knowledge snapshot

Evidence-based framework to inform regulation and reduce the risk of gambling products

What this article is about

Many factors may increase the harm from gambling. These include differences between individuals, the environment, and gambling products. The characteristics of gambling products that may increase risk is called product risk. But, approaches to reduce harm based on product risk are not well developed.

In this article, the authors describe what is meant by product risk. They then summarize information on the link between gambling products and harm. Next, the authors discuss the barriers to developing product risk regulations. Finally, the authors propose a framework to overcome the barriers identified.

What was done?

This article is a policy paper on product risk. The authors first explain what is meant by product risk. Next, the stakeholders who are most involved in product risk are identified. How different stakeholder perspectives might influence what is considered good evidence is also discussed. The authors highlight current challenges in product risk regulation. They then suggest implementing a whole system approach to developing interventions to minimize the risk of gambling products. Lastly, the authors discuss the current challenges of assessing product risk with specific examples.

What you need to know

Product risk refers to the characteristics of gambling products that may increase their harm. The characteristics could be related to the game itself or how it is delivered. For example, gambling activities that have fewer breaks between play are more

Why is this article important?

Many factors increase the potential harm of gambling. In this article, the authors describe product risk as a potential factor of gambling harm. Product risk refers to the characteristics of a gambling product that may increase harm. This article helps to clarify what is meant by product risk. The article also summarizes what is currently known about gambling products and their harm. The article identifies the stakeholders that are involved in developing regulations related to product risk. The stakeholders include the gambling industry, regulators, researchers, people with lived experiences, and others. The article also describes the barriers and challenges of developing a regulatory framework related to product risk. Lastly, the article proposes a framework to help in this area of policy. The framework encourages a whole systems approach with better communication and collaboration across all stakeholders.

harmful than games that have breaks. In particular, slot machines have been consistently found to be associated with greater harm. In contrast, lottery products are on the lower end in terms of harm. Some online versions of activities (e.g., sports betting) may also be associated with greater risk because of the increased accessibility and continuity of online activities.

There are many stakeholders when it comes to product risk. Governments and regulators are involved as they control the availability of gambling products. The gambling industry that develops the

products is also a stakeholder. Welfare organizations such as treatment service providers, the media, researchers, and people with lived experiences are relevant stakeholders. Because there are many stakeholders, developing policies to reduce product risk may be difficult due to competing interests.

Evidence related to product risk should come from multiple sources. Behavioural data from the gambling industry might be particularly important as it provides real-world information. But, other forms of evidence should also be considered including self-report survey studies. There is a need to decide what types of evidence may be helpful to determine product risk. The evidence then should be used to regulate product risk and modified if new information arises.

Reducing product risk requires a whole-systems approach with multiple strategies. These strategies should also be supported by multiple stakeholders. A whole-systems approach involves integration and collaboration from everyone involved.

Assessing product risk is a challenge. There is no agreed-upon approach for risk assessment. While some approaches do exist, they have some problems. For example, they are based on expert opinions, which may not align with real-world evidence.

The authors provide a framework with several key principles to guide safer product design and its regulations. The first is having a clear objective that is agreed upon by the stakeholders. Another principle is being outcome-focused on reducing harm and not just focusing on measuring what has been done. The third is that decisions need to be based on acceptable standards of research evidence. Taking a whole systems approach with shared understanding of product safety and risk is noted as another key principle. Collaborations between stakeholders and co-operative leadership are also identified as key principles to regulate product risk. Lastly, the authors note the need to develop a valid and reliable way to assess product risk. Assessment should be based on evidence, be theoretical sound, and be sensitive to differences in product designs. It should also use clear definitions and criteria.

Who is it intended for?

This research is intended for all stakeholders of gambling products. The stakeholders include the gambling industry, governments, regulators, researchers, the media, welfare organizations, and people with lived experiences.

About the researchers

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Citation

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