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Gendered-drivers of intimate partner violence and problem gambling

What this research is about

Gambling disorder occurs when people cannot control their gambling and it causes negative consequences. Gambling can cause serious harm, including intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV is when an intimate partner or ex-partner causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm. IPV also includes economic abuse and controlling behaviours.

Previous research has shown that gambling disorder is linked with higher rates of IPV. Between 37% and 56% of adults with a gambling disorder have engaged in some form of IPV. Most people with a gambling disorder do not carry out acts of violence against their partner. So, it is important to consider the connections between gambling disorder, IPV, and gender inequality. Specifically, gendered drivers are linked to increased violence against women. These drivers include attitudes that excuse violence against women. These attitudes might include justifying, trivializing, or blaming the woman for the violence. Male partners who believe in rigid and stereotypical gender roles are more likely to engage in IPV.

Gambling may interact with these gendered drivers. This may then increase the frequency and severity of IPV against women. This study examined how a male partner's gambling is linked with gendered drivers of IPV against women.

What the researchers did

The researchers recruited participants through service providers, online advertisements on Gumtree, GoogleAds and Gambling help online, emails to previous research participants, and word-of-mouth. Participants must be women aged 18 years or over, live in Australia, and speak English. They had lived

What you need to know

Intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs when an intimate partner or ex-partner causes physical, sexual, psychological, or financial harm. Gambling disorder is linked to higher rates of IPV. This study examined how gendered drivers of IPV, such as attitudes that excuse or justify violence against women, are linked to a male partner's gambling. The researchers interviewed 30 adult women in Australia who had experienced gambling-related IPV. They found that gender inequality within intimate relationships set the context for IPV. Drivers of IPV included male partners' patriarchal views about gender roles, control over decision-making, and restriction of their female partner's independence. Another driver was the justification for the use of violence against women. As gambling escalated, so did the violence.

experience of gambling-related IPV committed by a current or previous male partner. They must also have sought help from an IPV or gambling support service.

A total of 30 women participated in this study. The women were between 20 and 69 years, with most aged 30-49 years (63%). Most women (83%) lived in metropolitan centers.

The researchers made phone calls to each participant to schedule a time and safe location for the telephone interviews. During the interview, the researchers asked the women why they were participating in the study. The researchers then asked the women to tell their story about how IPV and gambling had impacted their life. The interview was unstructured to allow the women to freely share their personal story.

The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. Participants each received a \$40 voucher. They were also offered a professional debriefing to address any issues arising from the interview. The researchers used adaptive grounded theory to analyze the interviews and identify common themes.

What the researchers found

At the time of the interview, all 30 women had separated from their abusive male partner. Their relationships ranged from 2 to 25 years. Most male partners gambled on poker machines or casino games, races, or sports. Male partners often spent all available funds on gambling, missed family events, and spent a lot of time gambling.

The researchers identified five gendered drivers of gambling-related IPV. These included:

- (1) male partners held strict patriarchal views about gender roles. Male partners believed they were entitled to control family funds and prioritized their gambling above the family's welfare. Some women said their partner viewed them as his property.
- (2) male partners' peers and family members normalized abusive behaviour toward women. Family members and peers might also trivialize male partners' gambling and its harmful impacts.
- (3) male partners excused or justified the use of violence against women. They often blamed the women for their gambling losses.
- (4) male partners' controlled decision-making. For example, they controlled household finances and took control of the women's bank accounts.
- (5) male partners restricted the women's independence. Some women were coerced into giving up their educational or job opportunities. Others were forced to take on jobs. Several women mentioned not being able to socialize with others.

All women spoke about cycles of gambling and violence. Gambling created situations that increased IPV, including anger over losses. When gambling increased, male partners engaged in more violence. The women experienced financial, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. These patterns of abuse

and coercive control by male partners created a climate of fear. Alcohol and drug use also worsened the IPV and gambling.

How you can use this research

The findings can be used by practitioners to improve safety and service provision for women affected by gambling-related IPV.

About the researchers

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