

Gambling at the workplace and gambling problems

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Background

- An increase in the availability of slot machines
- Increased demands from businesses that wants help to deal with employees with gambling problems
- The Norwegian Governments action plan against gambling problems

Governmental regulations in Norway

- July 2006: the banknote restriction
- January 2007: night closing of gambling venues
- July 2007: a ban on slot machines

Consequences of the regulations

- Considerable reductions in the total turnover
- The number of calls to the helpline were significantly reduced
- The referrals to other help services were significantly reduced

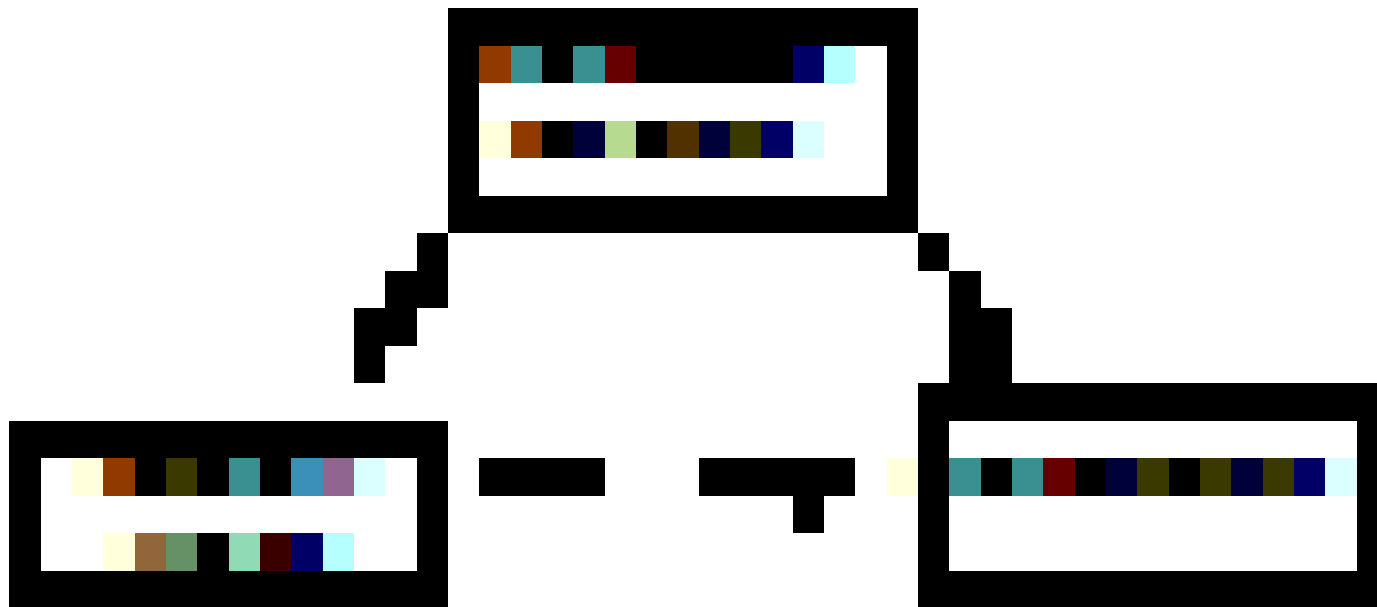
Opportunity structure

- Opportunity structure:
 - Sets of external factors that prevent or encourage action
- The opportunity available to an employee to gamble during working hours
 - Spare time during working hours
 - Exposure to gambling possibilities

The transport sector

- The combination of risk factors; young people, males, non-western immigrants and those without higher education is frequently found among bus, truck and taxi drivers (www.ssb.no).
- Workers in the transport industry have the time – in between fares, for instance, for taxi drivers
- Drivers often find themselves during a shift in venues with slot machines
- Given the opportunity structure, we would expect higher prevalence of gambling and gambling problems in this occupational group than the workforce as a whole

Opportunity structure and gambling



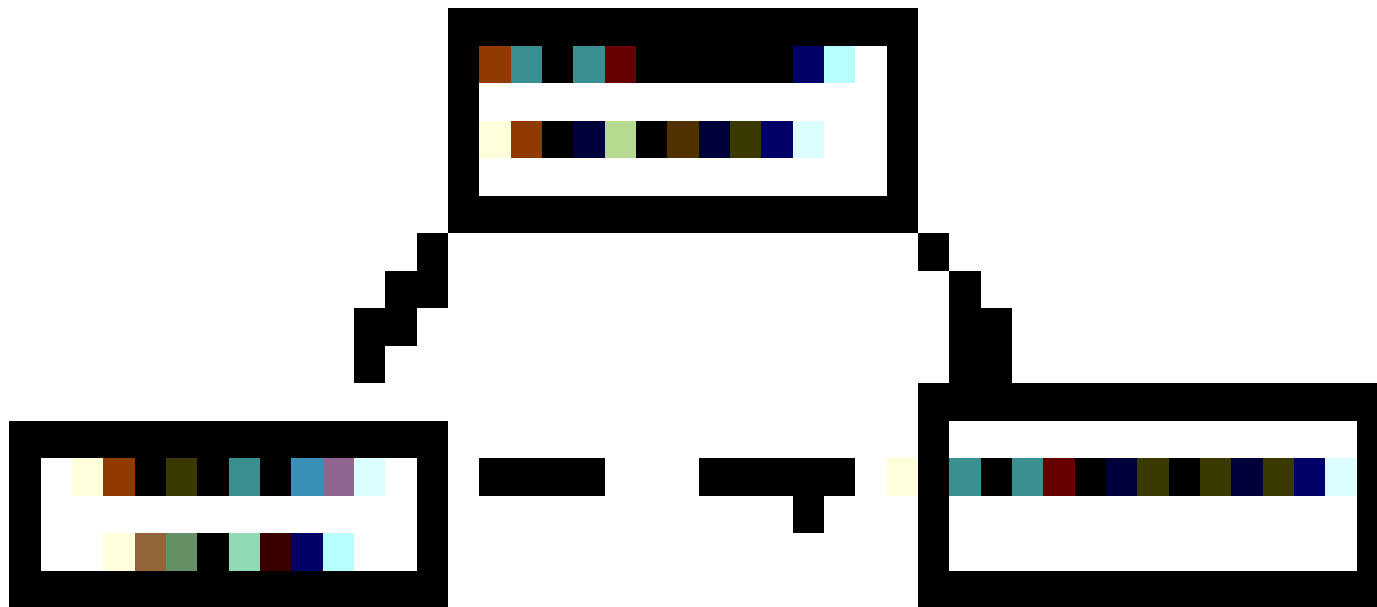
Sample

- A Questionnaire to 2782 employees
- The overall response rate was 38 %
- Males account for 85 % of our sample
- Slightly over 17 % are ethnically non-western immigrants

Opportunity structure and gambling

- A third of employees have more than two hours to spare at work every day
- 21.2% reported being in a venue of a slot machine during working hours
- 6.8% per cent said that they gambled during working hours
- 3.2% of the employees could be characterised as problem gamblers

Opportunity structure and gambling



Gambling during working hours

- More than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the employees with gambling problems, gambles during working hours
- More than 25 % of those who gambles during working hours have gambling problems
- More than $\frac{1}{2}$ of those who gambles more than $\frac{1}{2}$ hour per week has gambling problems

Conclusion

- The opportunity structure is a risk factor for, but not necessarily a cause of, gambling during working hours and problem gambling
- Gambling during working hours increases the odds for gambling problems

Implications

- The workplace as a good place to detect problem gambling
- The workplace could be an arena for early interventions and prevention of gambling problems
- It is important to provide business and labour with necessary information about tackling gambling and gambling-related problems
- This will require further research to establish the extent of the problem, its effect on the workplace, and how to carry out effective interventions