gambling disorder?

PhD student Dylan Pickering, under the supervision of Professor Alex Blaszczynski and Dr. Sally Gainsbury, is developing a multidimensional self-report scale that captures all aspects of recovering from a gambling disorder. A systematic review on treatment outcomes applied to gambling disorders research has been accepted for publication in *Addiction*. Qualitative data has also been collected from venue self-excluded individuals. The results from the systematic review and qualitative data is being analysed to create self-report scale.

Gambling Effects Measure

Psychologist and Clinic Manager Kirsten Shannon, Professor Alex Blaszczynski, and Dr. Fadi Anjoul are researching and developing a measure to assess the type, severity and extent of harms related to gambling. A manuscript on the psychometric evaluation was published and the research has currently been extended to

international populations.

Daily Fantasy Sports in Australia (DFS)

PhD students Dylan Pickering and Brittany Keen, and Professor Alex Blaszczynski are researching DFS to assess any harms associated with play, and to promote the inclusion into consumer protection laws. Surveys are being conducted to assess Australia's nature and level of involvement in DFS. If interested in supporting this research by hosting a direct URL link that would be viewed by those who engage in sports wagering or DFS, please contact [Dylan Pickering](mailto:dylan.pickering@sydney.edu.au) (dylan.pickering@sydney.edu.au). The project funded by the National Association for Gambling Studies

Multi-venue self-exclusion (MVSE) as a harm minimisation strategy

PhD student Dylan Pickering, Professor Alex Blaszczynski, and Zhenzhen (Sunny) Nong are evaluating motivations and barriers to joining MVSE to identify any areas that would benefit from modifications. A manuscript is underway that analyses qualitative data to help identify key strengths and weaknesses of MVSE have been completed. Baseline surveys for a longitudinal study design are also being conducted and has reached over 200 participants. This project is funded by ClubsNSW.

Behavioural feedback tools and the implication for empowering gamblers

Research Assistants Zhenzhen (Sunny) Nong and Michelle Beckett Conducting a scoping review on the use of behavioural feedback tools used to help gamblers manage their gambling behaviour. Journal articles that met criteria were chosen and analysis has begun. The results will help inform future research and responsible gambling policy. Zhenzhen is presenting the results at the upcoming NAGS conference.

Evaluating the Chaplaincy Program

Professor Alex Blaszczynski, Research Assistant Michelle Beckett are evaluating the short and long-term benefits of having a dedicated chaplain onsite to address health issues and disordered gambling patrons may be experiencing. Qualitative has been collected and analysed and the results are informing upcoming research in staff training and responsible gambling. This project is a partnership between ClubsNSW and The Salvation Army.

Upcoming Conferences

- Brittany Keen - Australasian Gaming Expo, Sydney, NSW August 15th.
- Dylan Pickering - The What and the How of the National Consumer Protection Framework: Panel. Gaming, Racing and Wagering Australia, Sydney, NSW August 16.
- Dr. Sally Gainsbury - A regulatory update - What's happening in Australia? Panel. Gaming, Racing and Wagering Australia, Sydney, NSW, August 15.
- Dr. Sally Gainsbury - Perception is everything - Onshore vs. offshore. Gaming, Racing and Wagering Australia, Sydney, NSW. August 16, 2017.
- Dr. Sally Gainsbury - Dymystifying eSports betting in Australia: Panel. Gaming, Racing and Wagering Australia, Sydney, NSW, August 16, 2017.
- Dr. Sally Gainsbury - FCRC (Financial & Consumer Rights Council) Annual Conference, Lorne, VIC, 12 October, 2017.
- Dr. Sally Gainsbury - Community Clubs Victoria Annual Forum, Melbourne, Vic, October 17, 2017.
- Dr. Sally Gainsbury - 5th Annual Harm-Minimisation Conference, GambleAware, London, UK. 6-7 December, 2017.

Visiting Researchers



With the intention of increasing national and international collaborations, the GTRC was host to visiting researchers and clinicians in the month of July. Clinician and adult

education expert, Janine Robinson, met with Professor Alex Blaszczynski to offer guidance on new responsible gambling staff training. During her visit, she consulted with various NSW gambling stakeholders to discuss new targeted initiatives aimed at better customer service and support for gamblers within venues. Robinson's wealth of experience and knowledge provided substantiated testimony of gambling staff training initiatives and offered new perspectives on current methods used within NSW.

Professor Matt Rockloff and Associate Professor Matt Browne, from Central Queensland University, also provided guidance to GTRC during July. They met with Dr. Sally Gainsbury and Professor Alex Blaszczynski to establish new



connections and discuss upcoming collaborations. While visiting, research assistants at the clinic had the opportunity to consult with the professors in regards to their current research projects and were given valuable recommendations. Assoc. Professor Browne provided expert advice in high level statistical analysis, and Professor Rockloff offered effective suggestions in research methods.

The meetings in July were a success. The GTRC is excited for ongoing collaboration with Janine Robinson, Assoc. Professor Matt Browne and Professor Matt Rockloff!

Interested in collaborating with the Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic? Please contact [Dr. Sally Gainsbury](mailto:sally.gainsbury@sydney.edu.au) (sally.gainsbury@sydney.edu.au) or [Professor Alex Blaszczynski](mailto:alex.blaszczynski@sydney.edu.au) (alex.blaszczynski@sydney.edu.au). Check out our [website!](http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/gambling_treatment_clinic/) http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/gambling_treatment_clinic/

Education and Training

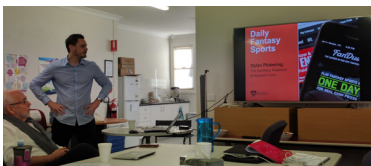
Cultural Awareness Training

Our psychologists undergo training in cultural awareness to ensure that our staff have an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Most recently, our clinical staff have undergone training with Paul Sinclair of Mirri Mirri, an Aboriginal owned company specialising in raising awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures. Many of our research assistants have also completed the cultural competence modules provided through the University of Sydney

Regional Training in Bathurst, Provided by the GTRC

In June, members of the GTRC team provided a workshop at the Regional Responsible Gambling Fund Forum conducted by Lifeline Central West. The following topics were presented to the regional counsellors:

Professor Alex Blaszczynski described the Integrated Pathways Model of gambling and its practical implications for counsellors in identifying specific subgroups and matching profiles to treatment interventions. Guidelines for determining the allocation of clients to a stepped-approach to cost-effective treatments were outlined; brief interventions based on psycho-educational principles and operation of gambling products, cognitive-behavioural derived therapies, and management of difficult impulsive clients. Counsellors were also introduced to the newly constructed and published Gambling Pathways Questionnaire ([Nower & Blaszczynski, 2017](#)) designed to give counsellors an instrument to aid in the identification of subgroup profiles.



Dylan Pickering delivered a workshop on daily fantasy sports. His presentation gave counsellors a

fundamental understanding of the concept and structure of fantasy sports competitions including key differences between season-long and daily formats. This prompted a debating of whether daily fantasy sports should be defined as gambling or a skills-based tournament. Counsellors expressed their interest in continuing to gain further knowledge and understanding of daily fantasy sports that could be pertinent to their clients.

Brittany Keen's presentation outlined new and emerging



technologies in the gambling environment. Brittany described the development and potential expansion of innovative products such as, including augmented and

virtual reality, blockchain, and Bitcoin. Brittany discussed e-sports, where teams of video gamers compete for large prize pools and tournament titles, which can be bet on using virtual items (skins) and through commercial betting operators.



Jessica Lam presented on the impact of problem gambling on families and outlined the Five-steps model

that has been developed by Professor Richard Velleman and Professor Jim Orford in the UK. A brief role-play was performed to demonstrate some of the micro-skills used in the 5-steps method. The presentation received positive feedback from attended counsellors, of which some explicitly expressed interest in knowing more about this intervention in the future. Plans will be made to offer more exposure and training to counsellors in this intervention that addresses a current gap in family support for clients with gambling related difficulties.

Journal Club

Journal club meetings are held every two months and provide an opportunity for the greater community to discuss important topics relating to gambling. As part of the GTRC's commitment to share expertise and facilitate knowledge translation, journal club provides a great opportunity for persons interested in discourse with Australia's only gambling clinic associated with a university. For July's event, we played host to a vigorous debate, held between our own Prof Alex Blaszczynski and special guest Dr. Clive Allcock, a respected psychiatrist who has been working with problem gambling for over 35 years. With them, we debated the questions "Are Poker Machines More Harmful Than Other Forms of Gambling?" We had a great turn-out, with over 40 participants joining in the very lively discussion, which touched on research findings, clinical opinions, and social impacts. Given how well received the meeting was, it is a format we will likely return to for future meetings.

Our next journal club is scheduled for 21st September, and will focus on the issue of clinical supervision, asking how we can make the most out of this important part of our clinical practice, including a talk from the UTS psychology clinic director, Alice Shires. Alice has been involved in the teaching, training and supervision of clinical psychologists and their field supervisors for many years as well as research into assessment of clinical psychology competencies during clinical psychology training and supervision. Alice is an MiCBT trainer and currently heads the UTS Mindfulness Integrated Therapies Research Clinic (MiTRC). If you would like to attend the upcoming journal club, please contact [Dr. Hunt](mailto:christopher.hunt@sydney.edu.au) christopher.hunt@sydney.edu.au.

The Science Talented Student Program (TSP)



A highly talented and enthusiastic group of first year science students worked with third year psychology student Lisa Zhang under the supervision of Dr. Gainsbury and Professor Blaszczyński as part of The University of Sydney's Talented Student Program. The TSP is restricted to the very top science study based on their achievements in high school studies. This program is a unique offering for students who are seeking to expand their intellectual horizons and indulge their intellectual curiosity. The aim of the program is to offer students of exceptional merit additional challenging material.

The students involved in our group truly took up the challenge of expanding their horizons by undertaking a qualitative analysis of 812 responses to an online survey examining the nature and experience of online regrets on social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. The research took place over the course of the semester, with students coordinating their own work, which included learning qualitative research methods and apply these to an existing dataset. The program culminated in the TSP Showcase presentation where the group shared their research at an event attended by academics from the Science Faculty, as well as family members.

We wish the first-year students (Kenneth Guo, Jennifer How, Clara Morris, Maggie Shao, Alissa Stark, and Victor Sun) the best in their studies and hope that they may engage with topics in Psychology in the future. Lisa Zhang will commence her Honours year in Psychology next year, and is currently studying on an exchange program in the U.S.

New TSP Student

Georgia Grattan is a third year Bachelor of Psychology student who will be undertaking a semester internship with Dr. Sally Gainsbury and Professor Alex Blaszczyński as part of The University of Sydney Talented Students Program. Georgia will be conducting a study examining player's perceptions of various newly available forms of gambling – skilled video gaming machines, secondary lotteries, and daily fantasy sports. The study will examine consumer's interest in these new forms of gambling, their understanding of how they work, and any impact of these activities on illusions of control – that is, do the gambling activities encourage players to overestimate the role of skill vs. chance.

GTRC in the Media

New technologies are shifting the gambling industry into uncharted territory. With the advent of virtual reality, daily fantasy sports, and online gambling, the GTRC has been busy studying the potential implications for each form. PhD candidate, Dylan Pickering, clarifies the new form of fantasy sports in his article featured in [The Conversation](#). Pickering charts the growth of daily fantasy sports (DFS) in the Australian wagering market and explains how certain structural features may increase potential for harm among its users. DFS operators are continually entering the growing market in Australia and are guided by the South Australian Responsible Gambling Code of Practice 2013. Currently, with funding from NAGS, Dylan Pickering and Brittany Keen are conducting research to map out any unique harms that arise from DFS participation relative to normal sports betting behaviour. This, in turn, may have implications for existing regulation. Dylan also discussed DFS with Nic Healy in a live radio interview on [2SER](#).

In an article for [EGR Intel](#), Dr. Sally Gainsbury and



Professor Alex Blaszczynski explain how of virtual reality (VR) may exacerbate or contribute to gambling disorders. While an exciting new venture in entertainment, the total immersion of the new technology can lead to behavioural disinhibition and create the illusion that wins and losses are extraneous to reality and solely

part of the virtual environment. VR is expected to see exponential growth over the next decade creating an impetus for operators and governments to respond with appropriate safeguarding. Dr. Gainsbury and Professor Blaszczynski identify that, at present, anticipating potential implications of VR is important while still in its inception phase.

Regulation guiding online gambling has been a considerable topic at the GTRC. The Interactive Gambling Amendment Bill 2016 outlines updated regulations regarding the online gambling market in Australia. Recently, the government held several inquiries allowing various stakeholders to submit recommendations to the Amendment. Dr. Sally Gainsbury and Professor Alex Blaszczynski presented a

[submission](#) clarifying the [status](#) of [online poker](#) within the new bill. Another submission was completed by Dr. Gainsbury and Prof Blaszczynski with assistance from Clinician Kirsten Shannon and PhD candidate Dylan Pickering outlining a National Consumer Protection Framework. Both of these entries garnered substantial interest in the media and prompted invitations to speak at the Senate Environment and Communications References Committee and participate in workshops and hearings with the Behavioural Economics Team of the Australian Government (BETA), and the Department of Social Services in Sydney and Canberra. To see a transcript of the ECRC speaker session, please [click here](#).

Dr. Christopher Hunt appeared on ABC News 24 to discuss changes to the advertising and promotion of sports betting, an issue which has recently been the subject of much community debate. The motion to ban gambling advertising during live sporting events is welcomed by Dr. Hunt who understands the potential impact it can have on problem gamblers. Dr. Gainsbury also featured in the on [radio](#) discussing the influence of advertising on social media. Her [recent research](#), conducted in collaboration with Dr. Brett Abarbanel at UNLV, Dr. Daniel King and Professor Paul Delfabbro at University of Adelaide and Professor Nerilee Hing, CQU, indicates that imagery used in such advertising appeals to younger audiences and potentially normalizes gambling without including responsible gambling language.



Be in touch:

If you would like to know more about the Gambling Treatment and Research Clinic at the University of Sydney, check out our [website](#)! Other research by researchers and clinicians at the GTRC is also available\ by connecting with us through [academia.edu](#) and [research gate](#). Or check us out on Twitter!

- @DrSalGainsbury
- @BrainMind_Usyd
- @dylanpic0
- @Krittany_Been

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