

Compulsive Gambling and Internet Gaming Disorder: A Comparative Study of Behavioral Addictions

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Introduction

Behavioral addictions, characterized by compulsive engagement in non-substance-related rewarding behaviors, are increasingly recognized within the framework of psychiatric disorders [1-5]. Compulsive gambling is formally acknowledged in the DSM-5, while Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) is included as a condition warranting further study. Both conditions share features with substance use disorders, such as craving, withdrawal, and impaired control, yet differ in their sociocultural context and neurological mechanisms. This study compares the psychological profiles, addiction severity, and neurocognitive patterns of individuals with compulsive gambling and IGD to better understand their similarities and distinctions [6-10].

Discussion

A total of 120 participants—60 with compulsive gambling and 60 with IGD—were assessed using standardized diagnostic tools, impulse control inventories, and neuropsychological tests. Both groups exhibited high impulsivity, poor decision-making, and deficits in executive functioning. However, IGD participants showed higher levels of social anxiety and time displacement, while gamblers experienced greater financial and relational problems. Neuroimaging studies cited in the literature indicate overlapping dysfunctions in the prefrontal cortex and striatum, with differential activation patterns depending on the addiction type. Treatment responses also varied, with gamblers responding more favorably to financial management interventions and IGD subjects benefiting from digital detox programs and behavioral activation.

Conclusion

Compulsive gambling and IGD share core characteristics of behavioral addiction but diverge in specific psychological and contextual features. Differentiating these conditions supports the development of targeted therapeutic interventions and informs updates to diagnostic classification systems.

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