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IMPULSIVITY MEASURES DO NOT PREDICT RELAPSE IN PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLERS

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Background and objectives: Pathological gamblers (PG) are often compared to substance dependent patients. Analogous to research into relapse into chemical addictions, a longitudinal outcome design was created to evaluate the impact of impulsivity measures on one-year relapse of pathological gamblers.

Methods: Twenty-two PG without comorbid substance use disorders and 31 healthy controls (HC) were compared on measures of impulsivity (Baratt Impulsiveness Scale, Delay Discounting Task, Iowa Gambling Task, Sensitivity to Punishment and Sensitivity to Reward Questionnaires, Stroop Color Word Task). The associations between these impulsivity measures and one-year relapse of pathological gambling were examined.

Results: PG_Abstainers (N = 9) had a later age of onset and gambled for a shorter period than PG_Non-abstainers (N = 13). The PG groups did not differ in impulsivity measures.

Healthy controls and PG differed on the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale and the Stroop Color Word Task, but not on the other impulsivity measures.

Discussion: The present data show that PG are not always impulsive and that gambling histories, rather than impulsivity measures, predict one-year relapse.