

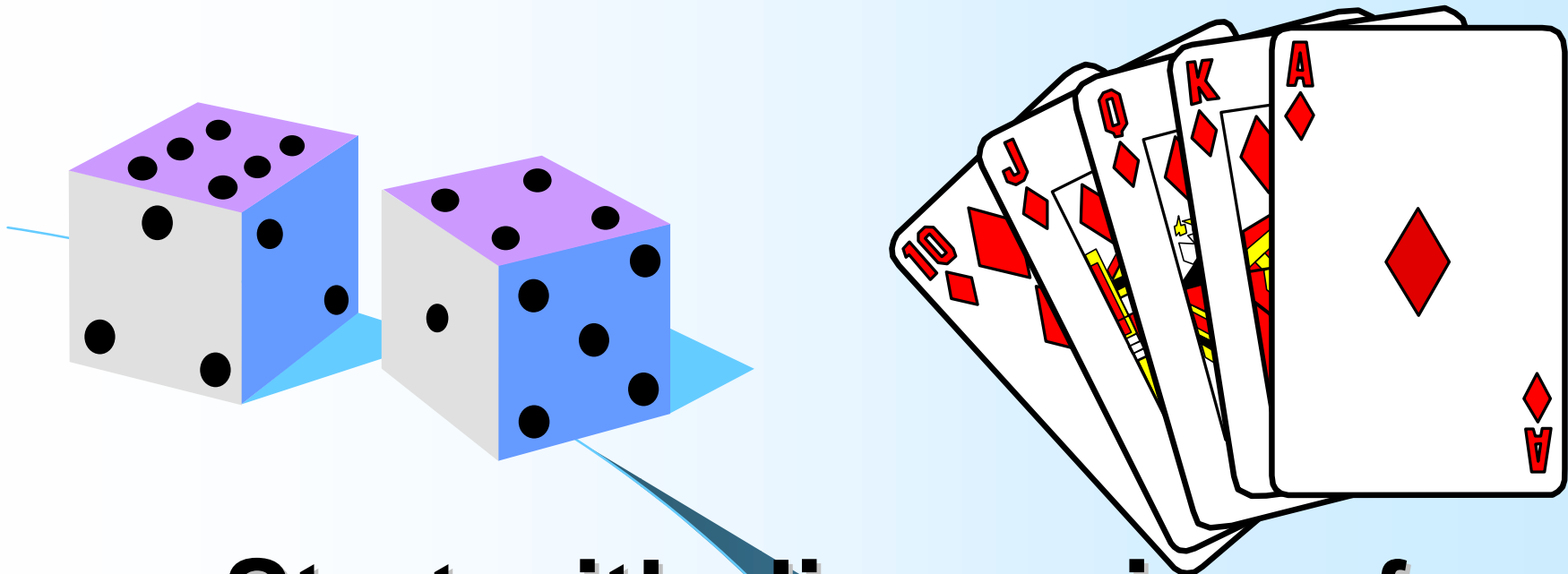


# Using Safe@Play with Problem Gamblers

Henry R. Lesieur, Psy.D., Ph.D.

Rhode Island Hospital

Providence, Rhode Island, USA

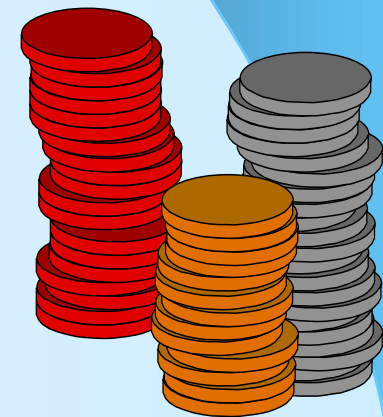


# **Start with discussion of PROBABILITY**

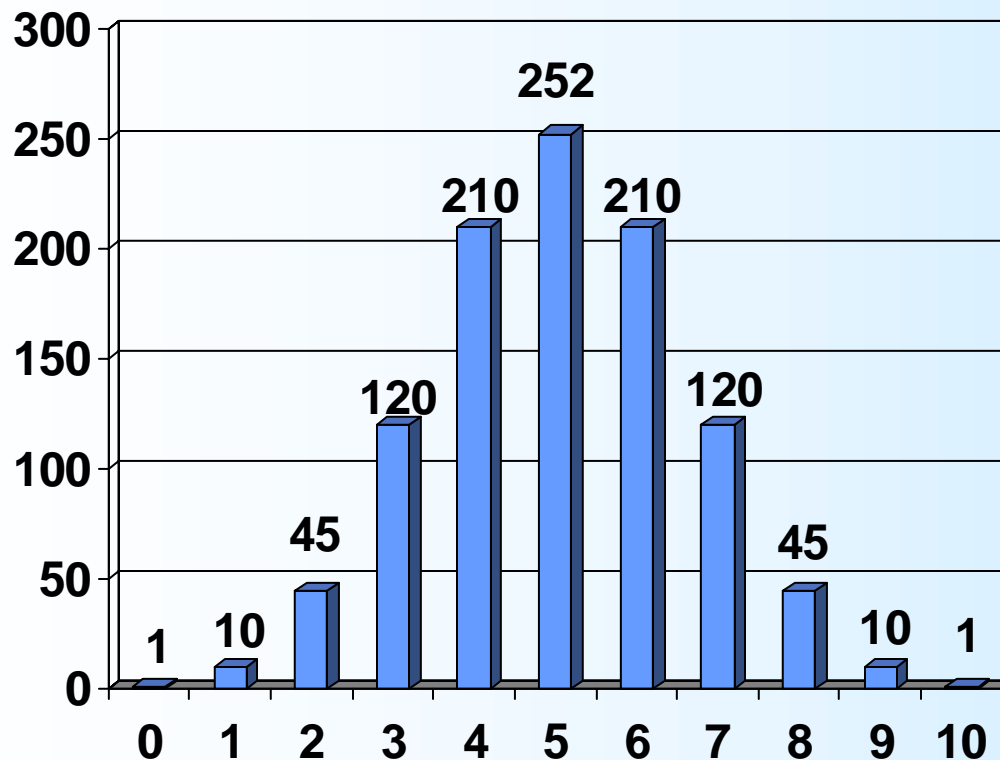
**DEPENDENT AND  
INDEPENDENT EVENTS,  
ODDS, CHANCE, ETC.**

# Use a Simple example: Heads and Tails

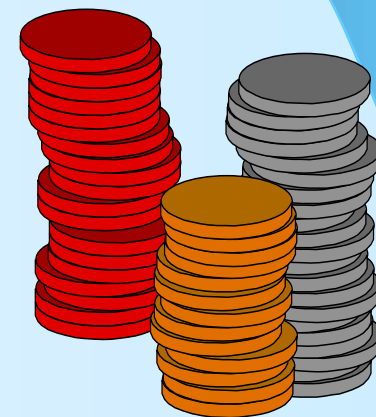
- 10 coins in a cup
- Shake cup and throw out coins
- Count the number of HEADS
- Record the number of heads
- Do it again at least 20 times



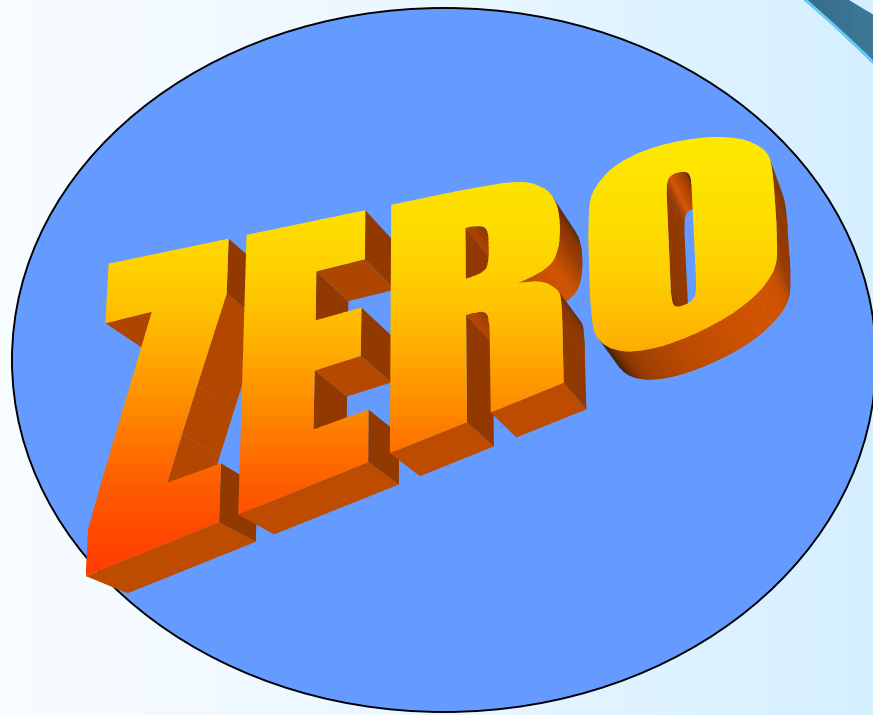
# Number of Times Heads Will Come Out in 10 Trials Based on Probability



■ Times out of 1024



What can you really do to influence  
the outcome of the next flip?



# Safe@Play Slots Tutorial

**Normal Play**

The **safe@play** Slot Machine tutorial

Go ahead, play the slot machine. Then check out the menu items below.

**Normal Play**

- Options
- About us
- Inside General**
- Primer
- Inside Advanced
- Be safe@play
- Exit

	1 <sup>ST</sup> COIN	2 <sup>ND</sup> COIN	3 <sup>RD</sup> COIN
7 7 7	250	500	750
BAR BAR BAR	75	150	225
Any 2	12	24	36
Any 1	8	16	24
	2	4	6

ACCEPTS \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100

INSERT BILLS

PAYLINE

WINNER PAID: 0000

CREDITS: 0000 **\$100**

COINS PLAYED: 0

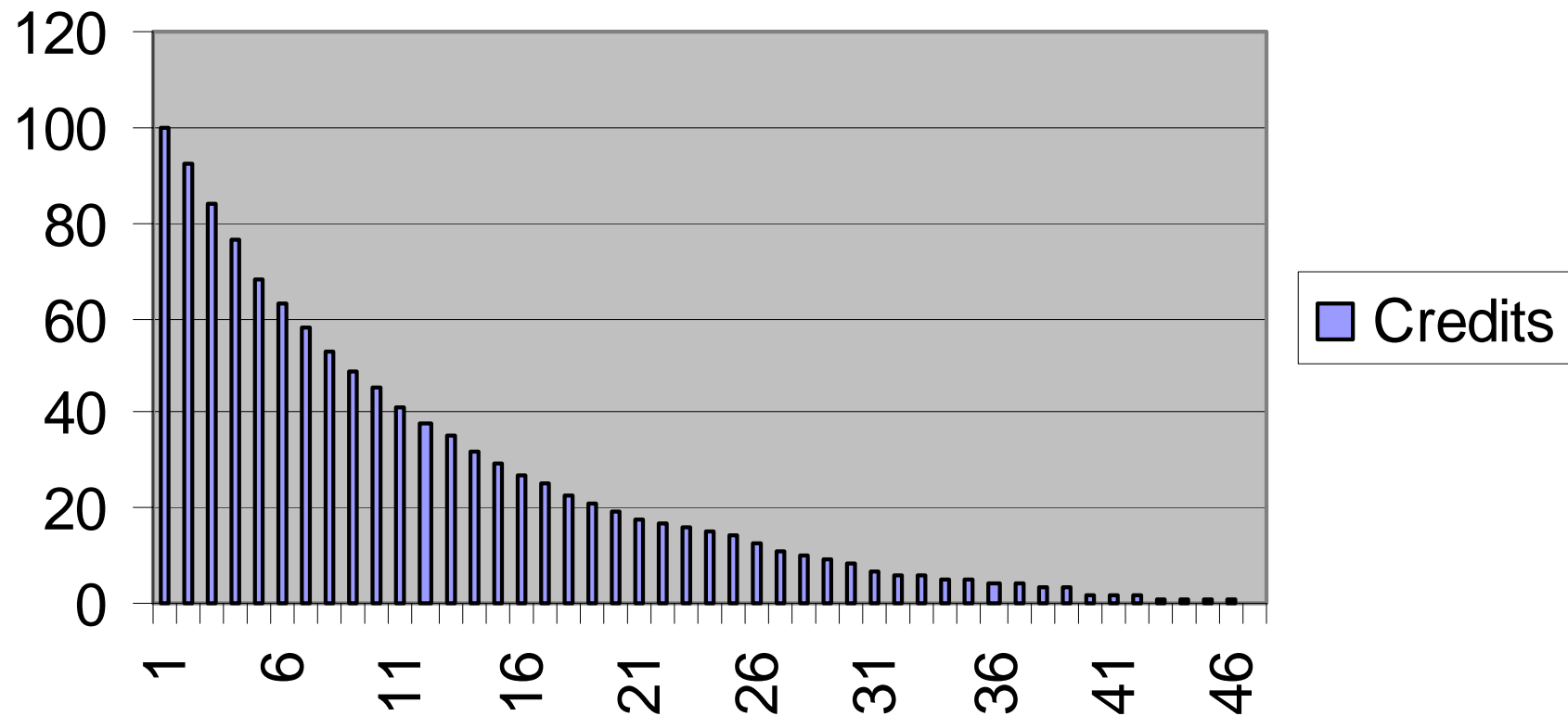
CASH OUT BET ONE SPIN BET MAX

Start | GAMBIB.do... | SOGSms.d... | NEConferen... | Slots | 1:07 PM

# Start Safe@Play with the Primer

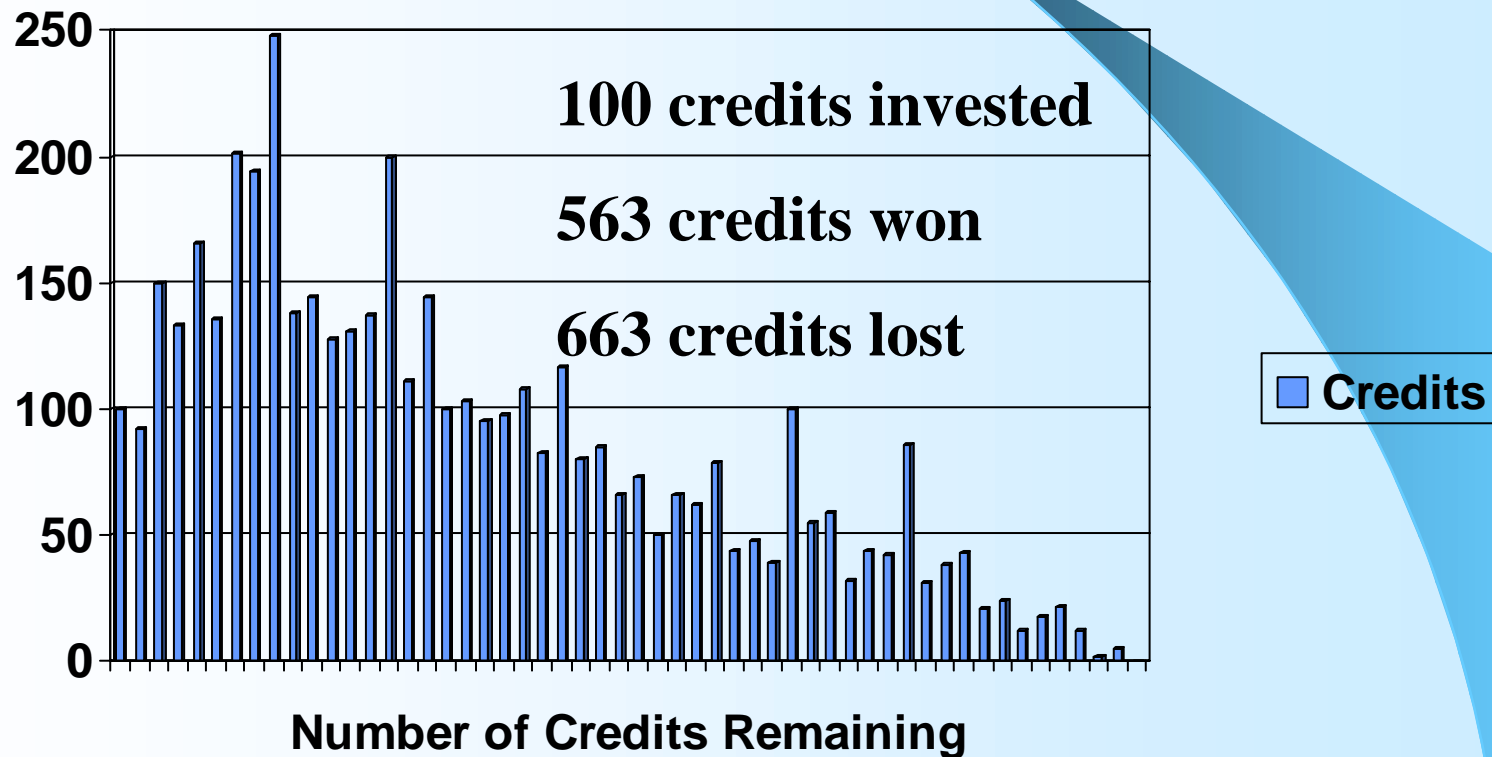
- The Random number generator (RNG) independent of slot machines
- Heads and tails again but use it to illustrate how the program uses the RNG to generate heads and tails
- 1,000 flips at once

## Average Number of Credits Left on Machine



**Number of Times Money is Churned at 92% Payout**

# Winning & Losing on a 92% machine – Random example

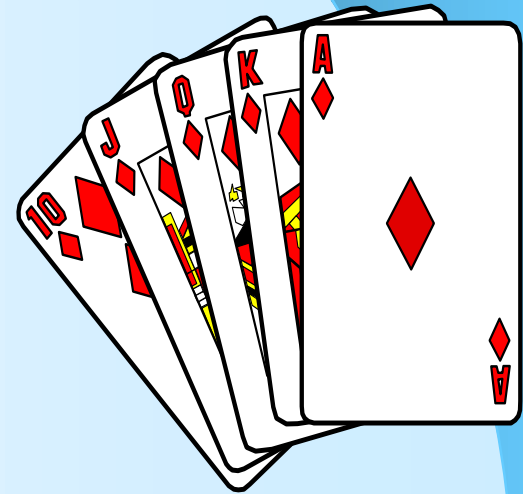


**Actual payout was 85% this time (randomly) – No big 500 or 1000 credit winner**

# Bases for Addictive Potential of Game

- 1. Illusion of Skill**
- 2. Immediate Payout**
- 3. Isolation**
- 4. Increased speed (continuous game)**

- **Raffles & Lotto are low**
- **Video games are high**
- **Source: Rob Hunter, Ph.D.**
- **(coined term “crack cocaine of gambling”)**



# The Progression of Problem Gambling is Faster for VLT's

Breen & Zimmerman, 2002

- **151 PG's seeking treatment in RI**
- **93 developed problems through “traditional” types of gambling, e.g., cards, dice, horses & dogs, sports.**
- **58 developed problems through electronic gambling machines (VLT's).**

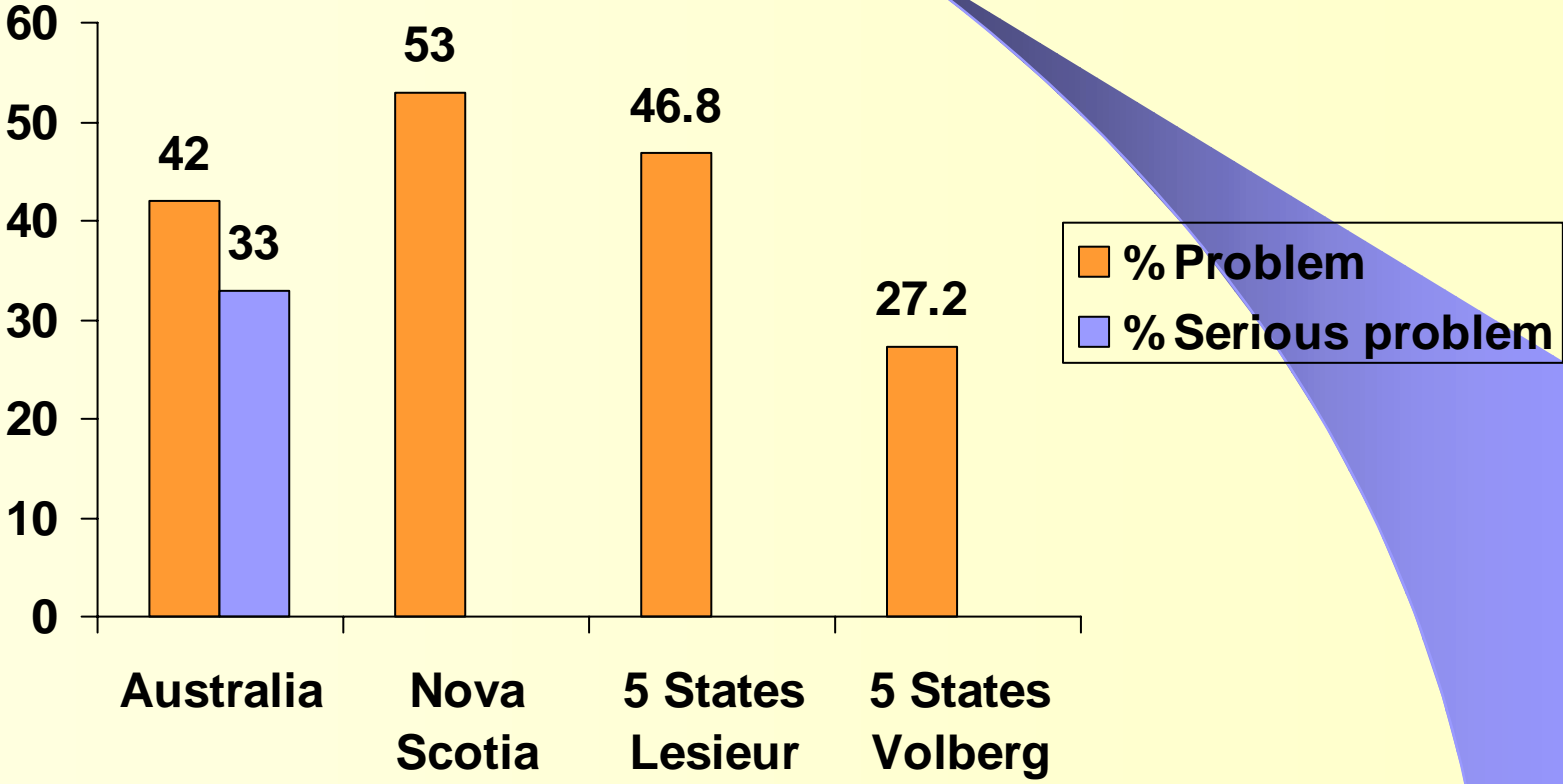
## Progression of Problem Gambling (cont)

- **The question: How long from the time when they became involved, until full-fledged DSM-IV diagnosed pathological gambling?**

## Progression of Problem Gambling (cont)

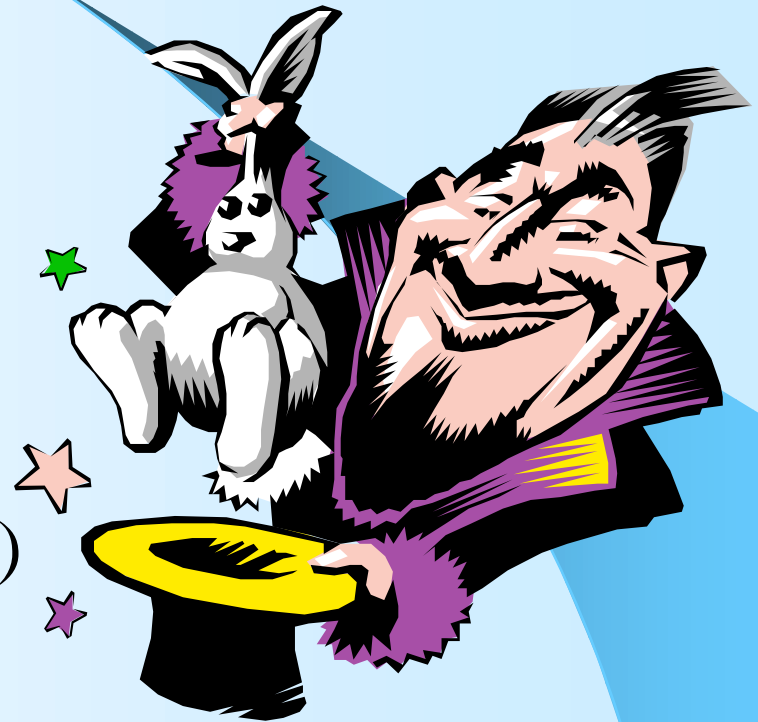
- **For VLT players it took an average of 9.5 months to get from “social gambling” to pathological gambling.**
- **For “traditional” gamblers it took about 3.2 years.**
- **The amount of financial damage between the two groups isn’t different, meaning that the VLT players did more damage faster.**

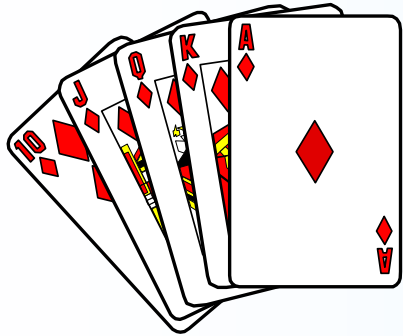
# Problem Gamblers and Expenditures on Video Machines



# Common Cognitive Distortions

- Winning and Losing Streaks
- Lucky Day
- Lucky Machine
- Lucky Shirt
- Blue Dot (National Enquirer)
- Bus Stop Analogy
- They Fix the Machines to pay when ...
- They fix the machines so they won't pay when ...





# Action (Skill) and Escape(Luck)

- **Action/Skill**
- **Competitive games**
- **Professional gambler as the ideal**
- **Sports**
- **Horses**
- **Craps (knows probability)**
- **Cards (percentage/card counting/basic strategy)**
- **Escape/Luck**
- **Random events**
- **Bingo**
- **Lottery**
- **Slots/Poker Machines**
- **VLTs**
- **Pull tabs**
- **Cards (no/logical strategy)**

# Randomness Within “Skill” Games

- **Sports**

- **Player gets injured in game**

- **Fumble**

- **Football hits goal post**

- **Etc.**

- **Etc.**



- **Horses (Dogs)**

- **Animal gets injured**

- **Jockey drops whip**

- **Animal gets boxed in**

- **Animal is sick**

- **Etc.**

- **Etc.**



# GABS, T-BAGS & GBQ

- Gamblers' Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (Bob Breen & Marvin Zuckerman, 1999)
- Taber's Beliefs About Gambling Scale (Julian Taber, n.d.)
- Gamblers' Belief Questionnaire (Steenbergh et al, 2002)

# Thinking Errors Among Problem Gamblers

- Gambler's Fallacy (streaks & the machine or I'm "overdue")
- Personification of the Machine
- Illusions of Control (Langer Experiment)
- Present Random Event explains Past Random Event (Gambler's Fallacy in reverse)
- Biased Evaluation of Outcome (random events are the cause of failure; success reflects skill)
- Entrapment (bus-stop analogy)



# Thinking Errors #2

- Gambling with “their” money
- Got to get “my” money back
- Superstition (Skinner’s pigeons)
- Bet on hunches
- Memory Biases (remember wins, forget losses)
- Near Miss (Gestalt phenomenon)
- Hindsight Accuracy (I had a system but I couldn’t stick to it)

