

knowledge snapshot



The 5-Step intervention may support families in India who have relatives with gambling disorder

What this article is about

Many people gamble without problem. Some people become addicted to gambling and develop gambling disorder. Gambling disorder is repetitive gambling behaviour that leads to negative consequences.

Gambling is common in India. However, there is little research that explores how many people gamble in India and what percentage has gambling disorder. There are few treatment service providers in India for people with gambling disorder. Families often do not know where or how to get help for themselves and for their relatives with gambling problems.

In this article, the authors discuss a gambling treatment program called the 5-Step intervention that may help the families of people with gambling disorder. They also highlight the challenges with delivering gambling treatment programs to people in India.

What was done?

The authors reviewed gambling research studies that described gambling treatment programs involving families. The studies were published in different countries, mostly from Western countries. The authors then described the 5-step intervention and current evidence about its success.

What you need to know

The Public Gambling Act of India (the Act) is a law that the British government put in place in 1867 to regulate gambling. It is still the only law that regulates gambling in India today. The Act bans people from playing games of chance. It allows people to play some games of skill. To date, certain types of gambling are only allowed in some states in India

Why is this article important?

Gambling is common in India. However, there is little research that explores how gambling affects the families of people with gambling disorder. In this article, the authors discuss a gambling treatment program called the 5-Step intervention. They explain the steps involved in the 5-Step intervention and discuss how it has helped families from different countries who have relatives with addictions. They also highlight the challenges with delivering treatment programs to people in India. The authors suggest that gambling needs to be recognized as a public health issue in India. They also note the need for more support for people with gambling disorder and their families in India.

(e.g., lotteries, horse racing). However, illegal gambling exists and usually involves betting on cricket. Furthermore, policy makers are worried that people in India will start gambling online and develop gambling problems. There is ongoing debate about whether gambling should be legalized or not.

Gambling disorder affects people who gamble and their families. There are few gambling treatment programs in India for people with gambling problems. There are hardly any for their family members. Most health care workers and policy makers in India are unaware that gambling disorder is a public health issue. People who experience gambling problems may feel ashamed of their gambling behaviour and decide not to seek treatment. Also, they and their families may not know where or how to get help.

The 5-Step intervention is a useful way to support family members who have relatives with gambling

disorder. It is a short gambling treatment program with five steps. In step 1, the treatment service provider explores how the relative's gambling is affecting the family members. In step 2, the treatment service provider gives the family members information about gambling. The purpose of this step is to increase their knowledge and reduce their stress about gambling. In step 3, the family members talk about how they deal with their relative's gambling behaviour. The treatment service provider discusses the pros and cons of their strategies and other strategies they could use to cope. In step 4, the family members identify people they know who could give them support when they need it. In step 5, the family members determine whether they need more help. The treatment service provider may connect them with other organizations that could help them.

Most studies on the 5-step intervention have focused on families affected by alcohol or drug addictions. Evidence suggests that family members benefit from the 5-Step intervention, regardless of what addiction their relative has. Previous studies showed that family members felt less stress and coped better with their relative's addiction after they completed the 5-Step intervention. Four studies focusing on low- and middle-income countries showed that family members understood their relative's addiction better. They also continued to use the coping strategies they learned after the program ended. One study in India showed that family members felt more supported by family, friends, and others after the program. Only one study in the UK had focused on gambling disorder. The results suggested that family members felt less stress and coped better after the 5-step intervention.

Who is it intended for?

The authors suggest that gambling needs to be recognized as a public health issue in India. Policy makers could also open more treatment service centres in India so that they are easy for people to access. The authors note that the general public, health care providers, and other service providers need to be more aware of gambling problems. They also suggest further research on the 5-step

intervention. For example, researchers could investigate if the 5-Step intervention is useful for young adults who have parents with addictions. They could also investigate whether the program is successful in different settings, such as in low- and middle-income countries.

About the researchers

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Citation

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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.

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