

knowledge snapshot



Recent evidence on gambling marketing content and effect on behaviour

What this article is about

New laws and modern technology have changed the way gambling is marketed. Gambling is now promoted in many ways, such as through traditional and social media (e.g., television and online), consumer marketing (e.g., price offers), and subtle marketing (e.g., sports team sponsorship). The increase in gambling marketing prompts the need to explore its potential effects on gambling behaviours.

Two previous reviews examined gambling marketing research. There was a lot of research on gambling advertising and people's views of gambling marketing. But, both reviews described challenges when trying to assess the impact of gambling marketing on gambling behaviours. The current review adds to these past reviews by exploring gambling marketing research carried out in the past five years.

What was done?

The authors searched for research studies about gambling marketing published between 2014 to 2018. They used search terms related to 'gambling' (e.g., betting, casino, gambling, lottery, wager) and 'advertising' and 'marketing' (e.g., advert, branding, commercials, promotions). They searched four databases: Business Source Complete (EBSCOHost), Health Source (EBSCOHost), Leisure Tourism Database (CABI) and Web of Science Core Collection (Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities and Emerging Sources Citation Indexes). Four authors screened the research studies from the database search. They removed any studies that were not related to gambling marketing. Articles that were editorials, opinion pieces, and reviews were also excluded. A total of 46 studies were

Why is this article important?

This review explores gambling marketing research published from 2014 to 2018. The review suggests three key findings: (1) gambling marketing is highly targeted and mostly involves sports; (2) targeted content in gambling marketing influences people's views of gambling, particularly children and people with gambling problems; and (3) gambling marketing can lead to more frequent and riskier gambling behaviour. The authors conclude with ideas for future research in this area.

found to be relevant. The authors also included unpublished research they were aware of.

The authors read through the full text of the research studies to examine:

- 1) gambling marketing content and frequency,
- 2) people's views of gambling marketing, and
- 3) gambling marketing's effect on behaviour.

What you need to know

Gambling marketing is highly targeted so that some people are more likely to see it than others, such as sports fans. The content of gambling marketing is also targeted, so that certain types of messages are more likely to be received than others. There are three types of messages: (1) brand awareness, (2) financial incentives, and (3) odds advertising. Brand awareness reminds people of a gambling brand's presence. It includes betting logos seen during sports coverage. Financial incentives, such as sign-up bonuses and 'free bets', aim to increase gambling. The financial incentives are difficult to understand and can lead to

decision-making errors by gamblers. For example, gamblers may take more risk with their bets. Odds advertising promotes complex bets that gamblers usually do not understand correctly, and also tends to take advantage of decision-making errors.

Most of the research on people's views of gambling marketing took place in Australia. Overall, people's views on gambling marketing seem to be negative. Gambler's views of gambling marketing are often worse than those of the general population. Children's views of gambling are also influenced by targeted content in gambling marketing. For instance, financial incentives and odds advertising make children believe that they could never lose money when gambling. People with gambling problems are more influenced by targeted marketing content. For instance, they report being more attracted to financial incentives than people without gambling problems.

Like the past reviews, the current review found that there is little research on gambling marketing's effect on behaviour, and these effects are difficult to measure. Most of the research is based on self-report data, but people may not be accurate in their recall nor actually know what drives their behaviour. Also, it is not ethical to expose certain groups, such as young people or people with gambling problems, to gambling marketing in the lab to test how it impacts their gambling behaviour. Two recent studies included in the review suggest that people with greater exposure to gambling marketing make more frequent and larger bets.

Who is it intended for?

This review is intended for gambling researchers and other who are responsible for gambling research programmes. It provides ideas for future studies. For instance, researchers could study online and social media gambling marketing targeted to young people or people with gambling problems. Also, researchers could find better ways to measure gambling marketing's effects on gambling behaviours. They could also work with the gambling industry and its marketing agencies to study the data they have.

About the researchers

Philip W. S. Newall is affiliated with Applied Psychology at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom. **Crawford Moodie, Martine Stead, Nathan Critchlow** and **Amber Morgan** are affiliated with the Institute for Social Marketing at the University of Stirling in the United Kingdom. **Gerda Reith** is affiliated the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. **Fiona Dobbie** is affiliated with the Usher Institute in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom. For more information about this study, please contact Philip W. S. Newall at Philip.Newall@warwick.ac.uk.

Citation

Newall, P. W. S., Moodie, C., Reith, G., Stead, M., Critchlow, N., Morgan, A., & Dobbie, F. (2019). Gambling marketing from 2014 to 2018: A literature review. *Current Addiction Reports*, 6(2), 49-56. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40429-019-00239-1>

Study funding

The study upon which this review was based was funded by GambleAware, a national charity instructed by government to commission research into gambling in Great Britain.

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.

