



There's a thriving industry that prospers because it deliberately creates addicts. Not quite as damaging as tobacco, liquor nor drugs, but can be lethal to bank accounts and family relationships.

When addicts are lured to the glittering facilities, they're welcomed lavishly. Posh surroundings, endless food and booze, glamorous entertainment and other distractions. Casinos love seniors, because statistically they have more time to spend in casinos than any other age group. Some experts consider casino gambling addiction as a mental disease, rather than a bad, compulsive habit many seniors fall into. Casino visits by retirees range from a fun hobby to mildly debilitating to uncontrolled financial disaster.

For example, typical seniors who patronize casinos could be mildly obsessed with trying to win on slot machines. They may visit once a month or less, lose a hundred dollars, but rarely play at the high-stakes table games.

There are also seniors who gradually become more and more obsessed with gambling, primarily with table games blackjack and craps. They go to casinos often and may lose hundreds of dollars on each visit.

The most afflicted addicts are those who display out-of-control symptoms, often growing in severity as losses mount. Early in addiction, compulsive casino patrons constantly assure themselves and family members that gambling is a hobby. They insist it's not affecting their lives nor finances.

They justify setting aside growing amounts of money for gambling, promising it doesn't take away from household needs. They're always certain their skills and knowledge will eventually make them winners.

They continually talk about the pleasures of gambling and glamor of casinos. When they lose, they're certain they'll win the money back and more on the next visit. The compulsion to be in a

casino grows to uncrontolled obsession.

No matter what evidence to the contrary, too many senior gambling addicts insist they don't have a problem. With big losses, they may promise to cut back. If pressed more, they become angry at those who suggest they'll never win against the odds.

Obsessed gamblers eventually try to cover losses by borrowing money, failing to pay bills and eventually desperate enough to steal money from family members. In the worst cases, they become mentally and physically ill from deception and false hopes.

Gambling can become a debilitating addiction. When it reaches the sick level of harm to the gambler and family, psychological intervention is absolutely necessary. Casinos can be fun for seniors, but whenever you visit, know their basic purpose. You lose; they win.