The Uncontrollable Diseas Of Gambling Essay, Research Paper

The Uncontrollable Disease of Gambling

In the US today, as gambling is becoming more popular so are gambling addicts. As the states institute legalized gambling, their income increases dramatically. Compulsive gambling needs to be recognized and medically treated before it is too late for the gambler. The only way to treat the disease of compulsive gambling is absence from gambling. Therefore, compulsive gambling must be considered and uncontrollable disease.

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, compulsive means an irresistible (uncontrollable) impulse (Mish 166). A disease is defined as being an abnormal bodily condition that impairs functioning and can usually be recognized by signs and symptoms. Uncontrollable means incapable of being controlled (Mish 222).

Pathologic gambling has been defined by the American Psychiatric Association “as a chronic progressive failure to resist impulses to gamble, and gambling behavior that comprises, or damages personal, family, or vocational pursuits” (Glazer 2).

How can it be determined if an individual is a compulsive gambler or not? According to the American Psychiatric Association you are a pathological (compulsive) gambler if you exhibits theses traits: (1) you have “preoccupation with gambling; (2) a need to increase the excitement produced by gambling; (3) restlessness or irritability when unable to gamble; (4) repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back, or stop

gambling; (5) gambling in an effort to get back money lost during gambling on a previous day; (6) gambling in an effort to escape” an unpleasant “mood; (7) lying to cover up gambling; (8) jeopardizing a significant job, relationship, or educational opportunity by gambling (9) engaging in illegal activity to finance gambling; and (10) going to someone else to relieve a desperate financial situation produced by gambling. An individual who fulfills five out of the ten criteria is diagnosed as a pathological gambler. Problem gamblers would satisfy only two, three, or four of these criteria” (Lesieur 2). If you answered five of the ten questions yes, you need to check yourself in to the nearest Gamblers Anonymous support group, because you have the uncontrollable disease of compulsive gambling.

Although evidence is presently sketchy on compulsive gambling, certain facts are beginning to emerge. In the past men were 95% of all compulsive gamblers. Today women make up almost a third of compulsive gamblers (Compulsive 1). Therapists have begun to notice many similarities between alcohol, drugs, and gambling addiction (Lesieur 6). “An addiction to gambling must be considered a sever problem, similar to that of alcohol and drugs.” Gamblers often experience an exhilarated high when gambling and withdrawal symptoms when they are not gambling (Glazer 8). Since pathological gamblers are determined to have similarities to alcoholism and drug users, which is considered to be an uncontrollable disease, pathological gambling must be labeled as an uncontrollable disease, in order to properly diagnose the problem and solve it (Lesieur 6).

“Compulsive gambling is perceived to be a disease that cannot be cured, only arrested” (Lesieur 5). In the past twenty years, gambling has dramatically increased, as has the rate of pathological gambling. By 1991, the total money spent on gambling has risen over three hundred billion dollars (Pathological 1). Although states revenues from gambling have increased immensely, the help for problem and pathological gamblers lags far behind. It has been proven that the rate of compulsive gamblers is rising at an alarming rate. The most common approach for pathological gamblers is to join self-help groups such as the Gamblers Anonymous (GA), a twelve-step program base on Alcoholics Anonymous (Lesieur 5). Many more hours need to be put into researching pathologic gambling. Research needs to be conducted on numerous angles, including whether or not pathologic gamblers should use abstinence from gambling for the rest of their life (Glazer 9). If we do not start spending money on researching the uncontrollable disease of compulsive gambling the problem will only continue to skyrocket into the next millennium.

If an individual is not able to control his or her mind they are out of control, in other words they are uncontrollable. A “compulsive gambler is unable to control the overpowering impulse to gamble” (Wedgeworth 4). Thus, the compulsive gambler is

determined to fit the concept that the overpowering drive to gamble is an impulse and not within the gamblers conscious control (Wedgeworth 5). Compulsive gambling is an uncontrollable disease that thrives in the victim’s head.

According to Aprile, a nurse practitioner, recent studies indicate compulsive gamblers suffer from inadequate levels of brain chemicals. Thus, the imbalance causes

the gamblers to engage in risk-taking chances (Aprile 6). If you are out of control of your body and your brain is not functioning properly, then you are not in control of yourself.

Since the compulsive gambler’s mind is not functioning properly, he or she is considered to be out of control and need help immediately. Otherwise, the uncontrollable disease of gambling will continue to ruin their lives.

Compulsive gambling is obviously an uncontrollable disease. The gamblers often drift into a state of mind that they have to gamble. They believe it will solve all of their problems, so the gambler has no choice, but to gamble away every penny he or she was able to get hold of. Compulsive gamblers make biased evaluations of the outcome. Often time, gamblers make irrational decisions that gambling will solve their financial problems. Which is just and illusion of control so the gambler can defend his or her gambling habits (Lesieur 7).

Although Gamblers Anonymous is a deep program aimed to cure gamblers from their uncontrollable urge to gamble by not gambling at all, the argument comes whether the only cure for the disease is abstinence. The easiest way to solve an uncontrollable disease is to never get it. So don’t start gambling if you don’t have to, otherwise, you will need all the friends you have to help you keep you away form the uncontrollable disease of gambling.

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