

The WAGER, Vol. 3(49) - It's a GAS

December 8, 1998

The creation of a new instrument for measuring psychological phenomena represents a substantial process that involves considerably more than the mere formulation of survey questions. Before a SOGS (South Oaks Gambling Screen) or a MAGS (Massachusetts Gambling Screen) earns acceptance among clinicians and researchers, it must be tested and retested for reliability, possible bias, its ability to measure the phenomena for which it was intended, and numerous other parameters. The development process usually takes months, or even years to complete. Hofstra University's Jeffrey Kassinove recently presented the preliminary validity results for the Gambling Attitude Scales (GAS), designed to assess a subject's attitudes toward various gambling activities. Four separate GAS instruments were created: GAS-general, GAS-casino, GAS-lottery, and GAS-horse racing. All four were administered to students from university-level psychology classes. The initial questionnaire represented 132 items, with 24 items for each GAS scale as well as a selection of non-gambling-related items included for methodological considerations. Using data obtained from extensive initial testing, final versions of the 4 instruments were drafted, each consisting of 9 questions. Items were phrased so that subjects responded using a 5-point, Likert-type scale. Higher scores represent more favorable attitudes toward gambling. Selected results and GAS-general questions are listed below.

- I think gambling is good for America
- I feel excited when I am around America people who gamble
- I gamble when the opportunity arises
- When people talk about gambling, I want to gamble
- I support the right of Americans to gamble as often as they want
- It's OK if there is gambling in my town

	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Mean¹</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
GAS-general	35.14	9.23	29.36	9.35	31.77	9.69
GAS-casino	38.9	8.6	33.48	10.41	35.8	9.99
GAS-horse racing	30.09	10.09	25.06	9.68	27.18	9.58
GAS- lottery	39.5	8.71	39.09	8.45	39.28	8.51

From these preliminary results, it appears that of the four gambling activities, the lottery was viewed the most favorably. Horse racing elicited the least positive attitudinal responses. It should be remembered that such conclusions are merely tentative, and we cannot be sure how these results will hold up when the scales are administered to a sample more representative of the general population. The author posits that the scales may have some predictive value for identifying potential pathological gamblers, but considerably more research is necessary before the validity of this supposition is assessed. Regardless, it appears that Kassinove's GAS scales may well prove to be a useful instrument for clinicians and researchers alike.

Source: Kassinove, J.I. (1998). Development of the Gambling Attitude Scales: Preliminary findings. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 54(6), 763-771.

This public education project is funded, in part, by The Andrews Foundation and the National Center for Responsible Gaming.

This fax may be copied without permission. Please cite The WAGER as the source. For more information contact the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, 190 High Street, Suite 5, Boston, MA 02110, U.S.