

# research snapshot

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Gambling advertisements are commonly shown on television during male live sports games in Ireland

## What this research is about

More people watch live sports games than any other types of broadcast. Popular live sports games include the Olympics and the Super Bowl. Gambling companies pay a lot of money to have their advertisements appear during live sports games. Many sports betting advertisements are on television during sports games. Gambling companies' logos are also on players' jerseys. Some athletes promote gambling companies that sponsor their team.

Gambling companies often make gambling advertisements appealing to young men. Many young men believe that gambling is a normal activity. There are more young adults with problem gambling (PG) than any other age groups in the United Kingdom (UK). PG is repetitive gambling behaviour that leads to negative consequences. Sports betting advertisements may feature in-play betting, which encourages people to make bets during the game. People can also make a large number of bets in a short amount of time. These features may lead people to develop PG. There are concerns that gambling advertisements may affect young children as well. Governments in some countries, including Ireland, allow gambling advertisements on television at any time of day. This means that children may see them.

In this study, the researchers investigated the number of gambling advertisements that television networks showed during popular live male sports games in Ireland. They also explored the characteristics of these advertisements.

## What the researchers did

The researchers randomly chose 65 live sports games that were broadcasted between December 2018 and

## What you need to know

In this study, the researchers explored the characteristics of gambling advertisements shown during popular male live sports games in Ireland. They randomly chose 65 live sports games to watch on television. The games included football (soccer), rugby, and Gaelic football and hurling. They sorted the advertisements into different categories based on the type of product they promoted. Advertisements promoting gambling were the seventh most common type of televised advertisement. Gambling advertisements appeared in 3 in 4 sports games. Most gambling advertisements included age limit and responsible gambling message. None showed responsible gambling tools. These findings suggest that gambling advertisements are commonly shown on television during live sports games in Ireland.

July 2019. The games included football (soccer), rugby, and Gaelic football and hurling. The researchers watched all the advertisements shown 30 minutes before each game started, during half-time, and 30 minutes after each game ended. They sorted each advertisement into one of 20 categories based on the type of product it was promoting. They also had categories for "Gambling", "Responsible gambling", and "Internal advertising." Internal advertising refers to advertisements that promote the television station showing the live sports game. The researchers also reviewed fixed and dynamic advertisements. Fixed advertisements are advertisements on boards within the stadium. Dynamic advertisements are rotating advertisements on electronic displays in the stadium.

The researchers recorded the number of commercials in each sports game. They recorded when commercials happened during the game. The researchers identified the type of betting offer each advertisement promoted. Betting offers included live odds betting, in-play betting, and free bet offers. They also identified whether each advertisement had any responsible gambling messages.

### What the researchers found

The researchers reviewed 3,602 gambling advertisements. Internal advertisements were the most common type of advertisement that television networks showed during sports games. Advertisements about gambling were the seventh most common type of advertisement that networks showed. The third most common fixed advertisement was about gambling. The most common dynamic advertisement was about gambling.

Television networks most often showed commercials of gambling advertisements during half-time while the sports games were playing. They also showed many commercials of gambling advertisements before the games started. These findings suggest that television networks show gambling advertisements when people are most likely watching sports games. About 3 in 4 sports games showed at least one gambling advertisement. This finding suggests that gambling advertisements are commonly shown on television during live male sports games in Ireland. A higher proportion of gambling advertisements were shown during football games than the other games. All sports games started before 9 p.m., suggesting that children could watch the gambling advertisements.

None of the advertisements during the sports games promoted responsible gambling tools such as spending limits. Most advertisements had age limit and a responsible gambling message. Few advertisements promoted betting offers, and none promoted in-play odds.

### How you can use this research

Policy makers can use this research to restrict when television networks in Ireland can show gambling advertisements during sports games. They could make

it mandatory for television networks to show responsible gambling advertisements during sports games. More research is needed to determine if television networks regularly show gambling advertisements during female sports games.

### About the researchers

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### About Gambling Research Exchange (GREO)

Gambling Research Exchange (GREO) has partnered with the Knowledge Mobilization Unit at York University to produce Research Snapshots. GREO is an independent knowledge translation and exchange organization that aims to eliminate harm from gambling. Our goal is to support evidence-informed decision making in safer gambling policies, standards, and practices. The work we do is intended for researchers, policy makers, gambling regulators and operators, and treatment and prevention service providers.

Learn more about GREO by visiting [greo.ca](http://greo.ca) or emailing [info@greo.ca](mailto:info@greo.ca).

