Brief Interventions for Problem Gamblers

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Background

- Self-help workbooks
- Motivational enhancement therapy (Miller & Rollnick, 1991)
- Studies with problem gamblers
  - Dickerson et al. (1990)
  - Robson et al. (2002)
Objectives

- Confirmation of effects of minimal interventions such as self-help workbooks and motivational enhancement telephone interviews on gambling behavior, the readiness of change, and the extent of gambling related problems in a sample of gamblers on amusement with prize (AWP) machines, who classified their own gambling behaviour as problematic and were motivated for change.
Hypothesis

- Participants who received the self-help workbook and additional motivational interviewing will show a greater reduction in gambling and greater improvement than those receiving the self-help workbook only.
Flyer

Flyer and poster in arcades/gambling halls

„Just for fun?... “

0800 – 5 64 64 84 (freecall)
Randomized matched samples

First call

Random matching

Self-help workbook + motivational interviewing

Self-help workbook

Control group „waiting list“
Course of Measurement

Method
3/5

2-months follow-up

6-months follow-up

12-months follow-up

T0  T1  T2  T3

baseline data
Stage-based Workbook for Problem Gamblers

Method 4/5

- Intro & Filter
- Chapter 1: „Stay as I am!“
- Chapter 2: „Changing? Yes and No!“
- Chapter 3: „Preparation“
- Chapter 4: „Full speed ahead“
- Chapter 5: „Stay the course“
Motivational Interviewing

- Feedback
- Responsibility
- Advice
- Options
- Empathy
- Self-efficacy
Instruments

1/2

- Severity of pathological gambling
  - Short Questionnaire of Gambling Behaviour (Petry & Baulig, 2003)

- Gambling behaviour
  - Frequency (days/week)
  - Duration (hours/day)
  - Stakes (losses/day in €)
Instruments

2/2

- Gambling related problems:
  - Family
  - Financial situation
  - Emotional state
  - Relationship to other people
  - Quality of life

- Readiness to change
  - Importance
  - Confidence of change
Subjects

1/2

- 58 male gamblers on AWP machines
- Age: 21 to 48
- Reaction to flyer and poster (with information of the research project) presented in arcades/gambling halls
Subjects

- Classified their gambling behaviour as problematic
- 88% agreed to at least 10 items of the „Kurzfragebogen zum Glücksspielverhalten“ (Short Questionnaire of Gambling Behaviour)
Readiness of change in both groups (number of gamblers, $N$)

Results 1/8

- **Group 1** (workbook + motivational interview)
- **Group 2** (workbook only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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Use of the workbook after two months

Results

2/8

Group 1 (workbook + motivational interview)

- 0 days/week: 2
- 1-2 days/week: 10
- 3-7 days/week: 17

Group 2 (workbook only)

- 0 days/week: 2
- 1-2 days/week: 14
- 3-7 days/week: 13

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Degree of gambling related problems

Results

Group 1 (workbook + motivational interview)
Group 2 (workbook only)

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Results
4/8

Stakes (in €)

Group 1
(workbook + motivational interview)

Group 2
(workbook only)

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Results

5/8

Frequency (days/week)

Group 1 (workbook + motivational interview)

Group 2 (workbook only)

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Results

6/8

Hours spent gambling/day

Group 1
(workbook + motivational interview)

Group 2
(workbook only)

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Results

Significant clinical improvement ( > 50%, 6 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>Not Improved</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Results

8/8

Significant clinical improvement ( > 50%, 12 months)
Discussion

1/2

- Results consistent with previous research
- Easier to control frequency than session expenditure
  - Card-based play to set limits
Discussion

Benefit from motivational interviewing
- Identification of problem gamblers in the venue
- Training of employees (e.g. in motivational interviewing)

Limitation: no control group
Self-help workbooks – useful in any situation!