



North Carolina Problem Gambling Program

1-877-718-5543

[morethanagamenc.com](http://morethanagamenc.com)

## Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors Related to Problem Gambling

Studies examining problem gambling among different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, races and ethnicities report higher rates of participation and gambling problems among particular groups for many reasons.

### Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors in Gambling

- The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 gave legal right to Native American Reservations to run gaming operations. There are currently two casinos in North Carolina and 480 across the U.S. operated by tribes (Meister, 2017).
- Twenty-five percent of the casino revenues in New York come from Asian-American clientele. In addition, Las Vegas has depended on a strong Asian clientele for years. This is due to carrying on homeland traditions of embracing games of chance and skill (Chen, 2011).
- Immigrants who arrive in the U.S. as children (12 or younger) gamble more frequently than those arriving as adolescents or adults (Caler, 2017).

### Cultural and Socioeconomic Factors and Gambling Addiction

- African-Americans and other minority groups have both problem and pathological gambling rates of two to three times higher than Caucasian gamblers (Cunningham-Williams, 2007).
- Military personnel are predominantly, young, male and heavily represented by ethnic minorities – all commonly associated with problem gambling (Timothy A. Steenbergh, 2008).
- Problem gamblers are more likely to have a substance use disorder, have undergone treatment for the substance use disorder and also have had a history of mental illness (McCorkle, 2002).
- Youth who are immigrants living in the U.S. for the first time are at risk for problem gambling, particularly if a person lives away from family (Caler, 2017).
- A casino within 10 miles of a home has a significant effect on problem gambling and is associated with a 90 percent increase in the odds of becoming a problem gambler (Weaver, 2005). Many Native American Reservations have had more than 20 years of legalized gambling.
- People in low socioeconomic communities experience problem gambling at higher rates (Cathy Wilde, 2014).

### Problem Gambling Signs and Barriers to Treatment

- Problem gambling signs include: increasing preoccupation with gambling; a need to bet more money more frequently; restlessness or irritability when attempting to stop; and “chasing” losses and loss of control.
- Problem gamblers can experience financial loss, bankruptcy, emotional and physical problems, criminal activity, loss of career, intimate partner violence, change in personal relationships and in extreme cases, suicide (Committee on Law and Justice, 1999).
- Barriers to accessing treatment for different cultures can include: cultural and language barriers that keep people living in isolation; distrust of government organizations; prejudice and discrimination; addictions seen as weakness or medical issue in culture; lack of services, cost of care or lack of awareness that care exists; lack of evidence based programs for different cultures; and stigma, shame, denial and guilt (Kalibatseva, 2001) (Tsuang, 2007).

*For more information on problem gambling, free screening and treatment options, training for clinicians and youth prevention grant opportunities, please visit [morethanagamenc.com](http://morethanagamenc.com).*



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Mental Health  
[morethanagamenc.com](http://morethanagamenc.com) • NCDHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. • 06/2018

## References

- Caler, K. R. (2017). Problem gambling among ethnic minorities: results from an epidemiological study. *Asian Journal of gambling issues and Public Health*.
- Cathy Wilde. (2014, January 3). *People in poor neighborhoods are twice as likely to have gambling problems, study finds*. Retrieved from University at Buffalo Research Institute on Addictions: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ria/news\\_events/latest\\_news.host.html/content/shared/university/news/news-center-releases/2014/01/001.detail.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ria/news_events/latest_news.host.html/content/shared/university/news/news-center-releases/2014/01/001.detail.html)
- Chen, D. W. (2011, March 15). *The New York Times*. Retrieved from Casinos and Buses Cater to Asian Roots: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Committee on Law and Justice. (1999). *Pathological Gambling: A Critical Review*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press.
- Cunningham-Williams, R. (2007, August 26). *Gambling Addiction Assessment Tool Applies Equally for Different Races*. Retrieved from ScienceDaily: [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/08/070824095816.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/08/070824095816.htm)
- Kalibatseva, F. T. (2001). Cross-Cultural Barriers to Mental Health Services in the United States. *Cerebrum*, 5.
- McCorkle, R. C. (2002). *Pathological Gambling in Arrestee Populations*. Maryland: Department of Justice.
- Meister, A. (2017). The Economic Impact of Tribal Gaming: A State-by-State Analysis. *American Gaming Association*, 1-4.
- Timothy A. Steenbergh, J. P. (2008). Gambling and Health Risk-Taking Behavior in Military Sample. *Military Medicine*, 452-453.
- Tsuang, T. W. (2007). Asian-Americans, Addictions, and Barriers to Treatment. *Psychiatry*, 51-59.
- Weaver, K. (2005, June 28). *Study Ties Risk of Problem Gambling with Proximity to Casinos and Other Gambling Opportunities*. Retrieved from The University of Buffalo Research Institute on Addictions: <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2005/06/7369.html>