

Trajectories of gambling behaviour and gambling problems in outpatient care – Results from an ongoing study

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ABSTRACT

Background and aims. In recent years, the number of gamblers seeking treatment is increasing in Germany (Braun et al. 2013, 2016; Meyer 2016). The demand for outpatient treatment is much higher than for inpatient treatment. However, little is known concerning the trajectories of gambling problems in gamblers seeking outpatient care. This study addresses this gap by analysing temporal changes in gambling behaviour and gambling problems using data from baseline (treatment initiation), 6-month and 12-month follow-up assessment.

Methods. Analyses are based on data from the *Follow-up Study - Outpatient care of patients with gambling problems*, a naturalistic study on the long-term development of gamblers seeking treatment. The sample consists of n=156 patients of 24 outpatient treatment centres in Bavaria, Germany. Follow-up data are still being collected, so far n=102 patients participated at 6-month follow-up and n=54 at 12-month follow-up. Longitudinal data analyses will be conducted to investigate temporal changes in gambling behaviour and gambling problems, e.g. time spent with gambling or fulfilled number of DSM-5 criteria.

Results. At Baseline, about 88% of participants were male and mean age was 36 years. The criteria for gambling disorder (DSM-5) were fulfilled by 98% of patients. About two thirds of patients preferred gambling on slot machines in street casinos and bars. Furthermore, 15% preferred online gambling and 11% preferred sport bets on- or offline, respectively. Preliminary results of longitudinal analyses will be presented.

Discussion and conclusion. The results will be discussed along with study design, methodology and international study results. Conclusions about the trajectories of gambling problems in a treatment seeking sample will be drawn.