

Children's recognition of the Irish National Lottery logo and tagline

What this research is about

In Ireland, about €10 billion is spent annually on various forms of gambling. The National Lottery is a common form of gambling. Experts now consider gambling to be a major public health concern because it can cause harms to people who gamble, their families, and communities.

Young people who gamble are at risk of developing problem gambling later in life. In Ireland, the gambling industry has a duty to protect children and adolescents from gambling harms. Considering this, it is particularly concerning that the Irish National Lottery's logo features an anthropomorphic dancing star with a smiling face. This design may appeal to children. There is evidence that gambling advertising plays a crucial role in promoting gambling behaviour. For many people, lottery is the first form of gambling they engage in.

In the current study, the researchers assessed recognition of the National Lottery's logo and tagline ('it could be you') among Irish children.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited children aged 6 to 13 years from nine primary schools in the Mid-West region of Ireland. Parental consent and assent from the children themselves were required to participate in the study. A child-friendly survey was developed to ask participants to identify the logos of six different companies, including fast food and clothing stores, and recall their associated taglines. Among these logos was the Irish National Lottery logo featuring a dancing and smiling star. Participants also reported their age and gender.

What you need to know

Young people who gamble are at risk of developing problem gambling later in life. Given the role of advertising in influencing gambling behaviour, it is concerning that the Irish National Lottery's logo consists of an anthropomorphic dancing star with a smiling face.

In the current study, the researchers assessed recognition of the National Lottery logo and tagline ('it could be you') among Irish children. They found that among 7-year-olds, 39.4% could correctly identify the National Lottery's logo and 3% could recall its tagline. Among 12-year-olds, the figures rose to 86.8% and 40.7%, respectively.

These findings raise concerns about the use of a child-friendly logo in gambling advertising. The Irish National Lottery's own Advertising and Promotion Code of Practice prohibits the use of symbols, signs, themes, or characters that can appeal to children. The researchers suggested a need to redesign the Irish National Lottery's logo and curb its widespread advertising.

A total of 671 children completed the survey in class. Since there were only nine children aged 6 and one child aged 13, their data were not included in the analysis. Thus, the sample consisted of 661 children aged 7 to 12 years (51% boys).

What the researchers found

Among children who were 7 years of age, 39.4% correctly identified the Irish National Lottery logo.

This figure increased to 86.8% among children aged 12 years. While 3% of 7-year-olds could recall the tagline ('it could be you'), 40.7% of 12-year-olds could recall it. Younger girls were less likely than younger boys to correctly identify the National Lottery logo and recall the tagline. However, among older participants, girls were more likely to identify the logo and recall the tagline than boys.

Age, but not gender, significantly predicted recognition of the National Lottery logo and tagline. For each one-year increase in age, participants were 1.56 times more likely to recognize the logo and 1.72 times more likely to recall the tagline.

It should be noted that an additional 4.2% of participants incorrectly identified the logo as belonging to a bookmaker. In Ireland, people can place bets with bookmakers to predict the winning lottery numbers. Therefore, the association of the National Lottery logo with some bookmakers in some children's minds could be considered partially correct.

How you can use this research

The findings of this study suggest that a considerable proportion of children in Ireland can identify the National Lottery branding. This is concerning given young people's vulnerabilities to gambling-related harms. The Irish National Lottery's own Advertising and Promotion Code of Practice prohibits the use of symbols, signs, themes, or characters that can appeal to children. The researchers suggested a need to redesign the Irish National Lottery's logo and curb its widespread advertising.

About the researchers

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