

Physical health and gambling and gaming disorders: A critical and systematic review of the literature

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Background

- Gambling and gaming disorders were introduced as addictions (DSM-5, ICD-11)
- Links with psychiatric comorbidities have been extensively investigated
- So far the impact on **physical health** has been overlooked

Objective

To evaluate the impact of gambling and/or gaming disorders on the physical health of gamblers and gamers

Method

Systematic review of the literature

- Elements of Cochrane method
- PubMed/Medline database
- Inclusion criteria:
 - Studies with subjects with gambling and/or gaming addiction (standardized criteria or not)
 - Studies examining links between gambling/gaming & physical health
- Keywords: *gambling, pathological gambling, gambling health, gaming, pathological gaming, gaming health*
 - Screening of titles/abstracts/Introductions
 - Full reading of selected articles and references
 - Systematic critical analysis of selected studies

Results

25 articles selected (14 reporting 57848 adults with gambling disorder and 11 reporting 63887 adults and adolescents with gaming disorder) from the U.S.(majority), Europe, Asia

Addiction assessment: SOGS test and DSM for gambling / heterogenous for gaming

Gambling disorder

Health assessment with open questions: 2 studies

Prevalence of reported symptoms: Sleep disorders : 35 to 68% ; Digestive disorders : 20 to 42% ; Headaches : 20 to 29%

Health assessment with closed questions: 5 studies

- More abdominal and dorsal pain (1 study)
 - Elderly subjects: more cardiac symptoms + arthritis (2)
 - More sleep disorders (1)
 - Self-perception of physical health = "average" (1)
- Vs. non-problematic gamblers

Health assessment with the Short-Form Questionnaire: 6 studies

- Significantly lower scores
- vs US. general population data (1)
 - vs non gamblers (2)
 - vs non-problematic gamblers (2)
 - vs non-problematic gambler twins (1)
- Notably for dimensions
- General Health (GH)
 - Bodily Pain (BP)
 - Role Physical (RP)
 - Physical Function (PF)

Sleep assessment with the PSQI and ESS questionnaires: 1 study

- Sleep quality and sleepiness scores significantly impaired vs non-problematic gamblers

Gaming disorder

Qualitative data only

Most frequently reported symptoms:

1. Sleeping problems

- 7 studies

- Daytime consequences

2. Pain

- 6 studies

- Joint pain (wrist, fingers, back, shoulders), headaches

3. Visual problems

- 2 studies

- blurry vision (reversible)

Symptoms more described among **teenagers**

No data for weight gain or lack of physical activities. Link with cardiovascular disorder? (1 study)

Conclusion

- Individuals with gambling or gaming disorders have an impaired physical health
- Further studies needed to understand the causal role of addiction, gambling and gaming
- Knowledge of these physical symptoms could help primary care physicians to better screen for gambling and gaming disorders among patients

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