

## Which news about gambling in girls?

A matched-study with data from a Prevention of gambling risks among adolescents program (PRIZE) to update quantitative and qualitative research

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*Background:* Although gambling is more common among male than female adolescents, and boys are more at-risk than girls to develop gambling problems, an increasing proportion of girls gamble and encounter problems. Thus, an update of quantitative and qualitative research about the phenomenology of gambling and the specificity of related factors is needed. Our goal was to analyze gambling behavior among female adolescents and to investigate a set of cognitive and affective variables with respect to gambling severity. Moreover, through a qualitative perspective, we focused on thoughts that girls showed to have with respect to gambling while attending the educational activities implemented inside a preventive intervention (PRIZE program) conducted with students attending high schools in Tuscany (Italy). To better identify specificities, we compared girls and boys matched according to age and type of high school, and we employed a sex-invariant instrument to assess gambling problems. *Methods:* Participants were 867 girls (*mean age* = 16.28, *SD* = 1.11) matched with 867 boys (*mean age* = 16.77, *SD* = 1.29). They completed the *Gambling Behavior Scale – For Adolescents* (GBS-A; Primi et al., 2015), other instruments to measure a set of cognitive and affective variables before the implementation of the intervention, and responded to open questions about gambling during the intervention activities. *Results:* Compared to their male peers, females present different characteristics in terms of gambling frequency, activities and severity. Differences and similarities with respect to boys emerged for risk and protective factors and pre-conceptions towards gambling.