



N E W S R E L E A S E

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**Scientists Honored for Outstanding Contributions to
Disordered Gambling Research**

NCRG Scientific Achievement Awards Recognize Gambling Studies Pioneer, Young Investigators

LAS VEGAS – A scientist whose research on cognitive therapy has transformed the treatment of gambling disorders as well as two accomplished young researchers in the field were recently named recipients of the second annual National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) Scientific Achievement Awards.

Robert Ladouceur of the Université Laval in Quebec, whose work in cognitive behavior therapy and treatment outcomes is among the best-known and most widely referenced work in the field of gambling studies, is the recipient of the NCRG's 2003 Senior Investigator Award, while Yale University's Marc Potenza, who has made a significant impact on the field of biological psychiatry as one of the first investigators to publish brain-imaging studies of individuals with gambling disorders, is the recipient of the 2003 NCRG Young Investigator Award. Renee Cunningham-Williams of Washington University School of Medicine received Honorable Mention in the Young Investigator category for her innovative work on the comorbidity of gambling disorders and the development of assessments to diagnose the condition.

The awards, which recognize outstanding contributions to the study of disordered gambling and related mental health disorders, will be presented Dec. 9 as part of the fourth annual NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction, sponsored by the NCRG and the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders, a program at the Division on Addictions at Harvard Medical School.

"Dr. Ladouceur has revolutionized the delivery of gambling treatment services at all levels of health care," said Dennis E. Eckart, chairman of the NCRG. "He has transformed how clinicians conduct psychotherapy, counseling, family and other group treatment, as well as how public health systems conceptualize and conduct prevention activities. We are extremely proud to honor Dr. Ladouceur, as well as Drs. Potenza and Cunningham-Williams, who represent the bright future of the field of gambling studies."

A professor of psychology, Ladouceur has revealed how the gambler's erroneous perceptions of chance and randomness can set the stage for the development of gambling-related problems. His treatment outcomes studies have indicated that cognitive therapy is a promising treatment approach.

Ladouceur has presented his work throughout Canada, the United States and Europe, including Switzerland, France, Spain, Italy, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and his cognitive treatment model is being used in many countries. He was invited to testify before the National Gambling Impact Study Commission and is a current member of the program advisory board for the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders. During his academic career, Ladouceur has published 250 articles in peer-review journals, presented more than 400 papers and edited six books.

Potenza's work includes a study on the neurobiology of urges to excessively gamble, and he is currently involved in several multi-center drug trials and played a central role in designing a trial combining behavioral and psychopharmacological treatments for gambling disorders. In addition, he received a grant from the NCRG in 2000 to conduct a trial testing the effectiveness of an anti-depressant combined with a drug used to blunt cravings for alcohol as a treatment for gambling and alcohol problems.

Potenza established and serves as director of the Problem Gambling Clinic at Yale University and has established and fortified relations between senior drug abuse researchers at Yale and regional and national experts in gambling treatment. He is an editorial board member of both the *Journal of Gambling Studies* and *The WAGER*. Overall, Potenza has published more than 40 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters dealing with addiction or disordered gambling. He is the co-editor of a soon-to-be-released book, *Understanding and Treating Pathological Gambling* (American Psychiatric Publishing, in press).

A research assistant professor of social work in psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine, Cunningham-Williams conducted an analysis of data from the St. Louis Epidemiologic Catchment Area study on disordered gambling and co-occurring disorders that was published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, one of the field's most influential journals. Cunningham-Williams recently completed research, funded by the NCRG, to develop a new assessment to diagnose disordered gambling. She was awarded a prestigious National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Career Development Award in 2000 and, in 2001, received the Young Investigator Award from the American Society of Addiction Medicine. Cunningham-Williams and her colleagues won the "Best Poster" award at the NCRG's 2001 conference, "Toward Meaningful Diagnosis of Gambling Disorders."

Recipients of the 2003 NCRG Scientific Achievement Awards were selected by an independent committee of distinguished leaders in the field of addictions and gambling research chaired by Dr. Joseph Coyle, Eben S. Draper Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

The 2003 NCRG Scientific Achievement Awards luncheon, sponsored by International Game Technology (IGT), will be held Dec. 9 from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas during the NCRG Conference on Gambling and Addiction. The conference will take place Dec. 7-9 at the MGM Grand. To obtain press credentials for events related to the conference, or to arrange for interviews with conference participants or NCRG Award winners, contact Holly Thomsen at 202-530-4508.

The NCRG, the only national organization devoted exclusively to public education about and funding of peer-reviewed research on disordered gambling, was established in 1996. The NCRG supports the finest peer-reviewed basic and applied research on gambling disorders; encourages the application of new research findings to improve prevention, diagnostic intervention and treatment strategies; and enhances public awareness of pathological and youth gambling. To date, the casino industry and related businesses have committed more than \$12 million to this effort, and the NCRG has issued more than \$8 million in support of groundbreaking research on gambling disorders. In 2000, the NCRG established the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders at Harvard Medical School's Division on Addictions. For more information, visit www.ncrg.org.

The Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders is a program of the Division on Addictions at Harvard Medical School. In accordance with the Harvard University name policy, the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders should not be referred to as the "Harvard Institute..." or the "Harvard Medical School Institute..." For more information about the use of the Harvard name, visit http://www.hms.harvard.edu/fa/use_of_the_Harvard_name.html.