

research snapshot

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Understanding responsible gambling and superstitious gambling behaviours through the common-sense model of self-regulation

What this research is about

Gambling disorder (GD) is a serious behavioural addictive disorder. It can cause harm to the physical and mental health of people who gamble. It can also harm their social functioning. The common-sense model of self-regulation (CSM) states that people are active problem solvers in dealing with their health. According to the CSM, people have illness representations about a certain illness. These representations include beliefs about the cause and consequences of the illness, emotional representations, and illness coherence. Emotional representations describe strong emotional responses, such as anxiety, that people have. Illness coherence is their complete and clear understanding of the illness.

This study applies the CSM to understand gambling behaviours. Specifically, this study looks at responsible gambling (RG) and superstitious gambling behaviours. In previous studies, RG has been linked with a lower risk of GD. It includes behaviours such as setting time/money limits on gambling. In contrast, gambling-related superstitions are manifestations of erroneous thinking about gambling. People with gambling-related superstitions tend to gamble more intensely and have a higher risk of problem gambling.

What the researchers did

The researchers conducted an online survey. Participants were Chinese adults who gambled in the past 12 months. A total of 603 valid responses were obtained. Slightly over half of the participants were men (54.1%). The average age was 40.57 years old. The survey included the following measures:

- Illness representations for GD: The researchers used the Chinese version of the Revised Illness

What you need to know

Researchers have used the common-sense model of self-regulation (CSM) to address physical illnesses and promote health behaviours. This study applies the CSM to understand how illness representations of GD are linked with gambling behaviours. The researchers used an online questionnaire to collect data. They found that perceived consequences of GD had a positive association with responsible gambling (RG) and a negative association with superstitious gambling behaviours. Also, emotional representations of GD were negatively associated with RG. But emotional representations had a positive association with superstitious gambling behaviours. The effects of perceived consequences and emotional representations on gambling behaviours were through positive gambling beliefs.

Perceptions Scale for Gambling Disorder. This scale was used to assess consequences, illness coherence, and emotional representation of GD.

- Positive gambling beliefs: The researchers used the positive play belief subscale of the Chinese version of the Positive Play Scale (PPS). This subscale has two dimensions: "personal responsibility" and "gambling literacy". Personal responsibility refers to the extent to which people accept that they are responsible for their own gambling behaviours. Gambling literacy refers to the extent to which people understand the nature of gambling and how it works.
- Responsible gambling (RG): The researchers used the behaviour subscale of the PPS to assess RG

behaviours. This subscale has two dimensions: "RG-honesty and control" (e.g., being honest about how much time one spent gambling) and "RG-precommitment" (e.g., setting money limit).

- Superstitious gambling behaviours: The researchers used the superstitious subscale of the Revised Gambling Motives, Attitudes, and Behaviours Inventory (GMAB-R).

What the researchers found

The researchers found that perceived consequences of gambling had a positive effect on RG and a negative effect on superstitious gambling. That is, people who recognized the negative consequences of GD were more likely to take RG behaviours. They were also less likely to engage in superstitious gambling behaviours. Moreover, perceived consequences influenced these gambling behaviours through promoting positive gambling beliefs.

Emotional representations of GD had a positive effect on superstitious gambling and a negative effect on RG-honesty and control. Emotional representations are strong emotional responses that can drive people to avoid dealing with the threat of GD. In this study, people with more emotional representations of GD were more likely to engage in superstitious gambling behaviours. They were also less likely to engage in RG-honesty and control. The effect of emotional representations on RG and superstitious gambling was through gambling literacy. This suggested that emotional representations of GD might prevent people from gaining gambling literacy. This would lead to fewer RG behaviours and more superstitious gambling behaviours.

Illness coherence of GD was not related to positive gambling beliefs or RG behaviours. But it was related to superstitious gambling. This could be because people's illness coherence of GD might include misinformation and biases.

How you can use this research

This research can be used to inform future GD prevention campaigns. It can also be used to better understand how the CSM can be applied to GD.

About the researchers

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Citation

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