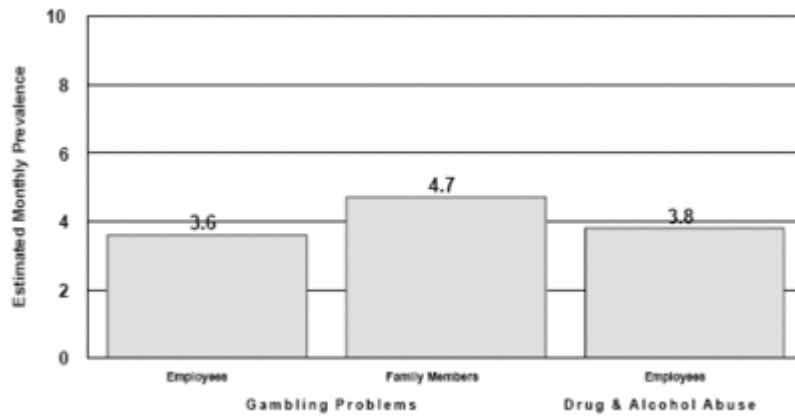


The WAGER, Vol. 1(25) - Gambling problems among those seeking help from employee assistance programs

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Problem gambling, like substance abuse, is responsible for absenteeism, lost productivity, accidents, and medical claims in the workplace. However, the consequences of problem gambling essentially have been ignored by business and industry, who have yet to recognize the importance of addiction to gambling as a cost issue. Little documentation exists on the prevalence of gambling problems within the workforce. A recent study¹ surveyed a sample of 198 employee assistance program (EAP) professionals. Seventy-nine replies were returned (40% response rate), but only 55 (28%) were usable. This study found that 3.6% of those employees who sought help from the EAP for any reason in the previous month had serious problems related to gambling. This rate may be compared with a one-month prevalence rate of 3.8% for drug and alcohol abuse among employees. Among family members seeking help for any reason from the EAP in the previous month, 4.7% had problems associated with an employee's gambling. This study also found that EAP professionals with some education about compulsive gambling were more likely to identify compulsive gamblers than those without such training. The similarity between monthly prevalence rates of gambling problems and substance abuse problems among employees suggests that the costs associated with these problems also may be similar.

Prevalence of Problem Gambling & Substance Abuse Among Employees &



Their Families

Sources:

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