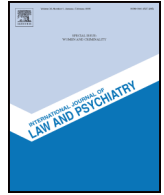




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

International Journal of Law and Psychiatry



A study of the connection between gambling and crime in Hungarian prisons

Judit Tessényi¹, Péter Kovács

University of Szeged, Hungary

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 March 2016

Accepted 18 April 2016

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Gambling game

Crime

Addiction

Problem gambling

ABSTRACT

In the following study, we examine the connection between crime and gambling addictions. In addition to examining the playing habits of 140 detainees prior to their imprisonment, we also study their demographic characteristics, and their relations.² We previously studied these correlations as a part of a data recording in 2009 (Tessényi-Kovács, 2011).³

By the 10th of October 2012, the use of gaming machines was terminated in Hungary. Therefore, our survey has gained a repeated actuality, since a significant cause of addiction has disappeared from the market. We question whether this factor has had a measurable effect. Although the elapsed time is not necessarily enough to measure the presumed changes in crime due to gambling, we nevertheless make the comparison with the results from 2009.

For the study of pathological problem gambling, we applied the original version of the SOGS-questionnaire, complemented with demographics and other relevant questions from the perspective of our survey.

© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

1. Background

Gambling addictions can be measured with a number of tools. Tests are one such mechanism. When choosing a test, it is reasonable to choose from those which are already rated and internationally accepted. This is why we have selected the SOGS⁴ questionnaire. The test was published in 1987 by Henry R. Lesieur and Sheila B. Blume. After multiple investigations, it was finalized in 1992, with additional application and operating instructions (Lesieur & Blume, 1987, 1992). SOGS is a 16-item-questionnaire which examines the respondent's playing habits, their frequency, and the behaviors related to them. Originally, it was designed to filter out the affected problem gamblers within clinical circumstances. SOGS is one of the most widely used tests in the epidemiological measurement of gambling addiction. Subsequently, an adaptation⁵ that considers the Hungarian circumstances was prepared (Demetrovics & Kun, 2010; Kun et al., 2011). However, it was not accessible until 2011 (Gyollai et al., 2011), meaning that the data was unavailable during the earlier 2009 prison survey.

In the 2009 study,⁶ only 33% of the respondents reported that gambling did not cause problems for them. However, of the sample group, 30.7% were prone to gambling addiction endangered, meaning that they answered between one and four of the relevant questions in the affirmative. As many as 35.7% of the sample's detainees could be considered gambling addicts, because positive answers were given to five or more questions. Of this group of gambling addicts, 22% gave a positive answer to only 5 questions, making their addiction less severe. The other 78%, however, exhibited signs of addiction in exceeding amounts (Tessényi & Kovács, 2011).

A similar study was performed in Canada, where Turner and his colleagues studied the question of gambling in penitentiary institutions there, with the application of CPGI/PGSI.⁷ According to their investigation, several field surveys were performed between 2008 and 2011 in penitentiary institutions in order to explore gambling behavior and gambling problems. Playing habits prior to and during imprisonment were examined separately. A total of 422 detainees (381 male and 41 female) took part in their survey. They found that of the examined prisoners, 8.9% had already been pathologically problematic⁸ gamblers prior to their imprisonment, and 4.4% remained so during imprisonment. These statistics show significantly higher rates of gambling addiction in prison as compared to those measured within the general population. While 34% of the detainees conducted gambling games in

E-mail address: tessenyijudit@gmail.com (J. Tessényi).

¹ Tel.: +36308253940.

² 2014 data recording took place in September–October, in Sándorháza, Mélykút and Baracska penitentiary institutions (Hungary).

³ The result of the first research is English appearance progress: Gaming Law Review and Economics Volume 19, Number 9, 2015.

⁴ South Oaks Gambling Screen: Lesieur and Blume (1987).

⁵ Under SOGS-HU name.

⁶ Between December 2009 and March 2010 in Tököl, Kecskemét and Szeged. The full analysis can be found in the 4th Article of the Statistical Journey 2011 (89th year).

⁷ Problem Gambling Severity Index of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index.

⁸ "Severe problem gambling".

prison, almost half of them had a gambling problem prior to their imprisonment (Turner, Preston, McAvoy, & Gillam, 2013).

Our 2009 survey revealed a significant relationship (significance = 0.005) between age groups and the SOGS-classification of the detainees. Of all gambling addicts, 55.6% were found to be between 18 and 30 years old, while the distribution of non-addicts was nearly consistent in all age groups. 35.9% of the endangered were less than 18 years old, and 59% were less than 30 years old (Tessényi & Kovács, 2011, 408 p.).

In the 2009 study, 50.7% of the respondents had already been convicted. Of this group with criminal records, 51% were classified as problem gamblers, based on the SOGS-measurement. Of those without a criminal record, 45% were not problematic, while 40% of them were endangered. These results revealed that problem gamblers were 3.38 times more likely to be found among detainees with previous criminal records than among those without.

Paterson and Garrett published a study⁹ in 2011 which examines the connection between gambling, drug use, and criminal behavior in an Australian context. Besides the survey of gender differences, their statement revealed that more than half of the prisoners used their addiction as a defense (in the Anglo-Saxon law the addiction, as a disease, is a mitigating circumstance). The connection between these three factors was most evident in cases of fraud, theft and robbery (Paterson & Garrett, 2010).

Valérie Beaugregard and colleagues used an interesting approach, by summarizing the opinions of Quebec province's penitentiary officials. They investigated disciplinary reports, which confirmed that coercion and prohibition are rarely successful in combatting gambling activities. This can be explained by the fact that betting activities were less of a cause for concrete interventions than other undesired behaviors, such as disturbing the peace of prisoners' cells. Many interviewed guards described gambling as a positive leisurely activity, reasoning that the negative effects generated by it appeared only occasionally; that gambling relieves stress; and it helps to maintain peace among the prisoners. Since this activity usually does not endanger the penitentiary staff or detainees, it is usually used as a tool of mediation (Beaugregard, Chadillon-Farinacci, Brochu, & Cousineau, 2013). In French prisons, the proportion of pathological problem gamblers is 6.7% (Mandhouj, Aubin, Amirouche, Perroud, & Huguelet, 2013). Here, another approach was taken in investigating the relationship between gambling and crime, by studying—during the detention period—the condition of penitentiary institutions rather than the playing habits prior to imprisonment.

As previously addressed, the comparability of given measurement results is greatly limited by differing periods, number of elements, but mostly by the application of various measurement tools throughout the different studies (Tessényi, 2013). For these reasons, we believe it is important to apply the original 2009 questionnaire during our latest measurements in spite of its occasional limitations.

2. Methodology

As seen in the above table, currently the prison population in Hungary is 18,000, 70% of whom are convicts (Table 1).

In 2011, the Hungarian version of SOGS-HU measurement tool was first introduced and used for the analysis of domestic data, which was measured in the first nationally representative sample (Gyollai et al., 2011). We compared this questionnaire, item by item, with our own SOGS questionnaire (translated by us and used in 2009 during our prison research) and found no essential differences, except stylistic discrepancies. On the basis of assessed answers (following Question 4), SOGS-HU determines the following categories (Table 2).

⁹ Report Into the Possible Connection Between Problem Gambling, Drug Usage and Criminal Activity Among Clients of OARS SA <http://iga.sa.gov.au/pdf/iga/IGA-OARS-20110623.pdf>.

Table 1

The total number of prisoners. 2008–2013 in the penitentiary. Adapted from: Central Hungarian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Hungarian Statistical Yearbook.

Detention	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Pre-trial detention	4366	4502	4803	4875	4888	5053
Convicted	10,072	10,590	11,241	12,028	11,981	12,391
IMEI	183	186	174	180	182	183
Referrals to imprisonment	81	82	110	127	128	214
All	14,702	15,360	16,328	17,210	17,179	17,841

IMEI: involuntary treatment.

We haven't found any "breaks" in the full sample, supporting or invalidating the categorization. However, within the group of problem gamblers, the 5th and 10th point can be regarded as a "watershed".

In order to continue this comparison with categories congruent with our 2009 results, we applied the original questionnaire and assessment system in our recent survey. However, in the following figure (Fig. 1), we see the classification of 2009 results as adapted to the standardized SOGS-HU survey. As seen in the figure, with the merging of the "less problematic" and the "problematic players", we arrive at the original results (in further analysis we use the "endangered" designation for this group) (see Figs. 2 and 3).

3. 2014 test results

In the fall of 2014, we repeatedly carried out our test, which had a sample size of 140 detainees. The differences in the sample will be analyzed in the next subchapter. In our recent sample, 16 women are included (11.4%). Therefore, gender characteristics are not considered in our study. However, it should be noted that according to the answers given by women in the survey, gambling problems are just as prevalent amongst them as they are amongst men—31.5% and 31.3% respectively. At the same time, on the basis of the test, among women, the proportion of not problematic (37.5%) and problem gamblers (43.8%) is higher, but the percentage of endangered (18.8%) is much smaller, although it has to be noted that the correlation is not significant. According to national records, women make up 6.5–7.6% of the prison population in Hungary (Table 3).

3.1. Changes compared to the 2010 proportions

Our main interest was in the changes in trends during the five years (between 2009 and 2014) concerning the imprisoned detainees' "contamination" and in relation to their playing habits. During the selection of respondents we focused on those whose crime or start of imprisonment took place after 2012.

Amongst the problem gamblers, 3.6% gave a positive answer to 5 questions in the filtering test, meaning that they were at the lower level of addiction. However, based on their answers, the overwhelming

Table 2

Methodological collation (SOGS-HU between employees and categorization). Adapted from: Gyollai et al. (2011) and Tessényi and Kovács (2015).

Score on the basis of "yes"	Name of the SOGS-HU-under	Comment own definitions
0	Problem-free	No problem
1–2	Few problems characterized by	Endangered
3–4	Problematic players	
5–20	Pathological gamblers	Dependent

SOGS: South Oaks Gambling Screen: <http://walfkerd.people.cofc.edu/360/AcademicArticles/LesieurBlume1987.pdf>.

SOGS-HU name of the Hungarian adaptation (Gyollai et al., 2011).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6554600>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6554600>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)