

Online Gambling, Impulsivity and Personality Traits: an Italian Sample

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Background and Aims: Internet Gambling has become one of the most popular and lucrative internet business. The recent improvements in technology have changed betting habits with online poker, casinos, sport betting, bingo and lotteries. Liberalization of the Italian online gambling market gradually started in 2006, but only in 2010 foreign gambling operators have been able to launch online real money games.

Our aim is to study the impulsivity and personality traits of an Italian sample of Pathological Gamblers (PG), showing the peculiarities of Online Gambling (OG).

Methods: 69 patients affected by PG, who accessed to our clinical center, were asked to fill the following questionnaires:

- Temperament and Character Inventory-Revised (TCI-R)
- Europ-ASI (Addiction Severity Index)
- Barratt Impulsiveness Scale (BIS-11)

Results: we found significant statistical correlations between OG and: younger age ($p < 0,01$), early onset of gambling ($p = 0,012$), male gender ($p = 0,015$), gambling exclusively with active games ($p < 0,001$), gambling that involves different games ($p = 0,04$) and PG familiarity ($p = 0,03$). Considering gamblers' personality traits, OG significantly correlates with higher scores in TCI-R subscales NS1 (exploratory excitability) and Persistence, while lower scores in HA2 (fear of uncertain) and ST3 (spiritual acceptance). There is no correlation between OG and impulsivity.

Conclusions: internet gamblers' young age could explain the correlations between OG and higher scores in NS1, HA2 and ST3, and consequently risky behaviours and less spiritual believes/acceptance. Higher scores in Persistence indicate perseverance in spite of fatigue or frustration. Cloninger's research found that Persistence, like the other temperament traits, is highly heritable.