



Similar Motives? The Relationship between reasons for drinking and gambling in a population sample (2020).

What is this Research About?

This study examined whether adults have similar motives for drinking and gambling. The primary goal of the study was to further examine the relationship between drinking and gambling motives to determine if these behaviors are motivated by similar processes. The aim of this study was to more closely examine conceptual overlap between drinking and gambling motives in a representative sample of adults. Previous literature shows that three unique motives have emerged in adult drinkers and gamblers: coping motives (drinking or gambling as a means to reduce negative emotions), enhancement motives (drinking or gambling to increase positive feelings), and social motives (drinking or gambling with friends for fun and celebration). A measurement for financial motivation was added to gauge gambling activities. Using the Drinking Motives Questionnaire (DMQ) and the Gambling Motives Questionnaire Financial (GMQ-F), the researchers questioned a sample of adults to measure their motivations for drinking and gambling. While both the DMQ and GMQ are commonly applied in their respective fields, surprisingly little research has examined commonalities between the two measures within the same sample. Therefore, this study explored this knowledge gap by asking people both questionnaires to determine if their motivations were similar or different for drinking alcohol or gambling.

What the Research Did

In July 2016, a professional research firm conducted a random telephone survey in Manitoba questioning participants about their drinking and gambling behaviours. The researchers only analyzed participants who had consumed alcohol and gambled within the previous 12 months. This included a total of 740 participants (n = 740). Scores from both the DMQ and GMQ-F were obtained from this sample and compared statistically to determine if motivations for drinking and gambling share commonalities.

What Did the Research Find?

The researchers found that there was limited overlap between motivations for drinking and gambling. This study indicated that the general population has separate motivations for these two activities. While alcohol use disorders and gambling-related harm are linked, this research suggests that, in the general population, the decisions to engage in drinking and gambling are motivated by different processes. Out of the three motives (coping, enhancement, and social) analyzed (financial was not included), coping motives demonstrated the greatest potential to lead to harm from drinking and gambling. The data also suggested that coping for gambling could be quite rare in the general population, whereas coping for drinking is more common. Overall, the findings from this study can be generalized to individuals in the



population who drink alcohol and gamble, but may not apply to at-risk individuals who engage in these behaviours at much higher intensities. While it may be true that motivations are distinct for the general population, this may not be the case for people with higher rates of problematic activity. As this study focused on the general population rather than a specific behavioural group, there is a need for future investigation into at-risk groups that may experience the most harm from drinking alcohol and gambling.

How Can You Use This Research?

This research has clinical and policy development implications to advance the understanding of those working in the health or public sectors that people who drink and gamble do so for different reasons. When developing policy interventions, such as public education campaigns, policy-makers need to take into account that people might require different information to minimize alcohol- and gambling-related harm.

What You Need to Know

While alcohol use disorders and gambling-related harm are linked, this research suggests that in the general population, the decisions to engage in drinking and gambling are motivated by different processes. Further research is needed to better understand the potential overlap of motivations between these addictive behaviours in the general population, and among at-risk people experiencing harm from alcohol use and gambling disorders. The results of this study provides evidence that motives for drinking and gambling are not synonymous and arise from distinct processes. This realization may have important implications for the design of

interventions and the implementation of public policy.

Citation

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