

Binge Eating and Gambling Are Prospectively Associated with Common and Distinct Deficits in
Emotion Regulation among Community Women
Sarah M. Farstad and Kristin M. von Ranson¹

This study compared facets of emotion regulation associated prospectively with binge eating and problem gambling to elucidate similarities and differences between eating pathology and a behavioral addiction. Women from the community ($N = 202$) who engaged in at-risk binge eating ($n = 79$), at-risk gambling ($n = 36$), or both behaviors ($n = 87$) completed four online assessments over six months. Baseline and six-month surveys assessed self-reported emotion dysregulation (including negative urgency and positive urgency), binge eating, and gambling; the abbreviated two- and four-month surveys assessed binge eating and gambling only. Binge eating and problem gambling were both associated with emotion dysregulation. However, greater positive urgency was associated with increased gambling involvement and more severe problem gambling, yet *slower* increases in eating-related impairment over time. Negative urgency did not explain unique variance in eating pathology or gambling once other facets of emotion dysregulation were considered, which suggests that previous cross-sectional research may have overestimated the association between negative urgency and both eating pathology and problem gambling. These findings suggest that positive urgency is uniquely associated with increased gambling frequency and severity; therefore, women who engage in at-risk gambling may benefit from interventions that target the regulation of positive emotions.

Statement of Implications: Our findings suggest that the experience of strong positive emotions (i.e., ecstatic, excited, overjoyed) could place certain women at greater risk of engaging in gambling than binge eating. Therefore, women who engage in at-risk gambling may benefit from interventions that target the regulation of positive emotions.