Irrational beliefs in gambling are related to trait impulsivity, but not state impulsivity

What this research is about

Pathological and problem gamblers have irrational beliefs about gambling. They tend to think about gambling outcomes in ways that promote further gambling, and believe that they can predict and control those outcomes. These individuals often are impulsive and tend to act without planning ahead. Impulsivity may be separated into state impulsivity and trait impulsivity. State impulsivity refers to when a person acts impulsively at a particular time in response to a situation. Trait impulsivity is a personality trait that describes how a person acts impulsively across a range of situations. This study examined how irrational beliefs might be related to state and trait impulsivity in undergraduate students in China.

What the researcher did

The researchers recruited students from six colleges in Changsha, Hunan Province, China. Participants were assessed on irrational beliefs about gambling and trait impulsivity using questionnaires. Only those who scored high and low on irrational beliefs about gambling were invited to come back to participate in the Iowa gambling task (IGT). The IGT was used to assess participants’ state impulsivity. In this task, participants were asked to choose between four decks of cards. Two decks had high immediate rewards but greater losses in the long run. The other two decks had lower immediate rewards but lower losses in the long run. It was expected that individuals who showed greater state impulsivity would be less likely to forgo immediate gains for long-term benefits.

A total of 110 students participated in the study. The researchers compared state and trait impulsivity between participants who scored high on irrational beliefs about gambling to participants who scored low.

What the researcher found

Students who were assessed to have high irrational beliefs about gambling showed greater trait impulsivity than those who had low irrational beliefs in gambling research.

What you need to know

This study examined how irrational beliefs about gambling might be related to state and trait impulsivity in undergraduate students in China. Only students who were assessed to have high or low irrational beliefs about gambling were invited to participate. Students who had high irrational beliefs showed greater trait impulsivity than students who had low irrational beliefs. However, there were no differences between the two groups in terms of state impulsivity. Thus, state and trait impulsivity might be two different aspects and should be further studied in gambling research.
beliefs. However, the two groups did not differ in their performance on the IGT. Thus, there were no differences between the two groups in terms of state impulsivity. Trait and state impulsivity might be two different aspects and should be further examined in gambling research.

How you can use this research

Gambling treatment and prevention providers might use this study to understand the differences between state and trait impulsivity. Researchers can use this study to further investigate the role of state and trait impulsivity in problem gambling.

About the Researcher

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Citation


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