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Senate inquiry: Prevalence of interactive and online gambling in Australia

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I am a 29 year old member of the public who has suffered with chronic Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) since childhood, with depressive symptoms becoming more prevalent in adolescence.

In March of this year after completing four years in the workforce, enduring much hardship along the way (working at the NAB in Melbourne) I had a severe mental breakdown. The acute and relentless nature of my OCD and depth of the related MDD meant I simple couldn't function; I was no longer mentally and physically able to attend work and was confined to my rented house.

During this period my mental health was so dire that I only left the house to meet weekly appointments with my psychiatrist. My sister who shared the house with me did the necessary grocery shopping etc.

After a three month period of trying the recommended anti-depressant medications in an attempt to alleviate the diabolical OCD and MDD symptoms I decided I had had enough, the pain was too much. A life of chronic illness had broken my spirit completely. I was now completely and hopelessly suicidal.

In response to these feelings and to my anti-depressant medication which added to my suicide ideation and compulsive / risk taking mindset I decided I would establish a Tabcorp Wagering internet betting account as this gave me the opportunity to bet my life savings in one bet.

Given my intention to basically bet everything I had and commit suicide I transferred my entire life savings of \$85,000 into my Tabcorp Wagering account (at the touch of a button). I placed a \$5,000 on a game of basketball, without even bothering to review the teams playing, in my manic and suicidal state this wasn't possible anyway (as my ability to concentrate or exercise judgment had completely gone).

With the result going against me I immediately looked for the next thing to bet on. My compulsive urges to gamble everything, and corresponding wishes to end my life lead to a bet of \$80,000 on a single game of tennis (at this year's Wimbledon tournament), a second losing bet. In the space of a couple of days I had lost \$85,000, everything I had.

Shortly after losing the \$80,000 I was left with the decision 'what now', 'this is what you wanted' I said to myself. The truth was though I didn't want to die; I was just an extremely unwell person who needed extensive psychiatric care, Tabcorp just provided the 'gun' so to speak. However having lost the \$85,000 I couldn't see a way out. I swallowed a hand full of my prescribed anti-depressants. I then poured myself a glass of whiskey (about 60ml), which I drunk before going to bed. At this stage I was completely and utterly hysterical and crying uncontrollable. I passed out in around twenty minutes. In truth I probable knew the amount of anti-depressants I swallowed wasn't enough to end my life, but I felt compelled to end the pain.

I am now more than ever chronically depressed and still gravely ill, wondering how I can possibly go forward from here. I have taken the time to read Tabcorp Wagerings Responsible Gambling Code of Conduct and have discovered there isn't a single preventative measure in place to address psychiatric illness and their interactive gambling products. There is no mention at all of mental health and problem gambling; despite this being an extremely important issue that regulation simply must focus on.

I'm left to wonder how Tabcorp can provide interactive gambling products to the Australian public without providing sufficient protection for citizens suffering from chronic mental ill health. Without even giving mental health some consideration? Despite the overwhelming evidence warning of the acute dangers of mental health and interactive products.

How many people have to die before something is done? How many lives have to be completely and irreversibly destroyed?