

Fighting compulsive gambling among women

By Tanya Mohn, New York Times

Blinking lights, the clicking sound of coins, and perks like free or inexpensive food, drinks and casino bus trips are enticing many older women to gamble.

For some people, that seductive environment can be extremely dangerous.

“Casinos are trained to make you feel welcome, while you lose your life,” said Sandra Adell, 70, a literature professor in the Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who recounted her experiences as a compulsive gambler in the book “Confessions of a Slot Machine Queen.” “What the industry is doing, the way it markets and keeps casinos filled with elderly people, is morally reprehensible.”

Hard numbers are difficult to find, but Keith Whyte, the executive director of the National Council on Problem Gambling, said that gambling addiction among older women near or in retirement appears to be increasing in scope and severity, with a devastating impact on personal finances.

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