

## Exposure to tipsters on social media is linked to greater gambling risk among adolescents

### What this research is about

Adolescents are often exposed to sports betting-related content on social media. Tipsters are people who provide information (i.e., tips) on sports betting strategies and predicted outcomes. Many tipsters have active social media accounts where they promote this information. Tipsters can be an influential source, but they often frame gambling outcomes as being in a person's control. Further, tipsters tend to highlight wins while downplaying losses. It is possible that adolescents who are exposed to tipsters are more likely to gamble and to participate in risky gambling. In this study, the researchers looked at the association between exposure to tipsters and gambling intention, behaviours, and risk factors among male and female adolescents.

### What the researchers did

The researchers used data from 782 adolescents who were recruited through nine secondary schools and vocational training centres in Galicia, Spain. Participants filled out a survey in their classrooms between January and March 2025.

The survey contained questionnaires asking about the following:

- Exposure to tipsters, including if participants knew a tipster and if they followed one.
- Reasons for gambling, assessed using the Gambling Motives Questionnaire-Financial (GMQ-F). The GMQ-F scale was adapted to ask participants about their reasons if they were to gamble, since there were many adolescents who did not gamble.

### What you need to know

Tipsters are people who provide information on sports betting strategies and predicted outcomes on social media. In this study, the researchers looked at the association between exposure to tipsters and gambling intention, behaviours, and risk factors among adolescents. Data came from 782 adolescents attending secondary schools in Galicia, Spain. Participants completed a survey in their classrooms.

Males generally reported greater gambling involvement and were more likely to experience problem gambling than females. Following tipsters was linked to greater gambling intention and riskier gambling patterns in both sexes, as well as being more likely to endorse all four reasons for gambling, especially financial reasons. Coping reasons for gambling were also notable in females who followed tipsters. The findings suggest that following tipsters on social media is linked to greater gambling risk.

- Risk of gambling, assessed using the EDGAR-A scale. This scale measures accessibility (i.e., how easy it is to engage in gambling), risk perception (i.e., recognition of potential negative consequences of gambling), and normative perception (i.e., beliefs that gambling is common among peers and socially acceptable).
- Gambling frequency and amount of money spent on gambling in the last 30 days.
- Problem gambling, assessed using the Consumption Screen for Problem Gambling (CSPG) and Lie/Bet Questionnaire.

## What the researchers found

On average, participants were around 16 years of age. There were 440 females (56.3%) and 342 males (43.7%).

The researchers first compared gambling intention, behaviours, and reasons between male and female participants, regardless of their exposure to tipsters. Compared to females, males reported greater intention to gamble, gambled more often, spent more money on gambling, and were more likely to experience problem gambling. Males also perceived more risk associated with gambling, but they were more likely to think of gambling as a normal and socially acceptable activity and to endorse all four reasons for gambling (i.e., social, enhancement, coping, and financial).

The researchers then compared between participants who were not aware of tipsters, those who were aware but did not follow one, and those who followed tipsters. For both males and females, participants who followed tipsters reported greater intention to gamble, gambling more often, and spending more money on gambling compared to the other two groups. Participants who followed tipsters were also more likely to experience problem gambling. In addition, they were more likely to endorse all four reasons for gambling, especially financial reasons. Coping reasons were also notable among female participants who followed tipsters.

Among males, compared to those who were not aware of tipsters, participants who were aware but did not follow one reported greater intention to gamble, were at higher risk of problem gambling according to the CSPG, and were more likely to endorse excitement, coping, and social reasons for gambling. But the differences were small. Among females, only participants who followed tipsters differed significantly from the other two groups.

## How you can use this research

The findings can inform media literacy programs and regulations on social media marketing to reduce the risk of problem gambling among youth.

## About the researchers

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## About Greo Evidence Insights

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