



The Exclusion of Gamblers: Preliminary Results of an Evaluation Study*

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Literature Review (I)

- **Ladouceur et al. (2000; Canada; 220 self-excluded casino gamblers; CSD)**
 - 95 % can be considered probable pathological gamblers
 - 24 % have been banned before; of these 30 % abstained from gambling for the duration of the ban

- **Ladouceur et al. (2007; Canada; 161 self-excluded casino gamblers; LD)**
 - A reduction can be observed in the desire to gamble, the harmful consequences and the symptoms of pathological gambling along with an improvement in perceived control over gambling behavior after 6 months
 - Gamblers still subject to a ban demonstrate more advantageous results than those whose ban has already expired

- **Steinberg & Velardo (2003; USA; 235 self-excluded casino gamblers; LD)**
 - 95 % can be considered probable pathological gamblers
 - The majority report a reduction in the gambling activities or abstinence from different forms of gambling after 3 months



Literature Review (II)

- **O'Neil et al. (2003; Australia; various stakeholder groups, CSD)**
 - Bans/self-exclusions have a limited effect on problematic gambling behavior, particularly since they are easy to breach
 - The attitude of banned/self-excluded gamblers to breaches of the ban/self-exclusion seems to be linked to their level of self-responsibility and awareness of their own gambling problems

- **Jackson & Thomas (2005; Australia; 19 gamblers from help programs, CSD)**
 - Given the lack of controls, the deterrent effect of a ban is seen as predominantly psychological



Status Quo – Summary

(Meyer & Hayer, 2007)

- Lack of research with multiple follow-ups
(= need for longitudinal studies)
- Reference to largely ambiguous, one-dimensional effectiveness criteria
(e.g., switching to other forms of gambling)
- Basic ignorance of variables which can influence the effectiveness of bans/self-exclusions (e.g., comorbidity disorders or individual readiness to change)
- Lack of comparative analyses of the benefits of bans/self-exclusions in different sectors of the gaming industry (e.g., offline vs. online)
- Lack of compelling results on the motives of banned/self-excluded gamblers
- Need for empirical research that takes into account the specific regulations in different European countries



... Possible effects of a gambling ban ...



"That's Mr. Roberts, Doctor. He has recently banned himself from Atlantic City Casinos. He's now going through extreme withdrawal."



Selected Issues of the Ongoing Research

- Which characteristics are typical for banned gamblers?
- What motivates gamblers to self-exclude?
- What expectations are linked to self-exclusion?
- Do banned/self-excluded gamblers make use of any form of additional help or support?
- How does the ban/self-exclusion affect their gambling activities?
- Do banned/self-excluded gamblers switch to other forms of gambling?



Participating "Sites"

- All Casinos Austria casinos in Austria and company headquarter in Vienna (n = 12 + 1)
- Selected Casinos Austria International casinos in Lower Saxony, Germany (n = 4; in Hanover, Osnabrück, Bad Harzburg, Bad Zwischenahn)
- Selected Casinos Austria International casinos in Switzerland (n = 2; in Lucerne and Bern)
- Internet gaming platform win2day.at (lottery games, casino games, games room)
- Internet gaming platform tipp3.at (sports betting)



Data Collection

➤ Casinos

- Gamblers are provided with a copy of the “Bremen Questionnaire on Exclusion” (BQE) when they elect to self-exclude/are banned (to be completed either in the casino or at home)

Timeframe: 01.12.2006 – 31.10.2008

➤ win2day.at

- Self-exclusion: Short version of BQE appears in a pop-up window

Timeframe: 12.12.2006 – 31.10.2008

- Operator imposed ban: Short version of BQE sent as Word file

Timeframe: 26.01.2007 – 31.10.2008



Study Design

Study phase T_0
Bremen Questionnaire on Exclusion

December 2006 – October 2008

Follow-ups F_1, F_2, F_3
Standardized questionnaires

January 2007 – October 2008
1, 6 and 12 months after T_0

In-depths interviews

March 2007 – October 2008



Instruments (T₀)

❖ BQE = Self-designed questionnaire

Offline sector:

40 items/blocks of items

- Sociodemographic characteristics
- Items on gambling behavior (incl. DSM-IV criteria on pathological casino gambling), readiness to change (cf. [Demmel, 2003](#)) and utilization of available help/support services
- Questions on the ban/self-exclusion (motivation, attitudes, expectations)

Online sector:

Short version of BQE containing either 19 or 16 items/blocks of items



Instruments (F_{1/2/3})

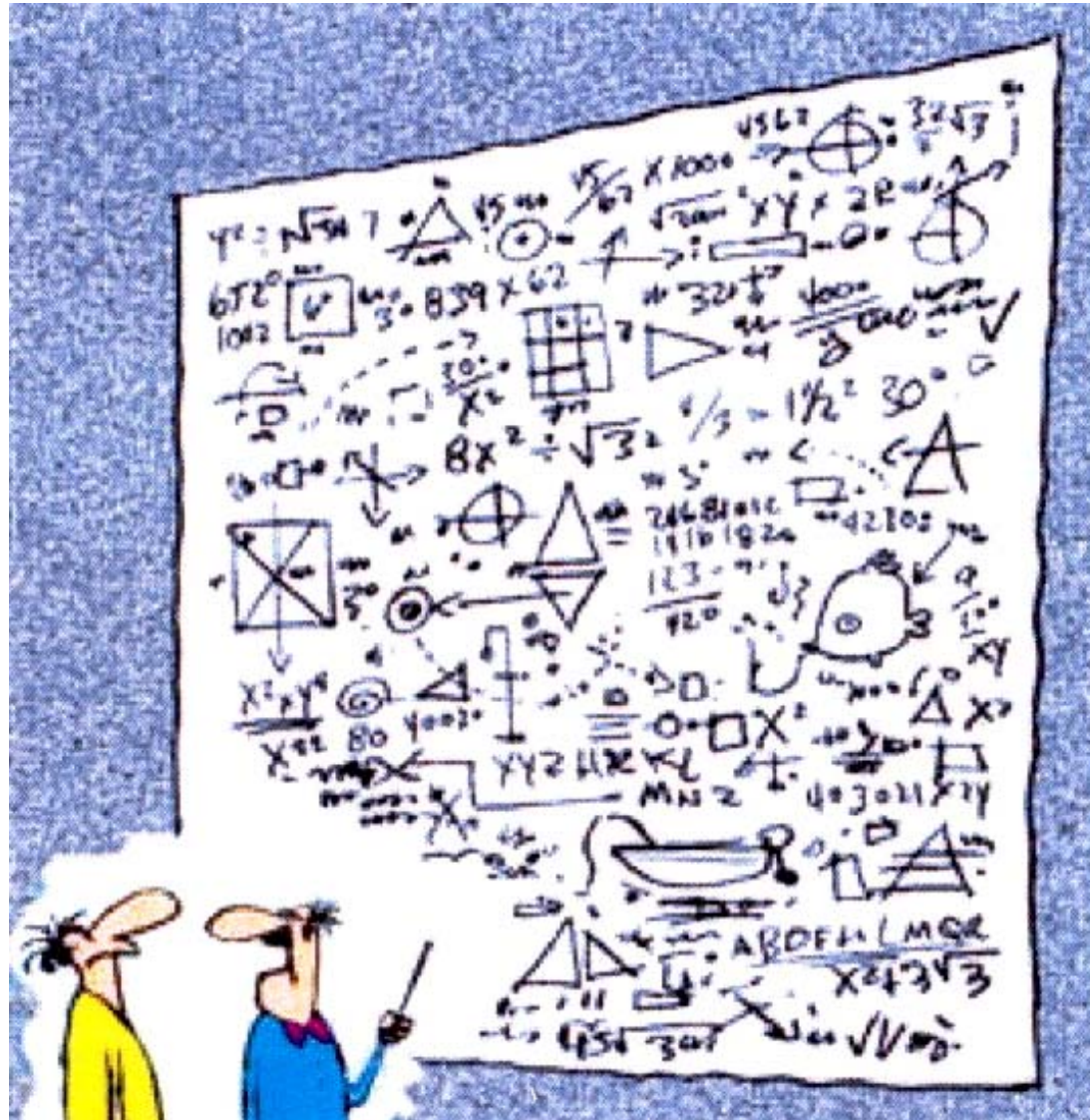
❖ Standardized questionnaires (by post, e-mail)

- Current gambling behavior (incl. changes)
- Problematic gambling behavior
- Gambling-related experiences (e.g., desire, behavior control)
- Readiness to change (cf. [Demmel, 2003](#))
- General benefits of the ban/self-exclusion
- Attitude to the ban/self-exclusion
- Utilization of help/support services
- Consumption of addictive substances
- Level of satisfaction in different areas of life
- "General Perceived Self-Efficacy" Scale (GSE; [Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1999](#))
- "General Depression Scale" (ADS-K; [Hautzinger & Bailer, 1993](#))



Preliminary Results

(as of April 2008)





Response Rates

	Response	Response Rate to T ₀
Casino sector	N (T₀) = 106 - incl. 1 operator imposed ban - all analyzable	Germany 35/182 = 19 % (operator imposed bans/self-exclusions) 35/172 = 20 % (operator imposed bans/self-exclusions, German-speaking guests only)
	N (F₁) = 23 N (F₂) = 15 N (F₃) = 7 N (L-I) = 15	Austria 56/939 = 6 % (self-exclusions only)
		Switzerland 15/777 = 2 % (operator imposed bans/self-exclusions)
win2day.at	N (T₀) = 171 self-exclusions - 143 analyzable N (T₀) = 1 operator ban	171/7,107 = 2 % (self-exclusions) 1/200 = 0.5 % (operator imposed bans)
	N (F₁) = 17 + 1 N (F₂) = 8 + 1 N (F₃) = 5 N (L-I) = 4 + 1	



Casino Sector – Sample to T₀ (I)

N = 106

Results

Gender

78 male (73.6 %); 27 female (25.5 %)

Age

Mean: 41.63 years old; Range: 20-75 years old

Problem status
(DSM-IV-Criteria
– 10 Items)

49 pathological gamblers (46.2 %) (≥ 5 criteria)
24 problem gamblers (22.6 %) (3-4 criteria)
24 social gamblers (22.6 %) (≤ 2 criteria)

⇒ Compared to Germany and Austria, more social gamblers and fewer pathological gamblers had banned themselves in Switzerland ($p = 0.015^*$)

Primary reason for
ban/self-exclusion

Table gambling: 31 (29.2 %); slot machine gambling: 51 (48.1 %);
both table gambling and slot machine gambling: 18 (17 %)

Experience with
protective measures

32 gamblers (30.2 %) had already been self-excluded or subjected to
a prior ban
15 gamblers (14.2 %) had experience of entrance restrictions



Casino Sector – Sample to T₀ (II)

Descriptive Results (N = 106)

- High level of importance attached to being able to stop gambling immediately (mean: 9.32; scale 0-10)
- Confidence in the possibility of being able to succeed rated highly (mean: 7.32; scale 0-10)
- Decision to self-exclude was taken after long consideration (mean: 5.90; scale 0-10)
- 3 most common reasons for self-exclusion (multiple answers possible):
 - lost too much money (75.5 %)
 - as a preventative measure (55.7 %)
 - no control over gambling activities (50.0 %)



Casino Sector – Sample to T₀ (III)

Descriptive Results (N = 106)

- Strong desire to gamble in a casino in the last 6 months (mean: 3.67; scale 1-5)
- Average level of control over casino gambling activities in the last 6 months (mean: 2.47; scale 1-5)
- Strong emotional stress felt with regard to casino gambling in the last 6 months (mean: 3.64; scale 1-5)
- Strong loss in quality of life associated with casino gambling in the last 6 months (mean: 3.27; scale 1-5)



Casino Sector – Problem Status to T₀

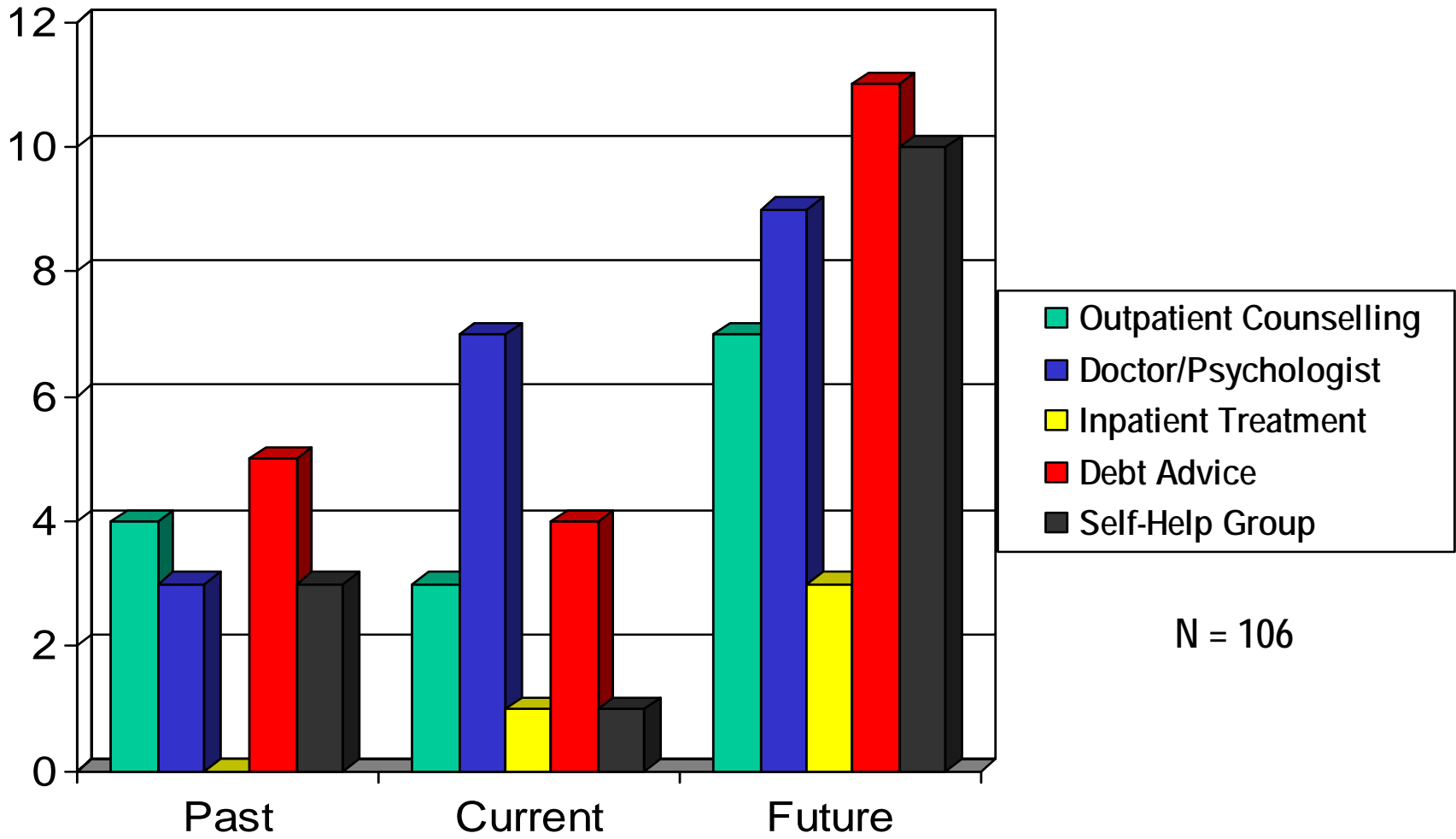
Comparison of pathological, problem and social gamblers (N = 106, DSM-IV Criteria)

- Pathological gamblers consider it more important to be able to stop gambling in a casino than the two other groups
- Pathological gamblers tend to consider the option of self-excluding for a longer period of time than social gamblers
- Pathological gamblers perceive a stronger need for additional support/treatment than social gamblers
- The desire to gamble, emotional stress, and loss in quality of life were stronger for pathological gamblers than for social or problem gamblers



Casino Sector – Help Utilized to T₀

Absolute Numbers

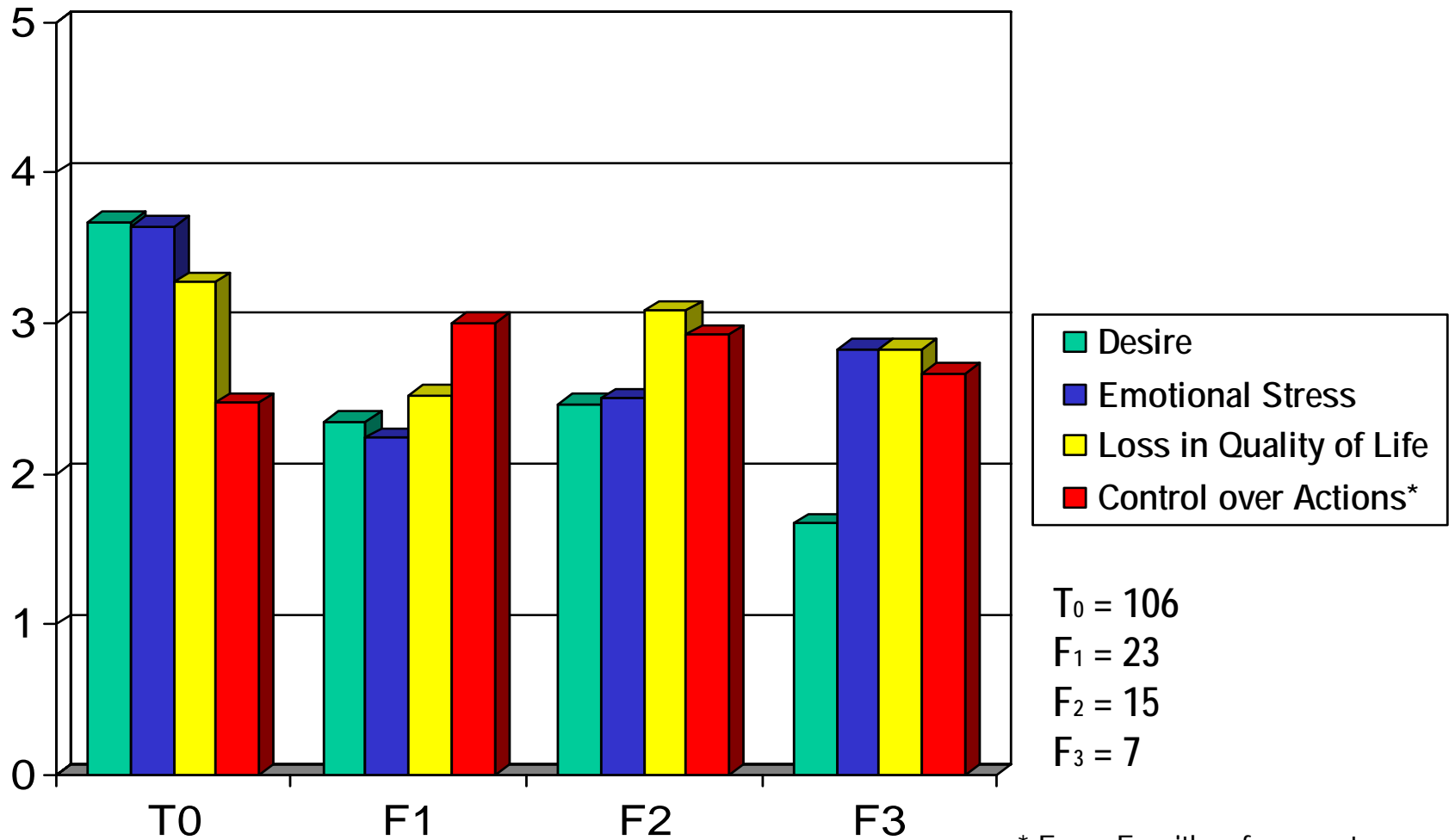


N = 106



Casino Sector – Indicators of Emotional Pressure over Time

Mean (scale 1-5)



T₀ = 106

F₁ = 23

F₂ = 15

F₃ = 7

* From F₁ with reference to gambling in general



win2day.at – Sample to T₀

N = 143 (self-exclusions)	Results (descriptive)
Gender	98 male (68.5 %) 45 female (31.5 %)
Age	Mean: 36.83 years of age Range: 19-64 years of age
Problem status (Lie/Bet)	98 problem gamblers (68.5 %) 45 gamblers without problems (31.5 %)
Experience with bans/self-exclusion	37 (25.9 %) had self-excluded on a prior occasion 5 (3.5 %) had been subjected to a prior ban (operator initiated ban)
Reason for self-exclusion (multiple answers possible)	Top 5 reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- preventative measure (57.3 %)- lost too much money (54.5 %)- spent too much time on the site (37.8 %)- no control over gambling activities (32.2 %)- annoyed with win2day (24.5 %)



win2day.at – Attitude Patterns to T₀

Comparison of problem gamblers and social gamblers (N = 143, Lie/Bet)

- Problem gamblers believe they will find it more difficult to adhere to the ban/self-exclusion ($p \leq 0.01$)
- Problem gamblers are more likely to recognize the need for additional support/treatment ($p = 0.027$)
- Problem gamblers tend to feel that the operator should be responsible for imposing a ban ($p \leq 0.01$)
- Problem gamblers believe that they will switch to other forms of online gambling ($p = 0.045$)
- Problem gamblers believe that they will switch to other forms of offline gambling ($p \leq 0.01$)



Preliminary Results – Summary (I)

Gamblers make use of self-exclusions both as reactive and preventative protection measures in the online and offline gaming sector.

Self-excluded gamblers rarely take note of additional help available. Despite this, the exclusion seems to have at least a short-term positive effect on gambling activities and the psycho-social functional level (casino sector).

In the casino sector, pathological gamblers differ from social gamblers, e.g. in their degree of readiness to change (importance), the length of time taken to initiate self-exclusion, and their prior experience with entrance restrictions.



Preliminary Results – Summary (II)

In the online sector, reasons other than gambling-related problems seem to play an increased role in the decision to self-exclude (e.g., annoyance, prevention).

In the online sector, problem gamblers differ from social gamblers with regard to self-exclusions in particular through their attitude patterns (e.g., anticipated switch to other forms of gambling or the futility of self-excluding without additional support).



Thank you for Listening!



"No, it's not medication, it's coffee. I have a blackjack tournament tonight and I don't want to get sleepy while I'm playing."



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