Co-occurrence of gambling disorder and problematic pornography use

What this research is about
Researchers have identified various sociodemographic factors as risk factors for the development of gambling disorder (GD). Like GD, problematic pornography use (PPU) is a behavioural addiction. PPU involves persistent and repetitive engagement in pornography. This leads to negative consequences in a person’s life. No previous study has explored the co-occurrence of GD and PPU. Thus, this study aims to compare the sociodemographic, clinical, and GD-related characteristics of adults with GD (GD group) and those with co-occurring GD and PPU (GD+PPU group).

What the researchers did
The participants were 359 adults seeking treatment for GD at a public hospital in Spain between 2021 and 2022. The researchers used the DSM-5 criteria for GD as well as the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) to measure GD severity. The researchers used the Problematic Pornography Consumption Scale (PPCS-6) to assess PPU. Twenty-two participants had a score of 20 or higher on the PPCS-6 and were placed in the GD+PPU group. The researchers used the Symptom Checklist-Revised (SCL-90-R) to assess mental distress and psychopathology. This tool assesses nine different symptom dimensions. These include somatization (i.e., a tendency to express mental distress as physical symptoms), obsessive-compulsive tendencies, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism.

The researchers used the Impulsive Behaviour Scale (UPPS-P) to assess 5 facets of impulsivity. These facets are (1) negative urgency (a tendency to act rashly under strong negative emotions); (2) positive urgency (a tendency to act rashly under strong positive emotions); (3) lack of premeditation (a tendency to act without thinking about the consequences); (4) lack of perseverance (an inability to maintain focus and finish one’s goal); and (5) sensation seeking (a tendency to seek out novel and exciting experiences). The researchers used the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale to assess emotion regulation. The Temperament and Character Inventory-Revised was used to assess personality traits.

What the researchers found
Most participants were men (92.2%), single (57.1%), and with primary education levels (51.3%). The majority of participants were employed (62.7%) and with mean-low to low social position indexes (76.1%). The average age was 39.5 years. The average age of onset of GD was 28.3 years, and the average duration

What you need to know
Researchers have not explored the co-occurrence between gambling disorder (GD) and problematic pornography use (PPU). This study compared the sociodemographic, clinical, and GD-related characteristics of people with GD only and those with both GD and PPU. Participants were adults seeking treatment for GD. Compared to the GD group, participants in the GD+PPU group had more severe GD symptoms. They were more likely to have substance use issues and worse psychopathology. They also showed higher levels of impulsivity and had more difficulties with emotion regulation. In terms of personality, they showed lower levels of self-directedness and cooperativeness.
of GD was 5.83 years. Participants mainly engaged in non-strategic (39.3%) or strategic gambling (42.6%). A few participants engaged in both (18.1%). Half of the participants gambled in land-based venues (50.4%). The other half gambled online (27.9%) or used mixed mode of gambling (21.7%).

The researchers found no sociodemographic differences between the GD and GD+PPU groups. The GD+PPU group had more severe GD symptoms and more illegal drug use compared to the GD group. The GD+PPU group reported more psychopathological symptoms, with higher scores on the SCL-90-R, except for phobic anxiety. These participants also showed higher levels of impulsivity and had more difficulties with emotion regulation. In terms of personality, they showed lower levels of self-directedness and cooperativeness.

How you can use this research
This research can inform clinicians and researchers on the co-occurrence of GD and PPU.

About the researchers
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Citation

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