

research snapshot

summarize | mobilize



Do video games lead to gambling?

What this research is about

Gambling and video games are rapidly developing. Many online venues even offer access to both. Continuous involvement in either of these activities can lead to harm. Examples of harm include lost finances and stress in personal relationships.

However, little is known about the relationship between problem gambling and video gaming. The aim of this study was to explore the direction of this relationship to determine if one activity leads to the other.

What the researchers did

Participants included 4,601 residents of Norway. Their ages ranged from 16 to 74 years. All participants had played video games during the past 6 months or had gambled during the past year.

In 2013 and 2015 the participants completed measures that assessed the severity of their video gaming and gambling involvement. Comparisons were made between the 2 sampling years.

What the researchers found

Overall, participants reported low involvement in video gaming and gambling. Their level of involvement did not change much over 2 years. Men were more likely to report gambling during both years of study. They were also more likely to report video gaming. However, this was only true during the first year of the study. Younger participants also reported more severe involvement in video gaming and gambling. Finally, playing video games was identified as a risk factor for problem gambling. Problem gambling, however, was not a risk factor for problem video gaming.

What you need to know

This study examined participant's video gaming and gambling involvement over 2 years. The findings suggest that their involvement in either activity did not change much overtime. Playing video games was identified as a risk factor for problem gambling. Problem gambling was not found to be a risk factor for video gaming. Researchers could explore this relationship further by conducting longitudinal studies.

How you can use this research

Gambling prevention and treatment providers could consider video gaming when screening for problem gambling. Researchers could also continue to study the longitudinal impact that gambling and video gaming have on one another.

About the researchers

Helge Molde, Bjørn Holmøy and Aleksander Garvik Merkesdal are affiliated with the Department of Clinical Psychology at the University of Bergen in Norway. **Torbjørn Torsheim, Rune Aune Mentzoni, Dominic Sagoe and Ståle Pallesen** are affiliated with the Department of Psychosocial Science at the University of Bergen in Norway. **Daniel Hanns** is affiliated with the University of Applied Sciences in Darmstadt, Germany. For more information about this study, please contact Helge Molde at helge.molde@uib.no.

Citation

Molde, H., Holmøy, B., Merkesdal, A. G., Torsheim, T., Mentzoni, R. A., Hanns, D., ... & Pallesen, S. (2018). Are video games a gateway to gambling? A longitudinal study based on a representative Norwegian sample. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10899-018-9781-z>

Keywords

Gambling, video gaming, longitudinal, representative sample, cross-lagged

Study Funding

This study did not report any sources of funding.

Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO)

Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (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 responsible 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 or emailing info@greo.ca.