



NEWS RELEASE

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Scientists Recognized for Exceptional Contributions to Research on Gambling Disorders

*NCRG Scientific Achievement Awards Honor Young Investigator, Co-Author of
Science-Based Framework for Responsible Gaming*

LAS VEGAS –Alex Blaszczynski, a pioneer in gambling research, treatment and policy development, and Jon Grant, an accomplished young scientist who has made significant contributions to clinical research in pathological gambling and other impulse control disorders, were named recipients of the third annual National Center for Responsible Gaming (NCRG) Scientific Achievement Awards.

Blaszczynski, chair in psychology and director of the Gambling Research Unit at the University of Sydney, is the recipient of the NCRG's 2004 Senior Investigator Award. Grant, an assistant professor of psychiatry and human behavior at Brown University Medical School, is the recipient of the 2004 NCRG Young Investigator Award.

The awards recognize outstanding contributions to the study of gambling disorders and will be presented Dec. 6 as part of the fifth 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.

“The scientific community has benefited enormously from Dr. Blaszczynski’s extensive work in the field of gambling research,” said Dennis E. Eckart, chairman of the NCRG. “His far-ranging contributions include studies of diagnostic and treatment issues, forensics, risk factors, suicide and the pathways of pathological gambling. We are extremely proud to honor Dr. Blaszczynski as well as Dr. Grant, who is an emerging force in the area of clinical research in pathological gambling.”

Blaszczynski has conducted seminal investigations of the relationship of disordered gambling behavior to anxiety, depression, substance use and suicide. His early research focused on the relationship between pathological gambling and sensation-seeking, impulsivity and other personality disorders. The author of more than 100 publications, he has published three of the 13 existing treatment outcome studies of pathological gamblers. A clinical psychologist, Blaszczynski is head of the department of medical psychology at Westmead Hospital.

Blaszczynski has made an impact through his efforts to apply rigorous scientific research to harm reduction and responsible gaming programs. He is the co-author of “A Science-based Framework for Responsible Gambling: The Reno Model,” with Robert Ladouceur and Howard Shaffer, which was published in the Fall 2004 issue of the *Journal of Gambling Studies*. Blaszczynski is a founding member of the Australian National Council for Problem Gambling, the National Association for Gambling Studies and a foundation director of the Australian Institute of Gambling Studies. He serves on the advisory board of the International Centre for the Study, Treatment and Prevention of Youth

Gambling Problems at McGill University and the international advisory committee for the *Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues*. He also is on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Gambling Studies*.

In addition to his position at Brown, Grant is chief of impulse control disorders at Butler Hospital in Providence, R.I. His research has focused on understanding the clinical characteristics of individuals with pathological gambling and improving treatment strategies to help those individuals. He has taken a leading role in the development and testing of diagnostic instruments for pathological gambling.

Grant's research also has been instrumental in the development of pharmacological treatments for pathological gambling and related disorders, and he has directed multiple treatment trials. He first-authored the publication describing the results of the first multi-center drug treatment trial for pathological gambling and is actively involved in testing additional pharmacological strategies to help improve treatment options. Grant was an investigator on the study of naltrexone as a drug treatment for gambling disorders, a University of Minnesota project supported by the NCRG. He recently received a career award from the National Institutes of Health to examine cognitive behavioral and motivational therapeutic approaches in the treatment of pathological gambling.

Grant's extensive educational background includes a Master of Arts in English Literature and law degree from Cornell University, Master's in Public Health from Harvard University and a medical degree from Brown University. During his medical residency alone, Grant authored 12 original research articles on pathological gambling. With Marc Potenza, he co-edited the recently published *Pathological Gambling: A Clinical Guide to Treatment*. He serves on the editorial board of *Annals of Clinical Psychiatry* and was recently appointed editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Gambling Studies*.

Recipients of the 2004 NCRG Scientific Achievement Awards were selected by an independent committee of distinguished leaders in the field of addictions and gambling research chaired by Joseph Coyle, the Eben S. Draper Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

The 2004 NCRG Scientific Achievement Awards reception will be held Dec. 6 from 5:30 to 7 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. 5-7 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 \$13 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.