

Online sports betting has created new generation of problem gamblers

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Alex Blaszczynski, Professor of Psychology at the University of Sydney, says there is a trend toward online sports betting which has altered the pattern of problem gambling presentations at the various University's Gambling Treatment Clinic.

The internationally recognised [gambling](#) expert says:

"Problem gambling has certainly moved away from the traditional picture of a person sitting for hours on end at a poker machine.

"While we are still seeing these clients, we are seeing that young men in particular are turning to gambling on sports. These young men are reporting difficulties controlling their internet-based sports betting in increasing numbers.

"Looking at our client numbers, we had approximately a 70 percent increase in the number of sports betting clients from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011."

The figures are not difficult to explain, says Professor Blaszczynski.

"With more and more people gaining access to higher internet speeds, and wireless internet via their [smart phones](#), you can literally gamble anytime, anywhere.

"Obviously all this makes it easier for people to gamble and increase their risk of higher rates of [problem gambling](#).

"With the footy season soon underway we are expecting to see a raise in the young male clients present with these problems."

Christopher Hunt, [clinical psychologist](#) at the University of Sydney Gambling Treatment Clinic, said a few years ago the majority of the people who visited the clinic gambled only on poker machines.

"However today, we are seeing many young men, who are losing large sums of money from betting on sports over the internet. They can literally lose a fortune without even leaving the comfort of their own home."

Mr. Hunt notes a link between this rise and the increased promotion of gambling through the sports media. "It is difficult to watch most kinds of sporting matches these days without being made aware of the prices that various outlets are giving for bets," he says.

"In this environment it is natural that many people with an interest in sports may try their luck by gambling on the sports they enjoy. Unfortunately some of these people will lose more than they planned to and become problem gamblers".

Provided by University of Sydney

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