Never too old, never old enough ... Gambling-related problems among older adults: risk factors and experimental treatment with focus on women

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INTRODUCTION

Population ageing driven by increasing longevity and low fertility rates is a global phenomenon. Gambling participation among older adults appears to be on the growth in recent decades. Due to this rise, problem gambling in this demographic is becoming a significant public health concern.

Do elderly gamble more than young people?

≠ 4 aspects: age, type of games, motivation and frequencies. It diminishes with the age (Petry 2002, Desai 2010). Games which implies no skills VLT, SLOTS (Lister and Nower 2014) (cards if they did it in young age), escape motivation, not to win (Desai 2004, Clark&Clarkson 2008), griefs and sorrow.

So less gamblers but they gamble much more frequently.

Which are consequences of gambling impact in elderly life?
Since 1976 (Kallick et al.) lower rate of G activities 23% over 65, vs 60/73% of younger. The gap gets lower in 1999 (NORC-Usa) 50% over 65 vs 64/67, depending on major interest of industries and more gambling opportunities. In Italy we are always late.. But..
AUSER (2013) age 65/96
ASL BERGAMO→Ifc-CNR, National Council of Research (2015) age 65/84 (tot population 59.394.207,over 65 →11.600.000 !! →44% gambled at least once, in last year
Old people don’t ask for help in Italy, they rather go for family doctor to cure their depression, anxiety
WHAT ARE RISK FACTORS AND SPECIFIC BEHAVIORAL MARKERS TO PREDICT GAMBLING DISORDERS IN THE ELDERLY?

How wide spread is it the problem in over 65? (Medeiros 2015, Potenza 2006)
Several studies confirm international findings that the elderly gambling diminishes with age, especially among men.
They further discover important issues influencing – either positively or negatively – such gambling: having children nearby (especially for 65-74-year-olds); attending recreation clubs (where lotteries and raffles can often be found), especially for women and among over-80s; close involvement in handling grandchildren and other family members, mainly among older adults (men); and the number of hours spent watching television, mainly among women. Also, having a hobby is a strong deterrent factor, particularly among men and those aged 65 and above.
GENDER

Gender was found significantly related to gambling (eds. H. Bowden-Jones & F. Prever, Routledge, 2017). Women mainly fall into the trap, whether by attending bingo halls and gaming machines, taking bus-trips to casinos, guests of nursing homes for the elderly, disabled people, those with a low income and/or educational level, the single, the widowed and the isolated who have no safety nets. Unfortunately, much of what is known about problem gambling and gambling disorders in female comes from studies of male pathological gamblers and very often limited to English-language;
HOW MIGHT GENDER DIFFERENCES AFFECT OLDER GAMBLERS?

This remains largely unknown. Thus, while male older gamblers were reported to exert what they felt was their right, as the main income earner in the family to spend money in whatever way they wanted (Zheng, Walker & Blaszczynski, 2010), older female gamblers were found to enjoy their freedom and their revenge in later life through gambling participation. The large proportions of older gamblers females in the literature coincided with argument about the “feminization of gambling”: according to Volberg (2003) this expression refers to the idea that “more women are gambling, developing problems and seeking help for problems related to gambling than in the past”. The feminization of gambling and problem gambling has been linked to the availability of gaming machines and Bingo. In Italian G.Clinics…pathological gamblers in treatment, mainly over 60 (Serpelloni DPA 2012).
TOWARDS INTEGRATIVE FORMS OF PREVENTION/INTERVENTION

In general there is an absence of understanding of older adult gambling, of age-specific vulnerabilities and risk markers in both male and female gamblers. Cinderella topic...as women & gambling topic Longitudinal studies with a life-course perspective to understanding gambling in later life are also lacking. Current gambling research focusing on social aspects, especially with particular subgroups, is largely descriptive and exploratory.

Collaborative research combining epidemiological, psychological and sociological efforts will greatly benefit theoretical development in this area (D’Agati)
THE POINT

To link clinical, social and educational levels as it may be fundamental to develop effective treatments for this population. After this brief literature review in order to identify risk factors and specific behavioral markers to predict gambling-related problems, our presentation provides suggestions for developing Preventive programs and effective treatments for older people.
SOME ITALIAN EXAMPLES

A cooperation with Milan Social Service underlines this useful path: finding new indicators, building family and social support, using money control as an instrument to avoid financial collapse. 

A user help line service: my supervision was aimed to integrate their daily social work, giving some advises to catch from phone calls all risk elements
A SPECIFIC AND EMPIRICAL FOCUS

A clinical intervention in “Gioco di donne”*, an Italian experimental gender group, is presented and discussed. The attention is motivated by the strong connection age/women/gambling, and by relevance of this first and unique group experience in Europe, which is also at the origin of the innovative project of the book "Gambling Disorders in Women. An International Female Perspective on Treatment and research"[1] (eds. H. Bowden-Jones & F. Prever, Routledge, 2017).

*"Women Game", gender group, Hazard & Women project, SUN(N)COOP
SO..

The Gambler isn’t anymore a risk-taking MAN, going for money, beautiful women, thrilling situation and adventure...
She’s rather a MIDDLE AGE LADY, even in her seventies, both italian or immigrated, fighting against daily life burden of family and work, against depression, and loneliness.

So, where is the adventure?

It’s in the dream to escape from daily life fatigue, just for a while.
Normalization of gambling, pervasive and ubiquitous venues, possibility of gambling being unnoticed, allowed women to overcome social stigma, giving to it a positive, even emancipatory connotation!
Since 2010- Milan Gender Group

- 10♀, 44 to 75 (64 medium age) → Castelfranco Group
- age and sex orientation, role of gambling (identification) & love addiction central experience (gender group Dissemination)
- Twice a week, two co-therapists, central location
- Privacy, no connotation
- Free help line (all week long for counseling)
- Our group → Privileged Observatory → Italian specific background & female gambling evolution → social and political implications (marketing policy → Italian state policy)

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M.D'AGATI→ specialist clinical intervention, from a sociological point of view, in our gender group: brainstorming on these main themes

1) losing their social roles because of retiring and re negotiation of roles among males and females.

2) gambling as a way of coping with daily boring tasks, isolation and lack of active performance, loneliness and narrow social relationships

3) erroneous thoughts
BY showing them three **video** very powerful in Italian reality:

“my Sundays with Ughina” (Fantozzi get retired)
“Fantozzi wins the SuperEnalotto” (Fantozzi the clonation)
“Casa Vianello” ending theme scene (Sandra Mondaini & Edmondo Vianello)

“Casa Vianello”

How boring, how boring..
BiBLIOGRAPHY


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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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stay in touch for information about our International Women & Gambling Network!