SPORTS BETTORS’ RESPONSES TO SPORTS-EMBEDDED GAMBLING PROMOTIONS: COMPARISONS AMONGST PGSI GROUPS

Nerilee Hing, Matt Lamont, Peter Vitartas, Elian Fink

Presenter: Professor Nerilee Hing

This study was funded by the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General

16th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking
Las Vegas, 6-10 June 2016
DISCLOSURE OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

~ AUD $6.5 million in research grants

• 97.5% from Australian Federal and State governments

• 2.5% as consulting fees from industry for RG-related work

• attended industry sponsored events & hospitality
Background

- Exponential growth of sports betting
- Only form with increased participation in last decade
- About 1 in 7 Australian adults bet on sport
- Proliferation of sports betting advertising
- And promotion of sports betting during televised sport
- Community concerns, including for problem gamblers
- “Forced” exposure while watching televised sporting events
Wide variety of promotional techniques
Why is this a concern for PG?

Gambling advertisements and promotions have been found to impact most on problem gamblers:

- remind about gambling
- arouse urges & triggers to gamble
- provide inducements to gamble
- increase already high gambling involvement
- undermine decisions to curtail gambling

Treatment services report increase in clients with sports-betting problems

(Binde, 2009, 2014; Derevensky et al. 2010; Grant & Kim 2001; Hing et al. 2014; University of Sydney Gambling Treatment Clinic 2011)
Study 1

Aimed to examine:
• Sports bettors’ responses to sports-embedded gambling promotions
• Whether this varies with problem gambling severity

Methods
• Online survey of 544 sports bettors in QLD
• Recruited through market research company
• 64% male, mean age = 42 yrs
• About half bet on sports at least fortnightly
• Bet on sports via Internet (57%), land-based venues (36%), phone (7%)
• PGSI used in validated form, Cronbach’s alpha = .97
• 50% NPG, 18% LR, 10% MR, 22% PG
## Sport watching frequency (N=544)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>At least monthly %</th>
<th>At least weekly %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Rugby League</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aust Rules Football</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby Union</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor racing</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problem gamblers watched sports where gambling is promoted more frequently than other PGSI groups \[F_{(3, 36)} = 27.57, p \geq .001\]
Perceived encouragement to bet from promotions (N=544)

- On-screen displays of live betting odds
- Promotion of novelty bets
- Celebrity endorsement of gambling
- Gambling advertisements in breaks
- Stadium signage promoting gambling
- Segments sponsored by gambling companies
- Live studio crosses discussing betting odds
- Gambling logos on players’ uniforms
- On-screen displays of gambling logos &
- In-match commentary about betting odds
- Pre-match commentary on betting odds

Problem gamblers had significantly higher agreement that all techniques encourage them to bet on the sport. Problem gamblers agreed all techniques encouraged them. Non-problem & low risk gamblers disagreed.

Problem Gambler  Moderate Risk Gambler  Low Risk Gambler  Non-Problem Gambler
Perceived influence of promotions on sports betting (N=544)

- Increased your frequency of sports betting
- Increased the time you spend on sports betting
- Increased your expenditure on sports betting
- Caused you to spend more time on sports betting than you had intended
- Caused you to spend more money on sports betting than you had intended
- Caused you or those close to you any sports betting-related harm

Problem gamblers had significantly higher agreement to all items than other PGSI groups. Problem gamblers agreed with all items. All other PGSI groups disagreed.
### Perceived influence of contextual factors on impulse bets (N=544)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>NPG</th>
<th>LR</th>
<th>MR</th>
<th>PG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good odds available</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favourite team(s) playing</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special match</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching with others who have bet on it</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching in venue with betting facilities</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a sports betting account</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having internet access during the match</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your favourite player(s) playing</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching with others barracking for same team</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching with others barracking for opposite team</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching with no children or adolescents</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of novelty bets open for a limited time</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions emphasising how easy it is to bet</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions that are funny or humorous</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- All PGSI groups influenced by these factors
- Only problem gamblers influenced

---
Key results from Study 1

- Compared to lower risk gamblers, problem gamblers:
  - are the most likely to be exposed to gambling promotions during sports broadcasts
  - feel most encouragement to gamble, and report being influenced to gamble most from these promotions
  - report being more influenced to sports bet by certain types of bets promoted and the appeals used to promote them

- Thus, whether intentional or not, these promotions target problem gamblers

- Results consistent with previous findings that problem gamblers report more stimulus to gamble from gambling advertising (Binde, 2007, 2009; Derevensky et al., 2010; Grant & Kim, 2001; Hing et al., 2014)

- Limitations of self-report
Study 2

• Prompted by Study 1 finding that problem gamblers were more influenced to bet by certain types of bets promoted and appeals used to promote them

• Aimed to identify:
  • Elements in sports-embedded gambling promotions that have most impact in engaging the desire to gamble
  • Whether this varies with problem gambling severity

• Methods:
  • Online survey of 200 regular sports bettors, 207 non-regular sports bettors and 204 non-sports bettors
  • Film company produced mock gambling promotions using live actors which were then linked to the survey
  • Questions about each promotion to measure attention, interest, temptation and likelihood of gambling on the promoted bet
Conjoint design

- Yielded 20 combinations to form basis of scripts for mock promotions
- Allowed identification of elements and variations eliciting most attention, interest, temptation & likelihood of placing promoted bet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Variation 1</th>
<th>Variation 2</th>
<th>Variation 3</th>
<th>Variation 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>On-screen display</td>
<td>Studio crossover</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>Ease of placing bet</td>
<td>Urgency of placing bet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet type</td>
<td>Traditional (match outcome)</td>
<td>Exotic key event (1st point)</td>
<td>Novelty risk-free (money-back)</td>
<td>Micro-bet (who will give away the next penalty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenter</td>
<td>Match commentator</td>
<td>Sports betting operator</td>
<td>Attractive non-expert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scene 13: TV Commentary with match commentator and attractive non-expert presenter

Scene 5: On-screen display, exotic key event bet

Scene 6: Studio cross-over to sports betting operator with novelty risk-free bet and sense of urgency
Key results from Study 2

Amongst the 105 problem gamblers:

• A risk-free bet (refund if team ahead at half time but lost) elicited most interest, temptation and likelihood of placing the promoted bet.

• Message elements further increasing this likelihood were attractive non-expert presenter, neutral appeal and on-screen display, respectively.

• After risk-free bet, they rated the micro-bet (who will give away next penalty) as the bet type that most increased their likelihood of placing the bet, whereas other PGSI groups responded more favourably to the traditional bet (match outcome) and exotic bet (1st point).

• While the risk-free bet appealed to all PGSI groups, problem gamblers were distinguished by their greater attraction to the micro-bet (who will give away next penalty).
Some conclusions

• Gambling promotions in sports broadcasts appear to be having most effect on problem gamblers

• Why? Marketing theory suggests:
  • More involved consumers pay more attention to advertising
  • Mere repeated exposure to stimuli has positive effects towards the promoted product
  • Marketing cues can induce craving amongst addicted consumers
  • Urge-inducing triggers can reinforce gambling behaviour over time through classical conditioning
  • These conditioned responses can thwart attempts to curtail gambling

• Thus, these marketing cues are likely to be driving additional consumption amongst problem gamblers
Conclusions (cont’d)

• Recent restrictions on the promotion of live betting odds during televised sport appropriate

• Current prohibition of betting on micro-bets via Internet appears prudent

• Results suggest consideration could be given to further limits on sports-embedded gambling promotions given the particular risk they appear to pose to problem gamblers

• Further research to establish any causation
Next steps

Study funded by Victorian RG Foundation to examine effects of wagering marketing on at-risk & problem gamblers:

1. Ecological momentary assessment study to gather longitudinal real-time data on exposure to wagering marketing and betting responses
2. Explanatory interviews
3. Experimental study of inducements
4. Psychophysiologial responses to adverts
5. Play-through conditions


n.hing@cqu.edu.au