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Correlates of Gambling Disorder

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Abstract

Gambling disorder is an addictive behavior in which valuables are wagered in neglect of financial losses and delusions of financial gain. To predict problem gambling behavior, a survey of Machiavellian personalities, money attitudes, and impulsive/compulsive buying behavior was administered to 410 students at UNLV. The results suggested that disordered gambling behavior may be predicted by Money Status scores. Specifically, amorality, money worship, and money vigilance were significant in predicting African-American pathological gambling. For Asians, only money vigilance loaded significantly.

Introduction

The prevalence of pathological gambling is about 7% for men and 3% for women. Men usually gamble to resolve boredom with high skill games such as sports betting and craps. Women usually gamble to alleviate negative emotions with low skill games such as slot machines or bingo (Blanco et al., 2006). Excessive gambling behavior is illustrated in impulse-control, obsessive-compulsive, and addictive paradigms. In support of the impulse-control perspective, impulsive behaviors such as drinking, smoking, and hyperactivity are overrepresented in pathological gambling samples (Slutske et al., 2005). With regard to the obsessive-compulsive schema, compulsive sexual and buying behavior were found in significantly more pathological gamblers than controls (Specker et al., 1995). Current framework proposes that money acts as a drug, thus stimulating cortical reward pathways gaming (Ross, 2008). With regard to money attitudes, gamblers scored higher than controls on obsession, power/spending, and anxiety (Blasczcynski & Nower, 2010). With regard to personality, strong links between anti-social (Blaszczynski et al., 2005), alienation, aggressive, and negative emotionality factors (Slutske et al., 2005) have been established in gambling disorder.

Method

A sample of 410 students (111 men, 299 women; 174 Caucasian, 34 African-American, 108 Hispanic, and 94 Asian) from an Introduction to Psychology class voluntarily completed the Pathological Gambling subscale of the Klontz Money Behavior Inventory (Klontz et al., 2012), the Compulsive-Buying Scale, (Ridgway et al., 2008) the Machiavellian Personality Scale (Dahling et al., 2008), the Klontz Money Script Inventory (Klontz et al., 2001) and Short Money Ethic Scale (Tang, 1995) for class credit.

Results

A standard multiple regression indicated that the two factors from the Compulsive-Buying Scale, four factors from the Machiavellian Personality Scale, four factors from the Klontz Money Script Inventory, and three factors from the Short Money Ethic Scale were a satisfactory model for predicting pathological gambling, $R = .414$, $R^2 = .171$, $F(13, 409) = 6.302$, $p<.001$. The Money Status factor contributed a statistically significant amount of variance to the overall model. For males and females, the overall models were statistically significant with Money Status being significant predictor for both sexes. For Caucasians, the overall model was statistically significant with Money Status contributing a significant amount of variance to the overall model. For African Americans, the overall model was statistically significant, with Amorality, Money Worship, and Money Vigilance all contributing significant amounts of variance to the overall model. For Hispanics the overall model was not statistically significant. For Asians, the overall models were statistically significant with both Money Status and Money Vigilance as statistically significant predictors.

Discussion

The Money Status factor was significant in the overall, male, female, Caucasian, and Asian models. The items within the factor embody positive judgments of the rich and negative judgments of the poor. Some pathological gamblers may not value the utility of money, meaning they do not conceptualize money as a source to make change in their lives, but rather as a source of stigma, in which those who have money are pedestalled and those who lack money are shamed. African-Americans make 25% higher charitable donations than do Caucasians and are experiencing higher average annual incomes (Kellogg Foundation, 2012; Tinuoye, 2012). As such, the gambler (especially for African-Americans) may not feel protective of their earnings and wagers funds on impulse because the player has a very loose attachment to money. Thus, the gambler does not believe their problems will be solved with money, but rather enforces the social norm that the presence of money equates to status. For both African-Americans and Asians, Money Vigilance loaded significantly to negatively predict pathological gambling behavior. Racial minorities have a higher prevalence of gambling disorder (Raylu & Oei, 2004) and Asians have a long cultural history of gaming (Loo et al., 2008). Thus, African-Americans and Asians may be endorsing cultural norms and fall victim to financial problems when savings is not prioritized over culturally acceptable means of recreation (i.e. gambling).