

Exploring the Potential of Evaluative Conditioning to Alter Attitudes Towards Gambling: A Longitudinal Study

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Abstract

The rise of online gambling activities has increased the number of people being at risk to develop a gambling disorder. Efforts to improve the prevention or treatment of gambling disorder (listed in the DSM-5, 2013) are needed as this maladaptive behaviour can lead to financial, professional, social, and health problems. The current project explores whether an evaluative conditioning (EC) intervention, which could be implemented in a non-commercial advertising campaign, can induce a negative shift in attitude towards gambling. We conducted a longitudinal between-subjects experiment (EC intervention vs. control condition) among 170 participants. The results indicated more negative attitudes and less intentions to gamble over time, but independent of the treatment versus control condition. This may suggest that the mere repeated exposure to potential negative emotional outcomes and consequences of gambling behavior may suffice to trigger an effect, even if the positive feelings shared by gambling and regular games are also highlighted.

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