

Interactive effects of problem-gambling severity, biological gender and alcohol consumption on electronic-gaming-machine behaviour

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Introduction: Problematic alcohol and gambling use comorbidity is well established, though little is known about the way alcohol consumption and gambling interact. We hypothesised three factors that would interact with alcohol consumption while gambling on electronic gaming machines (EGMs) to influence four behavioural gambling measures that can increase losses; preferred number of lines bet, average duration of play, average spend per session and preferred electronic gaming machine denomination.

Method / Approach: A total of 1557 male and female participants completed a questionnaire, measuring their problem gambling severity, alcohol disorder, consumption of alcohol while gambling, preferred EGM denomination, preferred number of lines bet, average duration of play and average spend per session.

Key Findings: Although males spent more than females, there was a *reverse differential spending effect* for problem gamblers such that females spent more than males. Alcohol consumption while gambling was associated with preference for higher denomination machines and players without alcohol problems who drank at the venue preferred to bet on more lines, suggesting a *double-max* strategy for that subgroup. For non-problem and low-risk gamblers, concurrent alcohol consumption was related to preference for higher denomination EGMs in female players, but not for male players.

Discussion and Conclusions: These findings are discussed in the context of the physiological and psychological effects of alcohol.

Implications for Practice or Policy: Since alcohol increases gambling risk-behaviour, information should be made available to gamblers about the ways in which alcohol may affect their decision making and the potential for financial impact. As is currently the case with pregnancy, female gamblers should be informed of the ways in which their greater physiological susceptibility to alcohol may adversely affect their judgement and increase losses while playing EGMs.