

research snapshot

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Young people's attitudes and experiences with sport betting advertisements

What this research is about

Today, gambling is more accessible and promoted than in the past. Many people may see gambling as a normal behaviour, which could lead to more positive attitudes about gambling. As gambling has been linked to sports, it becomes increasingly supported by sport fans and young people. Exposure to advertising that makes gambling seem less risky or relates it to fun may impact young people's attitudes towards it.

Several factors in advertisement may make gambling more appealing for youth. For example, using catchy phrases, celebrities, humour, and music may help young people recall gambling brands better. This makes gambling more dangerous because it could be perceived as an activity that is socially and culturally endorsed. Unfortunately, limited research has examined how young people experience and perceive ads for gambling. Therefore, this research aims to fill in this gap by exploring young people's awareness and recall of sports betting advertising.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited 111 youth, aged 11-16 years, from three community basketball stadiums in Victoria, Australia. A research team member approached young people and their parents/guardians about the study. Participants were invited to complete a survey with both closed and open-ended questions. First, the interviewer asked for their age, gender, sports participation, and type of basketball code they watched most often (local, national, and international). To assess brand recall, participants were asked to name all gambling brands that they could remember. They then described the advertising that they had seen for the first brand that

What you need to know

This study explored youth's awareness and recall of sports betting brands, perceptions of marketing messages, and their intention to gamble after turning 18. The researchers recruited 111 youth, aged 11-16, from three community basketball stadiums. The results revealed that the majority of young people had high recall and awareness of sports betting advertising. They knew the colours and specific appeal strategies that specific gambling brands used. About one-fifth said they would gamble after turning 18. Inducements, such as money back and sign-up offers, were chosen as influential strategies that could encourage people to gamble. Some youth critically engaged with the advertising that they saw and challenged the idea that gambling could lead to financial gain.

was recalled. To assess brand awareness, participants were asked to name the colour of six sports betting brands. Then, they were shown six images of gambling promotions without the brand name and asked to recall the brand.

The interviewer also showed participants six different promotional strategies (i.e., call to bet now, a bonus bet offer, a cash out promotion, an image of a celebrity within a gambling promotion, a money back offer, and a sign-up offer). Participants chose the promotion they thought would be most influential in encouraging people to gamble. Finally, participants were asked if they would bet on sports after turning 18 and which sports they would choose to bet on. They were also asked to describe the factors that

would lead them to gamble with a specific gambling company or brand.

What the researchers found

The majority of participants recalled at least one gambling brand. Over three-quarters recalled at least one sports betting brand. 'Sportsbet' was the most frequently recalled brand. Boys were more likely to recall at least one sports betting brand than girls. Most participants were able to match the colour and a promotion to at least one brand.

Participants described a number of appeal strategies used by sports betting brands. First were deal-based promotions, which they described as contributing to winning. Boys explained these promotions with greater details. Participants also discussed money-back promotions, which they saw as reducing the risk of losing money. Plotline and distinctive voice-overs were important, too. These strategies made ads more memorable and helped distinguish one brand from another. The top two promotions that were chosen as being influential were money back and sign-up offers. Some youth critically reflected on the strategies and promotions used in gambling advertisements. For example, they challenged the idea that there were no risks associated with gambling.

When asked whether they would gamble after turning 18, the majority (77.5%) said they would not. However, one-fifth (22.5%) said they would bet on sports, with more boys stating that they would than girls. For youth who said they would not gamble, the reasons were related to money (e.g., considering it a waste of money), morality (e.g., not agreeing with it), or risk (e.g., could develop problems). When asked which sport they would bet on, most participants chose basketball because of their knowledge about the sport and/or the teams. Finally, participants noted that if they would gamble with a specific company, it was because they were familiar with its ads or because of the deals or promotions being offered.

How you can use this research

This research could be used by policy makers, as well as public health and prevention service providers. Policies could be created to restrict gambling

advertisements on media to limit young people's exposure to gambling brands. Policy makers should consider restricting promotion of gambling inducements as they may reduce perceptions of gambling risks. Future research could examine whether young people change their attitudes towards gambling once they can legally access gambling.

About the researchers

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