

editorial/éditorial

Editorial: Announcing the Winners of the Second Annual *JGI* Scholar's Awards for Research Excellence in Category A (Applied) and Category B (Basic)

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In 2015, the *Journal of Gambling Issues (JGI)* instituted a new award—the *JGI* Scholar's Award—with the goal of supporting outstanding researchers in the field of problem gambling research. Our hope was to increase submissions to the journal from up-and-coming gambling scholars and to profile their work each year in a special issue. Our first two recipients were announced in issues 33 and 34 of the *JGI*, respectively (Stewart, 2016a, 2016b); we published the winning papers and the other finalist papers in those same two issues. In 2016, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows conducting research in problem gambling were once again invited to submit their best work to compete for the second annual *JGI* Scholar's Award and for consideration for publication in the journal. As with the previous competition, we organized the submissions into two streams to represent best the categories of manuscripts that we received: Category A (Applied)—Clinical, Social, Qualitative, Public Health, and/or Policy Research; and Category B (Basic)—Cognitive, Developmental, Lab-Based Experimental, and/or Systematic Reviews Research. Once again, we received an impressive number of submissions: 15, to be exact, 6 for Category A and 9 for Category B. We accepted submissions in both English and French, and from three countries: Canada, the United States, and Australia. Submitted articles underwent the normal double-blind peer-review process used at the *JGI* for regular research manuscripts. All manuscripts that passed the peer-review process (13 of the 15 submitted papers) were then sent to one of two sets of judges, one set for each stream. Judges were all members of the *JGI* Editorial Board, each with pertinent expertise in the relevant areas of problem gambling research. Judges conducted independent, blind evaluations of the manuscripts in their stream on five criteria: (1) scientific rigor, (2) coverage of the relevant literature, (3) theoretical contribution, (4) innovation of design and concept, and (5) quality of the analysis and discussion. Each judge assigned ratings on a 1–10 scale to each paper for each of these five criteria. A total score on a 5–50 scale was calculated for each paper for each judge; the two judges' scores were then totalled for each paper. The highest total score across judges determined the winning paper in each category. In one case, a close tie occurred between two papers in one of the categories and an additional two judges

from the *JGI* editorial board were brought in to break the tie in an additional set of independent, blind reviews. We extend our sincere thanks to Martin Zack, Daniela Lobo, Nigel Turner, Toulia Kourgiantakis, Serge Sevigny (Associate Editor), and Vivien Rekkas (Managing Editor)—members of the *JGI* editorial board who served as judges this year. Our judges' contributions of their time, effort, and expertise in reviewing and rating the papers submitted for the *JGI* Scholar's Award are very much appreciated.

In this special issue, we announce the winner of the Second Annual Scholar's Awards in each of the two categories. We also devote this issue to the publication of the 13 accepted submissions, including the respective winning Category A and Category B papers. The judges confronted a difficult task assigned to them in selecting the winner in each category, given the overall excellent quality of the submissions. Without exception, the papers were well written, the studies well designed and appropriately analyzed, and each makes a useful contribution to the understanding of a specific aspect of problem gambling. Despite the challenging job with which they were tasked, the judges produced ratings that were quite consistent and two clear winners emerged.

It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of the second annual *JGI* Scholar's Award for Category A. She is Melanie Dixon, a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Laval in Quebec, Canada who completed this work as part of her PhD. Dixon holds a bachelors' degree in psychology from Laval University. She has been a doctoral candidate in psychology (PhD in Research and Clinical Intervention) since 2012, under the supervision of Dr. Isabel Giroux, in a laboratory that focuses on both the psychology of gambling and the prevention and treatment of problem gambling. Her doctoral dissertation explores the perceptions and behaviours associated with online stock trading. Her winning paper is entitled "What characterizes excessive online stock trading: A qualitative study." She will be awarded a prize of \$1,000 Canadian in recognition of her strong work on this paper. Dixon's study was motivated by observations that excessive online stock trading seems to share similarities with disordered gambling (e.g., Turner, 2011), as well as by concerns that applying current gambling disorder criteria in assessing excessive trading may not be appropriate given unique aspects of the trading context (e.g., Markiewicz & Weber, 2013). Her study used a qualitative method to explore the characteristics and consequences of excessive online stock trading and to examine its links with gambling disorder from the perspective of online stock traders themselves. The interviewees reported believing that excessive trading was characterized by frequent engagement in the activity, preoccupation with trading, and negative effects of trading in multiple life domains (finances, work, relationships, and health). The interviewees also noted shared links between excessive trading and gambling disorder in the areas of chasing losses, and loss of control over the behaviour. Dixon's novel study concludes that, while excessive online stock trading is similar to gambling disorder in many respects, the assessment of excessive trading still needs to consider its own unique aspects, such as the state of the market. Dixon's important contribution sets the stage for,

and is likely to stimulate, much-needed additional research on how to best assess and treat the problem of excessive online stock trading.

While Dixon's paper emerged as the clear winner, the remaining five Category A submissions were of notably high quality as well. Two papers made use of qualitative methods. One study, by Méli \u00e9 ssa C\u00f4t\u00e9 of the University of Quebec at Trois-Rivi\u00e8res and her colleagues, used qualitative methods to examine the coping strategies used by the partners of disordered gamblers to deal with their partners' gambling behaviour and its effects. C\u00f4t\u00e9 et al. showed that partners used a wide variety of strategies aimed, primarily, not only at modifying the gamblers' problematic behaviour, but also at improving their own well-being; contextual triggers for the use of specific coping strategies were determined; and general agreement was found between members of the couple on the coping strategies the partners used. Another study, by Adele Morvannou of the University of Sherbrooke and her colleagues, used a qualitative method to examine the concepts of obsessive and harmonious passion from the perspective of poker players themselves. This French-language submission showed that poker players believed both forms of passion were relevant for their gambling behaviour, suggesting that passion is a relevant construct to be considered in the prevention and treatment of problematic poker play. Two other papers examined interventions for problem gambling via self-exclusion or warning messages. A paper by Dylan Pickering of the University of Sydney and his colleagues involved a retrospective investigation of the experiences and outcomes of individuals enrolled in a multi-venue self-exclusion program for problem gamblers. His results suggest that a self-exclusion program—one that has easy registration and prevents entry into multiple venues—fosters positive outcomes (e.g., reduced gambling, greater control over urges) for most self-excluded gamblers, particularly those striving to maintain abstinence. Another paper, by Tess Armstrong of Central Queensland University and her colleagues, examined the effect of several different types of pop-up warnings, differing in message frame and purpose, which appeared during play on an electronic gaming machine. Females showed increased gambling behaviour in the negatively framed, self-evaluative purpose condition suggesting potential iatrogenic effects of inappropriately-tailored warning messages. A final study in the applied category examined the impact of different recruitment methods in drawing problem gamblers in to self-administered treatment. Specifically, a study by Catherine Boudreault of Laval University and her supervisor compared gamblers recruited into self-administered treatment via either advertisements or a volunteer bank. Gamblers recruited via advertisements presented higher severity gambling problems relative to those recruited from the volunteer bank, but the two groups did not differ in treatment engagement, in this case suggesting the importance of using different recruitment methods to reach those gamblers who do not actively seek help better.

I am also very pleased to announce the winner of the second annual *JGI* Scholar's Award for Category B. Our winner is Matthew Keough, PhD, an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada who completed this work while a post-doctoral fellow at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Canada. His current research interests include personality-related

and cognitive mechanisms underlying substance abuse and behavioural addictions such as problem gambling, and online integrated treatments for co-occurring mental health (e.g., depression and anxiety) and addictive disorders, including gambling disorder. Keough conducted his doctoral research in clinical psychology under the supervision of Dr. Roisin O'Connor at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, and his post-doctoral fellowship under the supervision of Dr. Christian Hendershot in Toronto. His winning paper is entitled "Joint Effects of Impulsive and Self-Regulatory Process on Gambling Frequency." He will be awarded a prize of \$1,000 Canadian in recognition of his fine work. Dual process theories of addiction posit two cognitive systems that govern behaviour: an implicit, automatic, or reflexive system and an explicit, controlled, or reflective system (Stacy & Wiers, 2010). The two systems are believed to interact with reflective processes of the explicit system "putting the brakes on" the automatic processes of the implicit system. While many tests of this theory do exist in the alcohol abuse area, they are nonetheless rare in the problem gambling field. Keough's paper examined this theory in individuals seeking treatment for problem gambling. He and his colleagues hypothesized that implicit gambling cognition (specifically, the automatic tendency to associate gambling with positive outcomes) would be positively related to gambling frequency, but only at low (not at high) levels of capacity to self-regulate. Prior to treatment, participants completed two versions of an implicit cognition task—a single category Implicit Association Test (Karpinski & Steinman, 2006). These reaction time tasks assessed the degree to which the individual automatically associates gambling with tension reduction outcomes (task 1) or pleasurable, enhancing outcomes (task 2). Participants also completed self-report, explicit measures of their capacity to control their gambling behaviour when feeling bad or when feeling good (i.e., the Gambling Abstinence Self-Efficacy Scale; Hodgins, Peden, & Makarchuk, 2004), as well as an outcome measure tapping their gambling frequency. Consistent with hypothesis, the tendency to associate gambling automatically with tension reduction outcomes was significantly positively related to gambling frequency, but only at low levels of ability to self-regulate gambling when feeling bad. But Keough et al. did not find evidence of their other moderation hypothesis: the association between the tendency to automatically associate gambling with enhancement outcomes and gambling frequency was not moderated by the gambler's ability to self-regulate when feeling good. Keough et al.'s novel findings provide evidence for the dual process model in a behavioural addiction, extending work in the alcohol abuse field to problem gambling. The results also highlight the importance of negative reinforcement processes in gambling addiction. Finally, these results underline that, in treatment, it is important to enhance problem gamblers' abilities to self-regulate their gambling when they are experiencing unpleasant emotions, to help them overcome any automatic tendencies they may have to associate gambling with tension-reduction and thus to find themselves gambling as a way of relieving discomfort.

Whereas Keough's paper emerged as the top basic research submission, the remaining six Category B submissions were nonetheless strong and each worthy of honourable mention. Two other cognitive papers examined a method of eliciting dysfunctional thoughts in problem gamblers and financially-focused self-concept,

respectively. One of the two studies, by Maxine Chretien of Laval University and her colleagues, compared virtual reality to imagination in eliciting two types of dysfunctional thoughts in individuals with gambling disorder: gambling-related thoughts, and more general addiction-related thoughts. They showed that exposure to a gambling situation via virtual reality was more effective than via imagination in eliciting gambling-related thoughts specifically, suggesting virtual reality as a potentially useful therapeutic tool for gaining access to gamblers' dysfunctional gambling-related thoughts for use in cognitive restructuring. The second study, by Nassim Tabri of Carleton University and his colleagues, examined a cognitive construct—financially-focused self-concept—as a possible mediator of the relationship of perfectionism to disordered gambling in a large community sample of gamblers. Their results provided support for their hypothesized mediational model suggesting that perfectionistic tendencies in gamblers are associated with disordered gambling because such tendencies result in a self-concept focused on financial success, pointing to both perfectionism and financially-focused self-concept as potential intervention targets. Three papers were developmental in terms of their focus on gambling in adolescents or emerging adults. A study by Yaxi Zhao of McGill University and his colleagues examined the correlates of mobile gambling in a large sample of adolescents aged 10–19 years. Results revealed a 5% prevalence of mobile gambling, with regular mobile gambling being associated with a higher risk of developing a gambling problem, suggesting that underage mobile gambling may serve as one warning sign of adolescent problem gambling. Another study, by Rory Pfund of the University of Memphis and his colleagues, used a lab-based experimental design to examine the influence of three types of social interaction (warm confederate, cold confederate, and no confederate) on women college students' electronic gambling machine behaviour. Results suggest that the presence of another person is a risk factor for excessive gambling in women college students, with those students in the warm social interaction placing riskier bets and those students in the cold social interaction speeding up the rate of their gambling, emphasizing the need for contextually-sensitive responsible gambling interventions. Another study also focused on college students. It was conducted by Hollie Granato of the University of California, Los Angeles Medical Centre, and her colleagues, and it examined crossover effects of the use of drinking protective behavioural strategies (e.g., interspersing non-alcoholic with alcoholic drinks) on problem gambling in college gamblers with alcohol or drug abuse. Granato et al. found that greater use of serious harm reduction strategies (e.g., making sure to go home with a friend or using a designated driver when drinking) were associated with fewer gambling-related problems, accordingly suggesting strategies to reduce serious harm may represent an intervention target for potentially reducing negative consequences associated with both drinking and gambling. The final paper in this category involved a systematic review methodology. Specifically, the study by Jonathan Mercier of the University of Laval and his colleagues, conducted a systematic review of the literature on sports betting with the goals of describing the gambling habits and cognitions of sports bettors, and determining the roles of chance and skill in such betting. Results offer pertinent insights concerning the distinction between chance and skill in sports betting by showing that sports bettors perform better than chance in predicting

results accurately. However, such bettors do not win more money than they would with random selection, and overestimate the influence of skill on outcome.

I hope you will enjoy, as much as I did, reading this set of impressive contributions from these emerging scholars in the problem gambling field. We will all be keeping an eye on these outstanding new scholars to follow their developing careers as problem gambling researchers.

Having enjoyed a successful response to our first two calls for Scholar Awards, the *JGI* is now planning for our Third Annual Scholar's Award for Research Excellence. Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows conducting research in problem gambling will once again be invited to submit their best work for publication in a special section of the *JGI*. Again, articles will be accepted in two streams: Category A (Applied) or Category B (Basic), as described above. The first author of the winning article in each of the two categories will receive a prize of \$1,000 Canadian. We look forward to receiving another round of excellent submissions from emerging scholars in the problem gambling and gaming fields and to featuring these trainees' work in a future special issue of the *JGI*. Please keep a watch out for our imminent announcement of the 3rd Annual *JGI* Scholar's Award for Research Excellence, and encourage your trainees to apply.

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