



Two recent studies in DK

Implications for the treatment
of pathological gamblers

Magnus Larusson

Majorgården



Some considerations

- Gamblers only vs. mixed groups
- Group size
- Mutual aid groups (GA) – are they more problematic for the gambler than for alcoholics/drug abusers
- Does problematic gambling behavior have a negative impact on social skills (working with others)



Two studies

- Larusson (2008) on GA in Denmark; University of Iceland
- Plauborg, Tolstrup, Grønbaek and Rod (2009), on Majorgårdens treatment model; Danish Institute of Public Health



Larusson (2008)

- Qualitative design
 - Interview of 23 persons → 5 participated in in-depth interviews (when trust established)
 - Transcribed + content analysis
 - Themes identified



Plauborg et al. (2009)

- Evaluation of Majorgårdens treatment model (processes more than outcome)
 - Qualitative interviews; gamblers and participants in the family program
 - Questionnaires to those not involved in the qualitative part
 - Ca. 64 participants



Only gamblers vs. mixed groups?

- In GA retention is low (just as in treatment)
 - But some gamblers, surprisingly, prefer AA/NA
 - Questionable to evaluate Mutual Aid groups as treatment programs
- Plauborg et al. – mixed results
 - It's difficult being the only gambler in group
 - Special needs/knowledge – also for the family



Only gamblers vs. mixed groups?

- Some benefit greatly in a mixed inpatient setting
 - Those with concurrent addictions
 - Do very well after treatment according to Plauborg et al.
 - Most of the patients seem to benefit from (three weeks) inpatient treatment – so mixed groups may be the (second?) best choice



Losing one's "addict selv"

- Differences between drug addicts entering NA and gamblers entering GA (and the same applies to treatment)
 - A drug addict may enter NA in order to lose her identity as a drug addict (i.e. to conform to society)
 - Is known (stigma) as a drug addict
 - Has a network as such (reaching all the way to Afghanistan) – and related social skills
 - Will meet people from the network in NA



Losing one's "addict selv"

- This may be very different for the gambler
 - Who is better able to hide the addiction
 - Stands to "lose" something identity-wise upon entering GA
 - Little chance of meeting a gambling buddy
 - And who may lack some social competencies necessary to function in a group??



Social competencies

- The basic principle of Mutual Aid groups is doing service work (often phrased in terms of spirituality)
 - Arrranging meetings – cleaning up
 - Helping others – “if you want to keep it, you have to pass it on”
- This is very problematic for Gamblers
 - Is it in some way inherent in the process of becoming addicted to gambling??



Social competencies II

- Gamblers describe AA as “warmer” than GA
- In Canada and North America, GA has become more warm, spiritual og women friendly in recent years (Ferentsky, Skinner and Antze)



Social competencies III

- What does this mean for treatment
 - Smaller groups seem more appropriate
 - At least in outpatient programs
 - Recognising that Mutual Aid groups are problematic for gamblers
 - Brunch is part of the program at FC and Majorgården - socialising
 - Blended groups might be an idea (mixing shopaholics with gamblers works well)

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- Plauborg, et al. (2009) *Ludomani-behandling på Majorgården ...*
- Larusson (2008) *A tale of a twelve step fellowship ...*
- Larusson (2007) *Når spillet bliver alvor ...*

Magnus Larusson er uddannet sociolog og misbrugsbehandler. Han har 14 års erfaring med misbrugsbehandling og har bidraget til kurser og konferencer i de Nordiske lande.

"Når spillet bliver alvor," er skrevet for ægtefæller, forældre, søskende, børn, og andre der har haft en ludoman tæt inde på livet. Bogen giver indsigt i de nyeste teorier om ludomani, årsager og udvikling. Den fortæller hvad ludomani gør ved familien og spilleren selv, og hvordan det er muligt at komme videre med sit liv og genopbygge tilliden til sig selv og andre. Denne kompakte bog er det første trin tilbage til et bedre liv, uden spil.



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Magnus Larusson

Magnus Larusson **Når spillet bliver alvor** Om ludomani, familieliv og helbredelse

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