

# research snapshot

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## Exploring the link between gambling marketing and unplanned gambling spend in Britain

### What this research is about

Gambling marketing is a strategy to reach and engage consumers. It is linked to increased intentions to gamble, gambling behaviours, and spend on gambling activities. The researchers examined the link between unplanned gambling spend and factors such as marketing awareness among emerging adults and people who regularly bet on sports in Britain.

### What the researchers did

The researchers used data from two British non-probability online surveys. For both surveys, the cohorts were recruited by YouGov from their non-probabilistic online panel of over a million people who lived in Britain. YouGov contacted potential participants by email. For both surveys, care was taken to match the samples to the population profile of Great Britain in terms of age, sex, and region.

The first survey was the Emerging Adult's Gambling Survey. The Emerging Adult's Gambling Survey is a longitudinal survey. Emerging adults are people between 16–24 years old. Participants were recruited in July/August 2019. The current study only used data from wave one which occurred pre-COVID. A total of 3,549 responses from emerging adults were collected. Among them, 1,496 participants reported gambling in the last 12 months.

The second survey was the Betting and Gambling COVID-19 Impact Study. This survey involved adults (18+ years old) who regularly bet on sports. The researchers used wave two data that were collected in November 2020. Wave two survey asked about gambling experiences in August–October 2020 when land-based gambling venues and live sports opened again after closing due to COVID-19. A total of 3,195

### What you need to know

Gambling marketing is linked to increased intentions to gamble, gambling behaviours, and gambling spend. The researchers examined the link between unplanned gambling spend and gambling marketing among people who gambled in Britain. The researchers used data from two British online surveys. The first survey involved emerging adults aged 16–24 years old. The second survey involved adults who regularly bet on sports. In both samples, almost a third of participants said that marketing caused them to have unplanned gambling spend. Among people who experienced problem gambling, almost 9 in 10 said that marketing prompted unplanned gambling spend. Thus, the severity of problem gambling was linked to unplanned gambling spend. Receiving at least one form of direct marketing in the past month and following a gambling brand on social media were also linked to unplanned gambling spend. Being aware of marketing in the last month was not linked with unplanned gambling spend.

participants responded to wave two survey. Among them, 2,980 had gambled in the last three months.

Similar measures were used in both surveys. These included questions around:

- Unplanned spend on gambling due to marketing. People who regularly bet on sports were asked to think about the last three months. Emerging adults were asked to think about the last 12 months.
- Awareness of gambling marketing in the past month, such as adverts on television, radio and social media, sports sponsorship, etc.

- Receipt of direct marketing (e.g., emails, texts, social media messages, gambling app notifications) from gambling companies in the last month.
- Following gambling companies on social media.
- Problem gambling was assessed using the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI). People who bet on sports were asked to think of the last three months. Emerging adults were asked to think of the last 12 months. Participants were grouped into non-problem gambling (0 points), low risk, (1–2 points), moderate risk (3–7 points), and problem gambling ( $\geq 8$  points).

The researchers used weighted frequencies to examine the characteristics of the participants who currently gambled. They examined the proportion of those who said that marketing prompted unplanned gambling spend. The researchers then looked at factors that were associated with unplanned gambling spend. Age, sex, education, employment status, and the socioeconomic index of the area where a participant lived were included in the analyses.

### What the researchers found

Almost a third of people who currently gambled said that marketing caused them to have unplanned gambling spend (31.2% of people who bet on sports and 29.5% of emerging adults). In both samples, the severity of problem gambling was linked to unplanned gambling spend. Specifically, 87% of people who regularly bet on sports and experienced problem gambling had unplanned gambling spend. Also, 87% of emerging adults who experienced problem gambling had unplanned gambling spend.

Receiving at least one form of direct marketing in the past month was linked to unplanned gambling spend among both samples. Following or liking a gambling brand on social media was also linked to unplanned gambling spend. But being aware of marketing in the last month was not linked with unplanned gambling spend in either sample.

### How you can use this research

Policy makers can use this research to support restrictions on gambling marketing. Restrictions on marketing may reduce gambling-related harm.

### About the researchers

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### Citation

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### About Greo

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