research snapshot
summarize | mobilize

Criteria for effective staff training in responsible gambling

What this research is about

Gambling employees, such as casino and lottery workers, are trained in responsible gambling (RG) to minimize gambling-related harms in their customers. One way to assess the effectiveness of employee RG training is the use of benchmarking. Benchmarking allows a company or individual to compare their practices with the industry's best practices. There are no existing benchmark criteria for RG staff training, however. Thus, the current study assessed benchmark criteria for the training of gambling employees through feedback from RG experts. It also examined how often benchmarking should be done, and who should be responsible for it.

What the researcher did

The researchers invited experts in the field of RG from around the world. The researchers used the Delphi Method as a way to collect the experts' views on RG. This involved three phases. In the first phase, a survey with five open-ended questions about the criteria and key indicators required for effective RG training programs was sent to 40 experts. A total of 20 experts provided their feedback. Based on the results from the first phase, the researchers developed a second survey and sent it to the 40 experts of the first phase and nine additional experts. The experts ranked the importance of the proposed criteria and indicators that were identified during the first phase. Of the 49 invited experts, 24 responded. The researchers analyzed the results of the second survey to develop a list of relevant RG criteria and indicators. They sent this list back to the 24 experts that participated in the second phase, and asked if they wanted to reconsider their ratings in view of the overall ratings from all experts. Of the 24 experts, 21 provided their responses.

What you need to know

Gambling employees receive responsible gambling (RG) training to help prevent and reduce gambling-related harms in their customers. The current study generated and evaluated a list of useful RG criteria for gambling employee training. The researchers surveyed international RG experts to develop the criteria. The experts identified a total of 75 criteria that were grouped into six categories. Nine of the 75 criteria were rated as very important by 90% or more of the experts. All of the experts agreed that training must be easily understood and include concrete guidance for handling problem gamblers. Experts also agreed that benchmarking should occur regularly every 1-2 years and one institution should be held responsible for benchmarking.

What the researcher found

The RG experts identified 75 criteria for effective RG staff training. The criteria fit into six categories: (1) criteria of content; (2) modelling; (3) qualification of trainer; (4) framework conditions; (5) sustainability; and (6) statistical indicators. Ninety percent or more of the RG experts rated 9 of the 75 criteria as 'very important' for RG staff training.

In the category 'criteria of content', most of the experts (90% or more) agreed that training must include content to increase awareness about problem gambling, guidance to identify and help problem gamblers, and content related to practice. In the category 'modelling', most of the experts agreed that training should include a chance for participants' to reflect on what they learn, a chance to learn through practical examples, and is easily understandable. In the category 'qualification of trainer',

most of the experts agreed that those teaching the training should be well-trained themselves. The other highly rated criteria were support from the gaming operators, continuous monitoring of compliance with training criteria, and the inclusion of training on social responsibility (prevention, early intervention, and support). Finally, most of the experts felt that knowledge of gambling-related problems should improve after training.

The experts also agreed that benchmarking should be conducted regularly every 1-2 years. They also suggested that one institution should be held responsible for benchmarking. The experts did not agree on who should be responsible, though. Experts from industry and consulting companies believed that an internal person should take on the responsibility. However, experts from research organizations, universities, and health organizations believed that an external person should be responsible.

How you can use this research

The results provide academics and gambling operators' criteria to develop a benchmarking for staff training in responsible gambling. Future research should include more RG experts to verify the findings. It should also ask experts to rank the criteria that were rated as 'very important' to separate out the most important items.

About the Researcher

Stefan Oehler and **Raphaela Banzer** belong to the Department for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy B at State Hospital Hall in Tyrol, Austria. **Agnes Gruenerbl** belongs to Embedded Intelligence in Kaiserslautern, Germany. **Doris Malischnig** is part of the Department of Prevention, Casinos Austria-Austrian Lotteries in Vienna, Austria and the Institute of Psychology and Cognition Research at the University of Bremen in Germany. **Mark D. Griffiths** belongs to the International Gaming Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University in the United Kingdom. **Christian Haring** belongs to the Department for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy B at State Hospital Hall in Tyrol and Addiction Help Services in Innsbruck, Austria.

To contact the researchers, please write to stefan.oehler@bin-tirol.org.

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.