

Arizona Office of Problem Gambling

FY2010 Treatment Summary

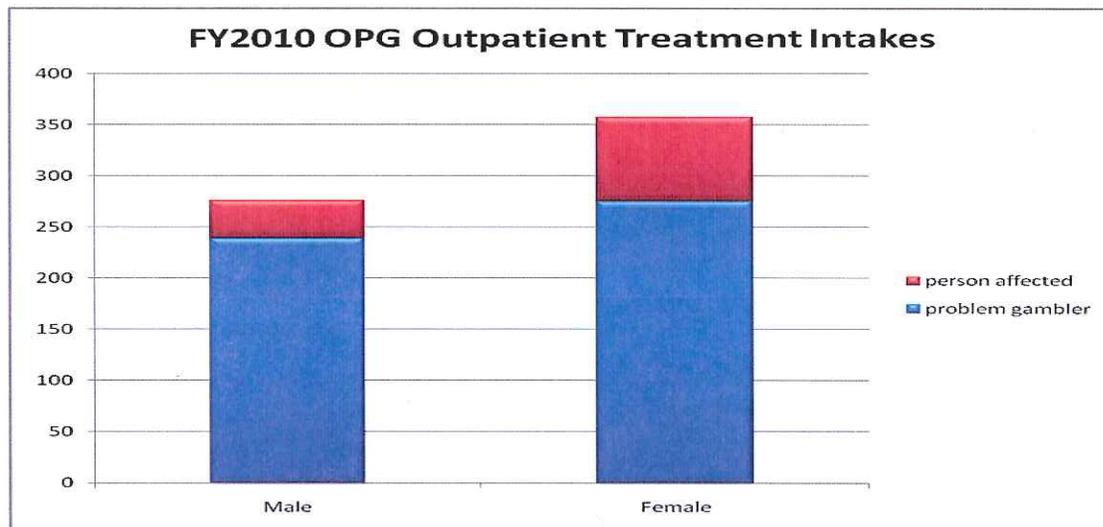
Overview

The Office of Problem Gambling continues to analyze treatment data reported to us from our 28 (have map with locations) current providers. The implementation of a web based data management system in 2009 continues to provide us the opportunity to learn more about the clients we are serving and how to best offer services to them. We are able to utilize increasingly more precise data to ensure our services are being delivered in the most effective and efficient way possible.

Although prior stakeholder reports highlighted the significant growth of the system over the past 5 years, this year we are going to focus on a more detailed snapshot of the program. We are excited to be able to present to you a clear picture of who we are serving, how we are serving them and the results we are achieving.

Who is being treated?

In fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010), 908 unique individuals received treatment services from OPG funded providers. During this time period, 633 individuals were admitted to treatment and 534 were discharged from services. Of the persons admitted, 27 were former clients who were re-enrolled for further therapy.



The "typical" person receiving treatment is a married (40%, Single – 24%, Divorced – 20%) Caucasian (77%) female (58%), 46 years of age (average age), college educated (71% with at least some college), employed full time (52%) with a median household income equal to that of the general population (ave - \$61,796.81; median - \$50,000; ave median income from 05-07 was \$47,750 for AZ). While these are the averages, it is important to note that services are provided to individuals across the spectrum of socio-economic status and ethnicity.

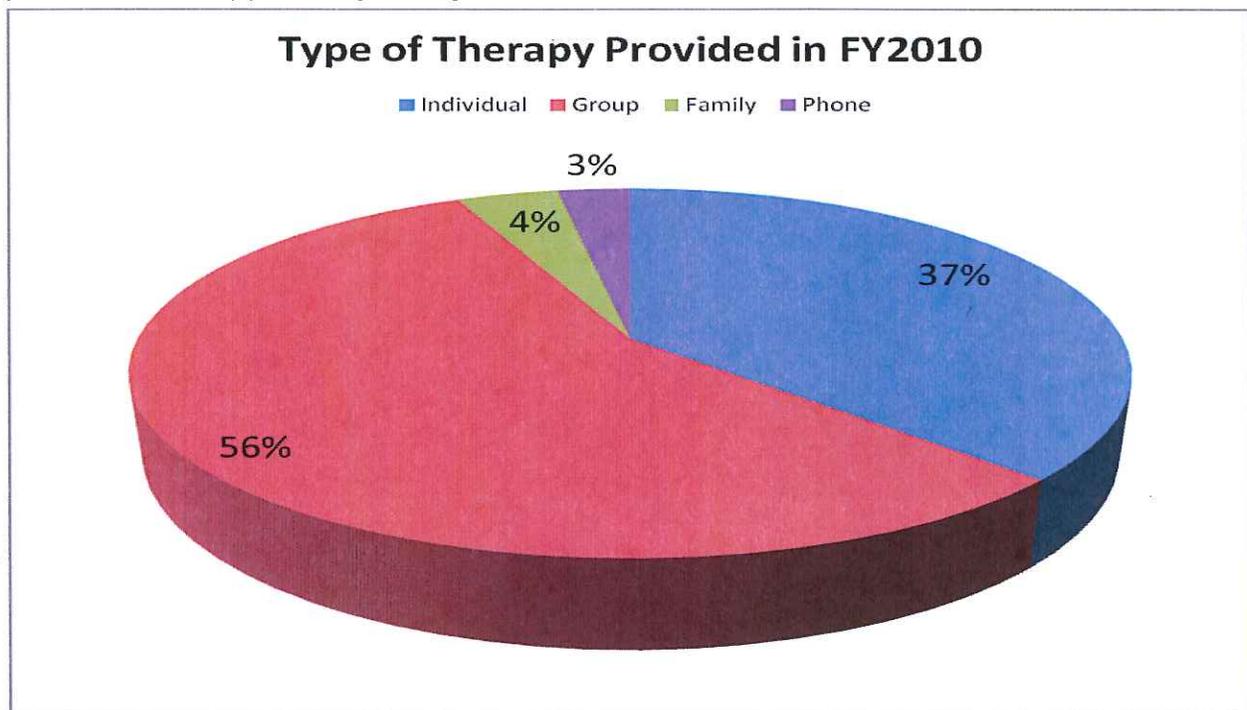
Problem gamblers seeking treatment begin gambling at an average age of 24, develop problems related to gambling at 37 (average), experience problems for 9 years (9.33 ave) before entering treatment and report slot machines (55%) as the gambling activity causing the most problems. After slot machines, Black Jack (11%) and Video Poker (9%) round out the three most common activities cited as causing the most problems.

Reporting an average gambling debt of \$44,222.74 (excluding outliers of \$2M +), it is not surprising 90% of clients are experiencing financial issues. In addition to financial pressures, 76% identify co-occurring mental health or substance use disorders – most commonly depression (84%) and anxiety (67%). 27% of the clients with co-occurring disorders report suicidal ideation and 6% report having made suicide plans. This data reinforces the need for interventions that are easily accessed by the public and which are able to respond effectively to crisis situations.

What does treatment look like?

Clients admitted to treatment during FY2010 most frequently identified Gamblers Anonymous (21%), family/friends (17%) and the OPG helpline (12%) as referral sources. Other common referral sources included current or former clients (10%), behavioral health professionals (10%) and the Arizona Council on Compulsive Gambling (7%). The wide range of referral sources speaks to the need to continually educate the community on the availability of treatment throughout Arizona.

An average of 22 hours of outpatient therapy was provided to each client during FY2010. In total, our providers delivered 20,249 hours of therapy. It is important to note that this number does not include a significant number of pro bono hours provided by our contracted providers to problem gamblers and persons affected by problem gambling.



What are the Results?

The OPG developed a client Self Assessment Tool (SAT) to gather and report on the outcomes of clients receiving problem gambling treatment. The SAT was developed to collect direct client input on their quality of life as well as gambling behaviors to measure the impact of treatment. The tool consists of 9 questions about gambling behavior (urge strength, amount of gambling, etc.) and 14 items on quality of life indicators (level of satisfaction with family, friends, vocation, etc.). Each client completes an SAT every 90 days through the course of treatment.

While still early in the analysis of this outcome data, the initial results are encouraging. After the first 90 days of treatment, clients report a statistically significant improvement in their satisfaction with friendships, decision making and self care. They also experience a reduction in their gambling behavior and problems caused by gambling. At both ninety days and discharge, clients report significant improvements in self esteem, emotional health and having money for needs. At the same time, they report improved ability to control their thoughts and urges relative to gambling and a reduction in the frequency and strength of urges to gamble.

Reinforcing these positive outcome findings was a report published by Dr. Bo Bernhard of the University of Nevada – Las Vegas titled “The Arizona Problem Gambling Outcomes Report”. Dr. Bernhard and his research team were able to contact 77 former OPG clients via telephone and asked them a range of questions about their satisfaction with the treatment they received, their quality of life and their gambling behavior as a result of treatment.

The following table displays the results of the clients’ assessment of the treatment services they received. The respondents were asked to rate each item from “1” to “5” with 1 being “Strongly Agree” to 5 being “Strongly Disagree”. As you will see, the clients overwhelmingly indicated agreement with the items:

Table 1: Evaluations of Treatment Services

	Average Score
1. I like the services that I received from this provider.	1.51
2. I would recommend this agency to a friend or family member.	1.47
3. Services were available at times that were good for me.	1.45
4. I was able to get all the services I thought I needed.	1.62
5. When I called for an appointment with my counselor, I was scheduled within a reasonable time frame.	1.20
6. I felt comfortable sharing my problems with my counselor.	1.38

7. Staff encouraged me to take responsibility for how I live my life.	1.18
8. Staff were sensitive to my cultural background (race, religion, language)	1.43
9. The distance and travel time required to meet with my counselor was reasonable.	1.79
10. I was encouraged to use Gamblers Anonymous and/or GamAnon on a regular basis.	1.40
11. I attended Gamblers Anonymous and/or GamAnon on a regular basis.	2.17
12. Treatment services were provided at a cost I could afford.	1.22
13. Group counseling was helpful.	1.66
14. Individual counseling was helpful.	1.48
15. Family counseling was helpful.	1.76
16. Overall, I was pleased with the results of my treatment program.	1.57

The clients' self evaluation of improvement as a direct result of the services provided was equally positive:

Table 2: Self-Evaluation of Client Improvement

"As a direct result of the services I received..."	Average Score
1. I deal more effectively with daily problems.	1.66
2. I am better able to control my life.	1.70
3. I am better able to deal with crisis.	1.91
4. I am getting along better with my family.	1.63
5. I do better in social situations.	1.79
6. I do better in school and/or work.	1.78
7. My housing situation has improved.	2.11
8. My symptoms are not bothering me as much.	1.93
9. My financial situation has improved.	1.84

10. I spend less time thinking about gambling.	1.77
11. I have minimized most of my problems related to gambling.	1.97

And while the data certainly verifies the positive impact of treatment, it is perhaps best expressed through the statements provided by the clients themselves:

"It made my recovery. They couldn't do it for me but I knew I didn't have to do it alone."

"I am so thrilled that it has been there, it has saved my life and my marriage."

"For me, it was life saving literally. I don't think I would be here today if I did not enter that program."

"I was suicidal, without her counseling I would not have been here. So I appreciate it very much. I am still struggling every day, but the program is wonderful. I really appreciate it. And now my goal is to help other people with same problem."

"The program was truly awesome. I would recommend it to anyone and it saved my life. And I'm definitely not a gambler (anymore). I don't think about it, I don't crave it, it's completely removed from my life. (Treatment) improved other areas of my life – it's an overall improvement of my life... other than (just) the gambling aspect. I would recommend the program to anyone."

And, finally, the concluding thoughts of Dr. Bernhard:

"Overall, these strong outcomes represent a genuine victory for those dedicated to helping problem gamblers turn their lives around in the state of Arizona."