

research snapshot

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Perfectionism and a focus on financial success may lead to disordered gambling

What this research is about

Perfectionists set high standards of achievement for themselves. They often pursue achievement in domains that they believe provide them with a sense of control and self-worth. Gambling outcomes, however, are uncontrollable. When perfectionists gamble, they may spend more time and money than they can afford, especially if they view money as being very important for their self-worth and set a high standard in the financial domain. This behavior can lead to disordered gambling. Disordered gambling is persistent gambling behaviour that leads to negative consequences such as debts and personal distress. The aim of this study was to examine the role of perfectionism and being focused on financial success in disordered gambling.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited 258 gamblers who resided in the USA to complete an online survey. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 71 years old. The survey assessed their perfectionistic tendencies and the extent to which they viewed financial success as being important for their self-worth. The survey also included the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) to assess for symptoms of disordered gambling.

What the researchers found

Participants with greater perfectionist tendencies had more severe gambling problems. They were also more likely to focus on financial success as being important for their self-worth. In turn, focusing more on financial success was associated with having more severe gambling problems.

What you need to know

This study examined the role of perfectionism in disordered gambling. Participants were 258 gamblers who resided in the USA and completed an online survey. The findings showed that having perfectionistic tendencies was associated with having more severe gambling problems. Gamblers with greater perfectionistic tendencies were more likely to focus on financial success as being important for their self-worth. In turn, focusing more on financial success was associated with having more severe gambling problems. This study suggests that treatment providers may want to target gamblers' perfectionistic tendencies to help reduce their gambling problems.

How you can use this research

Gambling treatment providers might be interested in the findings of this research. They could use the identified risk factors (i.e., perfectionism and a focus on financial success) to provide more targeted treatment. For example, cognitive behavioral therapy could be used to reduce perfectionistic tendencies. Doing so might help gamblers to reduce the importance that they place on financial success as a core aspect of their self-worth, which might help reduce their problematic gambling behavior.

Researchers could also build upon the findings of this study. For example, longitudinal research could be done to examine if perfectionism predicts having a financial focus and disordered gambling over time.

About the researchers

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Citation

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