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Taking the pulse of health news



By [Rita Rubin](#)

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## Study: Young people are taking a gamble

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Here's a shocking statement for you: An estimated 750,000--or one out of every 50--U.S. teens and young adults, ages 14 to 21, have a gambling problem. And one out of every nine gamble

frequently, or at least twice a week.

At least that's the conclusion of a [study](#) in the June issue of the *Journal of Gambling Studies*. Researchers based their findings on a survey of a representative sample of more than 2,200 U.S. residents in that age group.

Even though one out of every 50 might sound awfully high, the problem gambling rates in this study weren't as high as those in previous studies that focused on young people in individual states or schools, not the whole country. The rates also were lower than those in similar studies of older adults.

What, you might ask, constitutes a gambling problem? Well, according to the new study, by researchers at the [University at Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions](#), survey respondents were considered to be problem gamblers if in the previous year they met a minimum number of certain criteria. The criteria included missing a day or more of school or work because of gambling, ever gambling more than they'd planned to and going back another day to try to win back lost money. Those who worked full time were more likely to gamble, those who didn't go to school were more likely to gamble frequently and those who lived on their own were more likely to be problem gamblers.

"These results suggest that, in the minds of some, gambling may be associated with the transition to adulthood," the researchers write. Are you in that 14-to-21-year-old age group, or do you have a son or daughter who is? How common is gambling among the teens and young adults you know? Another question I have: What are they gambling on? Poker? Football games?

Posted at 02:49 PM/ET, May 08, 2008 in Addiction, In your head, Kids' health, Water

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