

Interventions for Problem and Pathological Gambling: Status, Innovations, and Challenges

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Abstract

The purpose of this presentation is to address research on the effectiveness of problem gambling interventions and offer insights for new directions. Dr. Martens has led two clinical trials over the past five years that have integrated technology into problem gambling interventions for young adults. In the first trial (Martens et al., 2015), he found that a computerized personalized feedback intervention reduced gambling problems among at-risk young adult gamblers. In the second trial (Martens et al., in preparation), he found that an intervention delivered via cell phone and text-message had an indirect effect on gambling-related problems. Although effect sizes for these interventions were in the small to medium range, both interventions were relatively inexpensive and easy to implement. He will discuss these findings, how they fit into the context of prior brief intervention efforts in the field (e.g., Cunningham et al., 2009; Hodgins et al., 2009; Petry et al., 2008), how they may be able to scale up and be disseminated widely, and how they inform potential future directions for reducing problem gambling among young adults and other vulnerable populations. He will also address some of the unique challenges associated with integrating technology into brief intervention efforts.

Implications

Individuals who engage in problem and/or pathological gambling experience interpersonal, vocational, and economic consequences due to their gambling behaviors. Research has shown that various interventions can help reduce gambling behaviors and related negative consequences. New advances in the field may boost the accessibility and effectiveness of these interventions.

Biography

Matthew P. Martens is the Faculty Fellow for Academic Programs in the Office of the Provost at the University of Missouri, where he holds the rank of full professor. He completed his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Missouri in 2002. He has over 100 peer reviewed journal article and been awarded approximately \$7 million in external funding as either a principal or co-investigator, including two awards supporting clinical trials for problem gambling.