Characteristics of gamblers choosing self-exclusion from casinos:
a prospective study in a French overseas territory

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Abstract

Aim: To describe the characteristics and gambling practices of subjects making a request for voluntary self-exclusion from casinos in Reunion Island, France (overseas territory).

Methods: From July 2013 to September 2014, all subjects requesting voluntary self-exclusion from gambling places were proposed to participate. They were interviewed with the Addiction Severity Index modified to include gambling and other non-substance additions and the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI). A follow-up interview was proposed in the following 4-14 months.
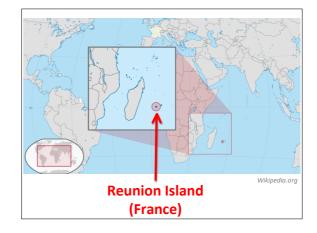
Results: 33 subjects were included (20 women, average age=52 y.o.). Most of them (n=27) met DSM-5 gambling disorder (GD) diagnosis. 15 subjects had at least one mood and/or anxiety disorder, 1 subject had an eating disorder, 2 met criteria for videogame addiction. No subject had gambling treatment history. Although 31 subjects exhibited a need for gambling treatment (ASI Interviewer Severity Rating ≥4), the majority of them did not report major concern or need for help. At follow-up, 2 out of 17 subjects were still engaged in gambling activities. The majority (53%) of those meeting DSM-5 GD diagnosis at baseline reported current gambling-related concerns at follow-up. Only one subject was in treatment for GD at follow-up.

Conclusion: A majority of subjects who use self-exclusion from casinos meet DSM-5 criteria for GD and would deserve specific care for GD. Improvement of coordination between gambling places, regulatory authorities and addiction clinics are needed to increase access to treatment.

Introduction

• Reunion Island: French overseas territory (Indian ocean)
• 843,614 inhabitants - 2512 km^2
• 3 casinos
• 80 to 120 self-exclusion requests per year

Wikipedia.org

Reunion Island (France)

Objective

To describe:
• The characteristics and gambling practices
• Of subjects making a request for voluntary self-exclusion from casinos
• In Reunion Island, Overseas territory, France

Methods

• Inclusion: All subject requesting self-exclusion in a casino or at police authorities between July 2013 and September 2014
• 1 interview at baseline
  – Modified Addiction Severity Index (mASI) (Denis 2015)
  – MINI International Neuropsychiatric Interview
  – DSM-5 Gambling Disorder criteria
  – Favorite game & gambling debts
• 1 follow-up interview
  – By phone

Results – Sample description

• Self-exclusion requests July 2013 – Sept. 2014
  – N=89
  – 33 subjects included
    • Acceptance rate=37%
• Characteristics of the sample
  – 20 women
  – Age: average 52 y.o. (SD=11)
  – 23 (70%) reported having a job
  – Average income: 2,500€ (SD=1,250)

Results – Gambling problems

• **27** subjects (81%) met current DSM-5 Gambling Disorder (GD) diagnosis

• 31 subjects exhibited a need for gambling treatment (ASI Interviewer Severity Rating ≥ 4)
  – 57% of them did not seek treatment for gambling (ASI self-evaluation)

Number of criteria	Number of subjects
0	4
1	0
2	1
3	1
4	3
5	12
6	6
7	6
8	0
9	0

Results – Gambling characteristics

• Favorite game: slot machines (31/33 subjects)
  – Internet gaming: 7 (21%)
• In the past 30 days before self-exclusion
  – All subjects gambled
  – Gambling expenses ranged from 50€ to 10,000€
• Reported gambling debts: 7 (21%)
  – from 700€ to 15,000€
• Lifetime treatment for Gambling: None

Results – Other addictive and psychiatric disorders

• Addiction
  – Tobacco use disorder: 12 subjects (36%)
  – Alcohol use disorder: None
  – Drug use disorder: None
  – Gaming disorder: 2 subjects
• Psychiatric disorders
  – At least one mood or anxiety disorder: 15 subjects (45%)
  – Eating disorder - bulimia nervosa: 1 subject

Results – Follow-up

- Rate: 52%
  - 17 follow-up interviews
  - Average time: 7.4 months
- 2 subjects still engaged in gambling activities
- Majority (53%, n=9) of those meeting DSM-5 GD diagnosis at baseline reported current gambling-related concerns
- Only 1 subject in treatment for GD

Conclusion

- The majority of subjects who use self-exclusion request from casinos
  - Meet DSM-5 criteria for GD
  - Deserve specific care
- Few were in treatment for GD at follow-up
- Improvement of coordination between gambling places, regulatory authorities and addiction clinic are needed to increase access to gambling treatment

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