

Journal Information

Journal ID (publisher-id): jgi

ISSN: 1910-7595

Publisher: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Article Information

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Received Day: 8 Month: December Year: 2001

Publication date: February 2002

Publisher Id: jgi.2002.6.6

DOI: 10.4309/jgi.2002.6.6

Response to a [letter](#) about “Chips, Chatter and Friends”

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(This letter prints out to about three pages.)

Playing poker can cause problems. Playing too long, too late, or losing more than one can afford are among the hazards. There are players in treatment for a gambling problem because of their involvement in poker.

The game of poker is, perhaps, the most popular form of gambling in North America. Prior to the proliferation of legalized gambling, millions of people played weekly, with friends and relatives. Playing in a public poker room in a casino has replaced many of these home games.

Playing in a public poker room can lead to gambling problems. I interviewed one player in treatment and in GA (Gamblers Anonymous Ed.) who started as a low stakes recreational player in the casinos. His involvement increased, leading to playing at higher and higher stakes. He lost his business, his girlfriend, and wound up in treatment.

It is important to understand why some people do become problem gamblers. It is also important to understand why others can play safely. My article (http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue3/first_person/index.html) was about the pleasure that many people find in playing poker. I am sorry that my descriptions caused the reader's wife pain.

We invite our readers to submit letters on gambling topics. Please note that we can publish only a fraction of the letters submitted. All letters must be signed. We cannot publish anonymous letters, or those of a libellous nature. Letters to the Editor are reviewed and chosen by the editor and members of the editorial board. Letters may be sent by e-mail or to the mail address given below. Once a letter is accepted, we will request an electronic version. Each published letter will include the writer's first and last names, professional title(s) if relevant, city, province or

state, and country. Alternatively, for good cause, the editor may confirm a letter's authorship and publish it as [Name withheld]. We reserve the right to edit each submission for uniform format and punctuation.

Phil Lange, editor

The Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues: eGambling

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