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Are online poker problem gamblers sensation seekers?

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationship between sensation seeking and online poker gambling in a community sample of adult online poker players, when controlling for age, gender, anxiety and depression. In total, 288 online poker gamblers were recruited. Sociodemographic data, gambling behavior (CPGI), sensation seeking (SSS), depression and anxiety (HADS) were evaluated. Problem online poker gamblers have higher sensation seeking scores (total, thrill and adventure, disinhibition and boredom susceptibility subscores) and depression scores than non-problem online poker gamblers. Being male, with total sensation seeking, disinhibition and depression scores are factors associated with online poker problem gambling. These findings are interesting in terms of harm reduction. For example, because disinhibition could lead to increased time and money spent, protective behavioral strategies like setting time and monetary limits should be encouraged in poker online gamblers.

Key words: problem gambling, sensation seeking, online poker, depression, anxiety

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