

GAMBLING: HELP AND REFERRAL ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006

In the fall of 1993, at the time the Québec government established the first casino, a wide range of measures for the protection of gamblers were put into place, including *Gambling: help and referral*, because of the need to make people aware that gambling is, for some, not a game anymore. The helpline soon became the reference when one was looking for help for gambling-related problems. The service, provided by the Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montréal, has been financed by Loto-Québec from 1993 to 2001, and since April 2001, by the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec*.

Gambling: help and referral offers information, listening and support on compulsive gambling, as well as referral for all available help in the field. The helpline is available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, throughout Québec. The personnel responds to several types of demands and needs: relevant reflections on the caller's gambling habits support and empathy in moments of great distress, and stabilization of callers before their referral to resources specialized in crisis situations. The anonymous and confidential nature of the communications allows people to talk about their difficulties without being afraid to be identified. In fact, suffering, shame, despair, anxiety and insecurity are often part of the caller's burden.

An Advisory Committee was set up in 2005-2006 to make recommendations to the Centre regarding *Gambling: help and referral's* mandate as requested by the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec*. This Advisory Committee held two meetings this year.

Between November 15th, 1993, and March 31st 2006, near 104,000 people turned to *Gambling: help and referral* for help or information. The number of Anglophones who used the helpline accounts for more than 9% of the callers.

Of the 13,278 calls in 2005-2006, 74% of the callers were worried about their gambling habits (28% were women and 46% were men). Among the other calls, 9% came from peers of a gambler (brother, sister, or friend); 4% from spouses; 2% from parents; and 11% from field workers. Adults accounted for 96% of the calls, 3% were elderly people and 1% of the calls was from teenagers and children.

Requests can be divided in the following categories:

- ◆ Requests for listening and support from gamblers themselves, their spouses, their peers and parents amount to 7% of calls;
- ◆ Requests for general information amount to 25% of calls;
- ◆ Requests for therapy, counselling, self-support groups, or other related requests as budgeting, help for problems related to violence in family, drug abuse or suicide amount to 68% of calls.

We wish to underline that 40% of calls were directly handled by the staff of *Gambling: help and referral*.

Among the types of games mentioned the most often by callers were video-lotteries (81% of the mentions), the slot machines at the casinos (8%), and the lotteries (6%).

As for the geographic origin of the calls, 47% originate from Greater Montréal, 13% from *Montréal*, 10% from Québec area, 3% from *Outaouais*, and 27% from the other regions of Québec.

According to its mandate of referring to the appropriate service, the helpline has directed 186 people with complaints against organizations or establishments to the appropriate authorities. We have received no complaints concerning our service this year.

The continuing training program responds to different needs of the personnel regarding the evolution of our understanding of compulsive gambling. This year, Mrs. Louise Nadeau, *Professeure titulaire au département de Psychologie de l'Université de Montréal* met with our team concerning the Practices and challenges in the field of addictions from 1995 to 2005; Mrs. Élisabeth Papineau *Chercheuse Institut national de santé publique du Québec et Chercheuse associée, Institut national de la recherche scientifique* shared her studies on four cultural communities in regard to problem gambling, on different interventions in gambling treatment and gave us a look into the reasons for giving up gambling treatment. Finally, Mrs. Liane d'Orsonnens, Criminologist, Social Worker and Director of *Programme pour toxicomanes souffrant de troubles mentaux (ISTM)* at Portage with her colleague Mr. Tony Dias discussed Comorbidity in mental health and addictions.

Concerning public relations activities, *Gambling: help and referral* participated in 35 activities, 5 of which were television or radio broadcasts. In total, *Gambling: help and referral* was the subject of 234 publications in the media.

With its booth :

- Week of the Bar of Montréal, April 2005;
- Conference «*Les Dépendances au travail : beaucoup plus qu'un problème de gestion de la main d'œuvre*» of the *Association des infirmières et infirmiers en santé du travail*, April 2005;
- Annual Conference of the *Déléguées et Délégués sociaux FTQ*, October 2005;
- Conference «*Des outils pour répondre aux besoins de la clientèle*» of the *Association des Intervenants en toxicomanie du Québec*, October 2005;
- *Centre d'écoute et de référence Halte-Ami : Semaine de la prévention de la toxicomanie*, November 2005 and February 2006;
- *Cegep André-Laurendeau*, November 2005;
- *Collège Jean-Eudes*, March 2006.

Participation in special events:

- Congrès Rond-Point 2005, *Fédération québécoise des centres de réadaptation pour personnes alcooliques et autres toxicomanes*, April 2005;
- Panel on gambling treatment services, *Fédération québécoise des centres de réadaptation pour personnes alcooliques et autres toxicomanes*, April 2005;
- Conference «*Gagner, perdre, espérer*» sur les jeux de hasard et d'argent dans les communautés maghrébine, centre-américaine, haïtienne et chinoise de Montréal, *L'Institut national de la recherche scientifique et l'Institut national de santé publique du Québec*, May 2005 ;
- 6th Annual Conference on Gambling and Addiction, National Center for research on pathological gambling and related disorders, Las Vegas, USA, December 2005;
- Conference on prevention of gambling, *Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal*, October 2005 ;
- XXXIIIrd Conference of *l'Association des Intervenants en toxicomanie du Québec*, October 2005;
- Québec survey on the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and gambling habits of high school students in 2004, *Centre interuniversitaire québécois de statistiques sociales*, February 2006 .

Publicity:

- Advertising insert, Conference of *l'Ordre des Infirmières et Infirmiers du Québec*, November 2005;
- Magazine *L'Intervenant*, 2005-2006, (4 issues);
- *L'Infirmière du Québec*;
- *La Gazette des Femmes*;
- *L'Express et La Parole*, Drummondville;
- *Le Soleil*, Québec, Winter of 2006 ;
- *Le Journal de Québec*, Winter of 2006;
- *Magazine Le Point*, Montréal, Québec and Trois-Rivières;
- *Journal Métro*, winter 2006;
- *24 heures*, winter 2006;
- Bulletin *Le Point de Repère*, Lévis ;
- Bell Directories and Yellow Pages;
- More than twenty Agendas of different groups and weeklies.

Promotional campaigns:

- *Alstom Télécity Inc.*, in the Montréal metro, fall of 2005 ;
- *MétroMédiaPlus* with advertising in buses of four targeted regions (*Lanaudière, Chaudière-Appalaches, Laurentides, Montérégie*), fall of 2005 and winter 2006;
- Viacom with advertising on bus shelters and billboards in the largest cities of the Province, fall of 2005 and winter 2006.

TWO PILOT PROJECTS

The *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* has given the Centre the mandate to set up two pilot projects concerning problem gambling this year.

The first project consists of producing a new version of the Web site of *Gambling: Help and Referral*, to improve interaction and offer help online. Since January 2006, people can ask for help and referral by email (for francophone only at the present time); two counsellors are available to answer these demands. The new Web site will be launched in the summer of 2006.

On the new Web site, general information and online help will be available. Right at the beginning, the user will be offered to choose between asking for help and asking for information.

The Web site is created by Fjord Marketing and will be easy to navigate, user-friendly and designed for people unfamiliar with Internet. It will take into account that the target users come from different age groups, different social and geographic origins. Furthermore, it is available not only to gamblers, but also to their spouses and other members of their families, their peers and field workers. The project continues until March 31, 2007 and we received an average of 10 requests every week between January and March 2006.

The second mandate entrusted to the Centre is concerning short term therapy over the phone. Gambling problems come to the forefront as gaming becomes more and more available. Helping gamblers is a challenge that the *ministère de la Santé et des services sociaux* has already undertaken through a network of rehabilitation centres throughout the Province; but these centres are often concentrated within urban areas. Progressively, as gambling practises diversify, the *Ministère* is exploring different avenues innovating in ways to make the offer of services more flexible, especially in outer regions.

In this light, the *Ministère* has mandated the Centre to explore telecounselling. A short term model has been proposed which set the content of seven telephone sessions. Québec is at the forefront for the treatment of problem gamblers. *The Centre québécois d'excellence pour la prévention et le traitement du jeu de Université Laval* is a pioneer in the field, and the model developed by Dr. Ladouceur, head of the Psychology department, is widely used in all gambling problem treatment centres around the Province. In order to be able to compare services, the Information and Referral Centre has decided to model its telecounselling interventions on the global model of *Université Laval*.

But because of the particularity of short term interventions, and of our aim at therapy, the basic model of Dr. Ladouceur has been modified. The challenge given the Centre is to put in place conditions to elicit behaviour change for the client, and to do so by means of the telephone.

A clinical supervisor and qualified counsellors have started offering telecounselling to as many as one hundred (100) gamblers. The clients come from different regions around the Province of Québec. This pilot project must end in June 2006.

CONCLUSION

During the winter of 2006, the *ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux* as well as the *Fondation Mise sur Toi* have both launched a major multimedia campaign to promote awareness of excessive gambling and advertise our service. We thank them for this initiative.

Since January 2006, help is available online (in French only for now) on the website of *Gambling: Help and Referral*, at www.jeu-aidereference.qc.ca.

Day after day since 1993, the Information and Referral Centre of Greater Montréal takes up the challenge : to manage a 24/7 service on compulsive gambling which responds to the needs of people having a problem with compulsive gambling as well as their relatives. The Centre insures that it functions within strict financial parameters. An updated data bank, as extensive and reliable as possible, keeps up with the development of public and private resources for people having problems with compulsive gambling. Five years after, free services were made available for gamblers and their peers. The Centre makes sure that they are well known throughout the Province through its service *Gambling : help and referral*.

For thirteen years, we have pursued this objective: to offer a reliable and quality service of information, referral and support to the Québec population. We will continue to do all we can to justify the trust of the public and of our sponsors who have supported us since 1993.

**GAMBLING: HELP AND REFERRAL
STATISTICAL REPORT 2005-2006**

SOURCE OF ENQUIRIES

Associations	27
Colleges, Schools, Universities	129
Communications Media	53
Industry, Commerces	329
Labor and unions	9
Parapublic services	150
CLSC	54
Private agencies	275
Professional persons	209
Public in general:	
Men	6 280
Women	3 893
Parents	331
Peers	1 268
Spouses	617
Public services	102
Religious organizations	2

TOTAL 13 728

GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Region 01, Bas Saint-Laurent	164
Region 02, Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	292
Region 03, Capitale Nationale	1 335
Region 04, Mauricie-Centre du Québec	489
Region 05, Estrie	399
Region 06, Montréal	6 489
Region 07, Outaouais	410
Region 08, Abitibi-Témiscamingue	113
Region 09, Côte-Nord	83
Region 10, Nord du Québec	25
Region 11, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	70
Region 12, Chaudière-Appalaches	204
Region 13, Laval	470
Region 14, Lanaudière	533
Region 15, Laurentides	702
Region 16, Montérégie	1 728
Other regions	222

TOTAL 13 728

TYPE OF GAMBLING

Arcades	2
Bingo	34
Card games	30
Casino:	

Slot machines	383
Black Jack, roulette, baccarat	55
Craps games	3
Games and pool	2
Horse races	7
Lottery	284
Pool betting on sports	22
Video-lotteries	3 922
Others	80

TOTAL 4 824

AGE CATEGORIES

Adults	13 164
Children	11
Senior citizens	438
Teens	115

TOTAL 13 728

TYPE OF ENQUIRIES

Counselling	74
Listening and support	1 491
Support group:	
Gamblers	2 152
Parents	151
Spouses and Peers	995
General Information:	
Codependency	62
Gamblers' Profile	338
Gambling	138
Gambling: help and referral	5 314
Prevention	90
Self-Exclusion	93
Residential readaptation:	
Private services	438
Parapublic services	163
Out-patient treatment:	
Private services	1 126
Parapublic services	4 004
Relapse	17
Social reintegration	11
Related requests:	
Budget counselling	279
Drug addiction	134
Legal services	17
Other requests	3 447
Shelters	63
Suicide	189
Violence	46

Complaints against services	186	<u>FOLLOW-UP CALLS</u>	
TOTAL	21 018	Additional communication with client or other	8
<u>TYPE OF REFERRALS</u>		Communication with services	221
Directed to appropriate resource	12 411	TOTAL	229
Referral calls by our staff	39	<u>PUBLIC RELATIONS</u>	
Short term service	8 525	Information sessions	06
Services required insufficient	27	(attendance : 8 persons)	
Services required unavailable	16	Meetings and seminars	24
TOTAL	21 018	Radio, TV	05
		TOTAL	35

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