

Changes to the playing field: A contemporary study of actual European online sports betting

Online sports betting is growing in popularity but, for some, it can lead to negative consequences.

Studying current online sports betting behavior can help us identify markers of risky play and intervene accordingly.

The Study



Analyzed 8 months of actual online sports betting activity of 32,262 bettors who placed sports bets on a European betting platform in 2015.



Examined **typical and highly involved bettors** to understand their betting patterns and determine whether activity has changed since an earlier study of sports gamblers conducted over a decade ago (LaBrie et al., 2007).

Typical Bettors



Most bettors engaged at moderate levels.



Median behavior over 8 months:



Placed **2.5 bets** per betting day; **15 bets** total



6.1 euros per bet; **26%** of bets were combo bets; **16%** of bets were in-game bets



Lost 36% of amount wagered; net loss of **25 euros**

A combo bet is a bet where a bettor makes multiple selections, all of which must win for the bet to pay out. An in-game bet is a bet placed after a game has already begun.

Sports betting behaviors did not change much over a decade in spite of updates in legislation and greater popularity.

More research into individual betting trajectories and types of sports bets is needed to identify risks for gambling problems among online sports bettors.

Highly Involved Bettors



Highly involved groups (the **top 2%** for each metric) could be distinguished from the rest of the sample by **total amount wagered**, **net loss**, and **number of bets**.

Median behavior over 8 months:



Bettors in Top 2% by Total Amount Wagered



3% of bets were combo bets; **97%** were in-game bets



Lost 1% of amount wagered



Bettors in Top 2% by Net Loss



31% of bets were combo bets; **69%** were in-game bets



Lost 22% of amount wagered



Bettors in Top 2% by Number of Bets



8% of bets were combo bets; **82%** were in-game bets



Lost 8% of amount wagered

All highly involved groups bet often, wagered large amounts, and placed more in-game bets than typical bettors. However, highly involved groups on amount wagered and number of bets were *less* likely to place combo bets and had *lower* percent loss than typical bettors.

Not everyone in the highly involved groups were engaging in risky play. Being highly involved does not necessarily mean a person has a gambling problem.