

A Brief Commentary on Navigating the Current Illegal Sports Betting Landscape in the United States

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Received: 30-Aug-2024, Manuscript No. JART-24-146862; Editor assigned: 02-Sep-2024, PreQC No. JART-24-146862 (PQ); Reviewed: 16-Sep-2024, QC No. JART-24-146862; Revised: 23-Sep-2024, Manuscript No. JART-24-146862 (R); Published: 30-Sep-2024, DOI: 10.4172/2155-6105.1000003

Citation: Choi S (2024) A Brief Commentary on Navigating the Current Illegal Sports Betting Landscape in the United States. J Addict Res Ther 12:S1

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Abstract

The expansion of legalized online sports betting in the USA has reduced reliance on offshore sports books in states with regulated markets. However, in states where sports betting remains prohibited, offshore sports books continue to operate and attract American bettors. This persistent challenge underscores the need for a comprehensive approach beyond regulation. This paper briefly reviews current efforts to combat the illegal sports betting market and provides suggestions for effectively dismantling offshore operations.

Keywords: Offshore gambling; Illegal sports betting; Illegal online gambling; Offshore sports book

About the Study

The United States of America, where the sports betting market was once dominated by offshore sports books, has seen rapid expansion of legal online sports betting venues across multiple states. As of August 2024, over 30 states have legalized sports betting, offering it to residents through online and mobile platforms [1]. The growth of the legal market has reduced the reliance on offshore operators in the legal states, but offshore platforms still remain readily accessible to American residents and widely used, particularly in states where sports betting is still prohibited [3,4]. Many online gambling reviews provide misleading information about gambling laws and present offshore sports books as legitimate. Deluded players are susceptible to placing bets on offshore platforms while erroneously believing they are using legal platforms [5,6]. Additionally, these offshore platforms benefit from high visibility in search engines results, attracting players searching for betting options [7]. Players using offshore platforms are exposed not only to legal violation, but also to significant risks related to consumer protection and gambling addiction. Therefore, despite the expanding legal landscape, the ongoing prevalence of offshore sports books underscores the need for increased restriction and awareness to protect American residents.

Efforts to combat the illegal sports betting market seem to be multifaceted. Major offshore sports books have begun withdrawing from states where strict governmental measures are taken against them [8]. Recent academic research supports the need for multifaceted efforts, exploring detection techniques for illegal online gambling sites, the impact of illegal live sports streaming services on promoting illegal online gambling and the effectiveness of blocking measures against offshore gambling [9-11]. Public awareness campaigns, such as Better Safe, have also played a major role in raising awareness about illegal online gambling and educating players about the risks of using offshore sports books, including the lack of legal recourse in disputes, potential data breaches and issues with receiving payouts.

Conclusion

While regulation seems to be a key component in restricting the illegal sports betting market, it needs to be part of a broader strategy that includes strong enforcement, public education and technological measures to block access to offshore sports betting platforms. Enhancing cooperation between federal and state agencies, improving international collaboration to tackle cross-border illegal operations and leveraging advanced technologies for monitoring and enforcement are essential steps to effectively dismantle offshore operations. Only by addressing the issue from multiple angles can the USA effectively combat the illegal sports betting market.

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