

Kids who get gifts of scratch lottery tickets gamble earlier in life

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(Medical Xpress)—Youngsters who receive instant lottery tickets as a gift tend to begin gambling earlier in life—a possible risk factor for more severe gambling disorders later, Yale School of Medicine

researchers report Sept. 19 in the journal *Adolescent Health*.

Children or adolescents who received gifts of scratch lottery tickets as children tend to have more permissive attitudes about gambling than those who did not receive tickets as gifts, according to a survey of some 2,000 Connecticut [high school students](#).

Researchers also reported a stronger association between age of gambling onset and the severity of [problem gambling](#) severity among those who received lottery tickets. Other factors—such as depression and alcohol and drug use—were related to the severity of problem gambling whether or not students had received [lottery ticket](#) gifts. The study could not determine whether early gifts of lottery tickets influenced later problem gambling because it did not follow students over time. However, the survey supports recent research that shows the early experience of gambling is associated with future problems such as difficulties stopping gambling despite experiencing major life difficulties related to gambling.

"Our research suggests that family members and friends should consider the possible negative impact of giving children or adolescents lottery tickets as gifts," said Marc Potenza, professor of psychiatry, child study, and neurobiology, and senior author of the research.

Potenza notes that the Connecticut Lottery also has cautioned against the purchase of lottery tickets for youth.

Provided by Yale University

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