

| Marketing stimuli and their perceived effects among sports
: bettors in treatment for gambling disorder

| **Hibai Lopez-Gonzalez, PhD**

| *Post-doc researcher*

| Psychiatry Dept. , Bellvitge University Hospital

| Bellvitge Biomedical Research Institute (Barcelona)

Declaration of conflicts://

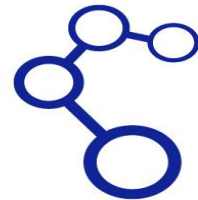
I declare no conflicting interests. All my funders are public institutions.



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement
Secretaria d'Universitats i Recerca



Agència
de Gestió
d'Ajuts
Universitaris
i de Recerca



Institució
CERCA
Centres de Recerca
de Catalunya

Introduction: // Rise of gambling marketing

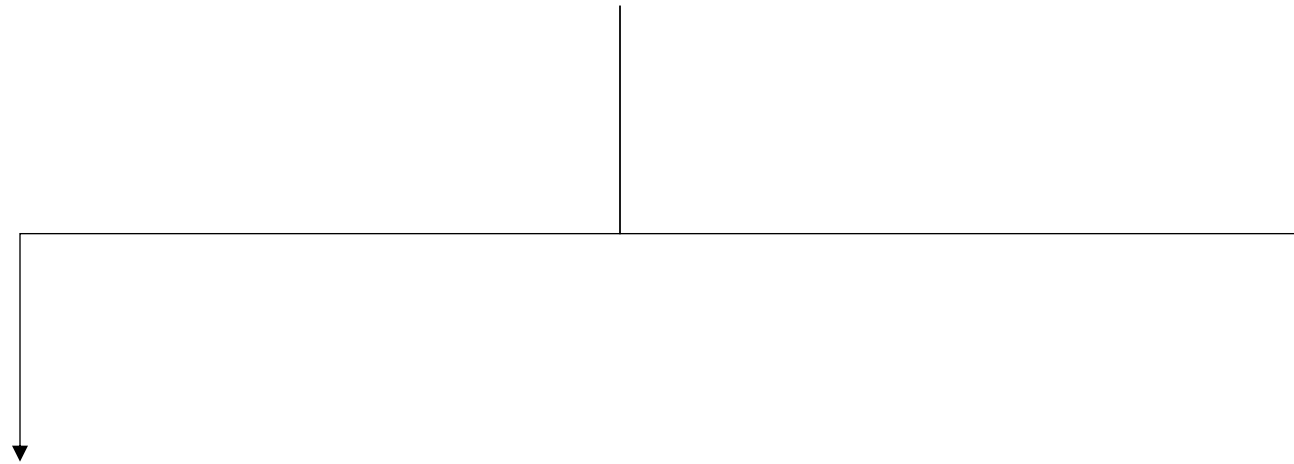
- Growth of gambling advertising **expenditure** by the industry (DGOJ, 2017), and therefore, increased **exposure** to gambling stimuli by consumers (Håkansson & Widinghoff, 2019)
- Many jurisdictions are imposing **strict regulations** and/or prohibitions (Italy, Belgium, Latvia), and others face increasing scrutiny by the public (e.g., UK)

Introduction: // Marketing and Problem Gambling

- Inconclusive evidence on how gambling advertising influences gambling
 - i. Does marketing **create new gamblers** or makes them change brands? (Hing et al., 2016)
 - ii. Are there **long-term effects** for gambling advertising (e.g., normalisation)? (Deans 2017 et al., 2017)
- Evidence of the association between gambling advertising and problem gamblers:
 - i. Problem gamblers are **more exposed to gambling marketing** (Hing et al., 2014; Hanss et al., 2015)
 - ii. Problem gamblers report **higher perceived influence** (Hing et al., 2018; Lopez-Gonzalez et al., 2018)

Introduction: // Rise of sports betting marketing

- Sports betting represents **43% of the online gambling market** in the European Union (European Gaming and Betting Association, 2018).



Historically, sports bettors have represented **a very small fraction of the gamblers** undergoing treatment (Estévez et al., 2018).

Sports bettors are **specially targeted** by marketing stimuli (Gordon et al., 2015; Lopez-Gonzalez et al., 2018; Newall, 2018;).

Aim: //

How do sports bettors undergoing treatment perceive marketing and advertising strategies?

Method: // Recruitment

7 focus groups (43 sports bettors)
in treatment for problem gambling

1. 18+ years
2. Sports betting their preferred gambling mode
3. Diagnosed with GD
4. Currently undergoing treatment



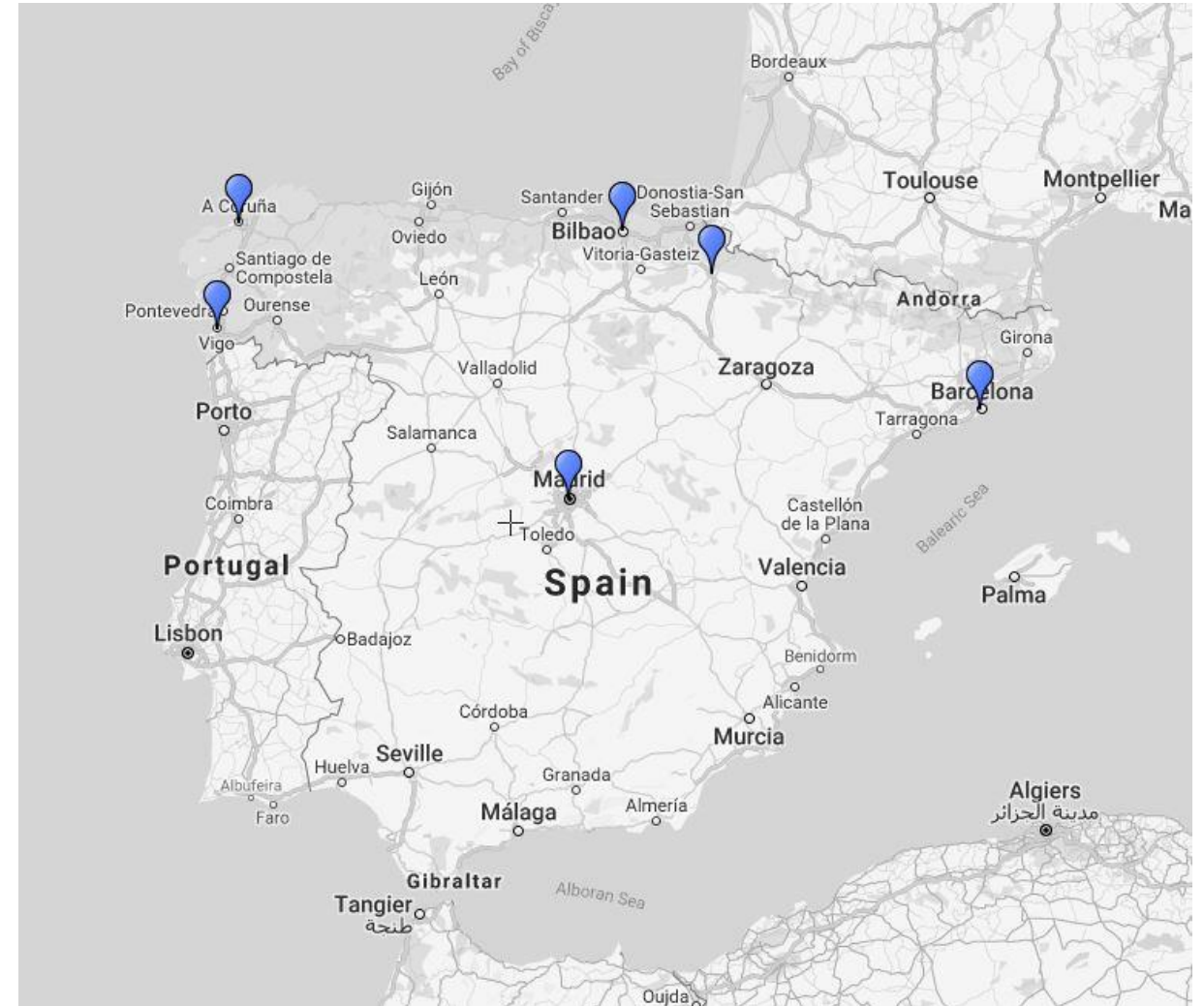
Method: // Recruitment

7 focus groups (43 sports bettors)
in treatment for problem gambling

6. Spanish gamblers' association &
Bellvitge Hospital

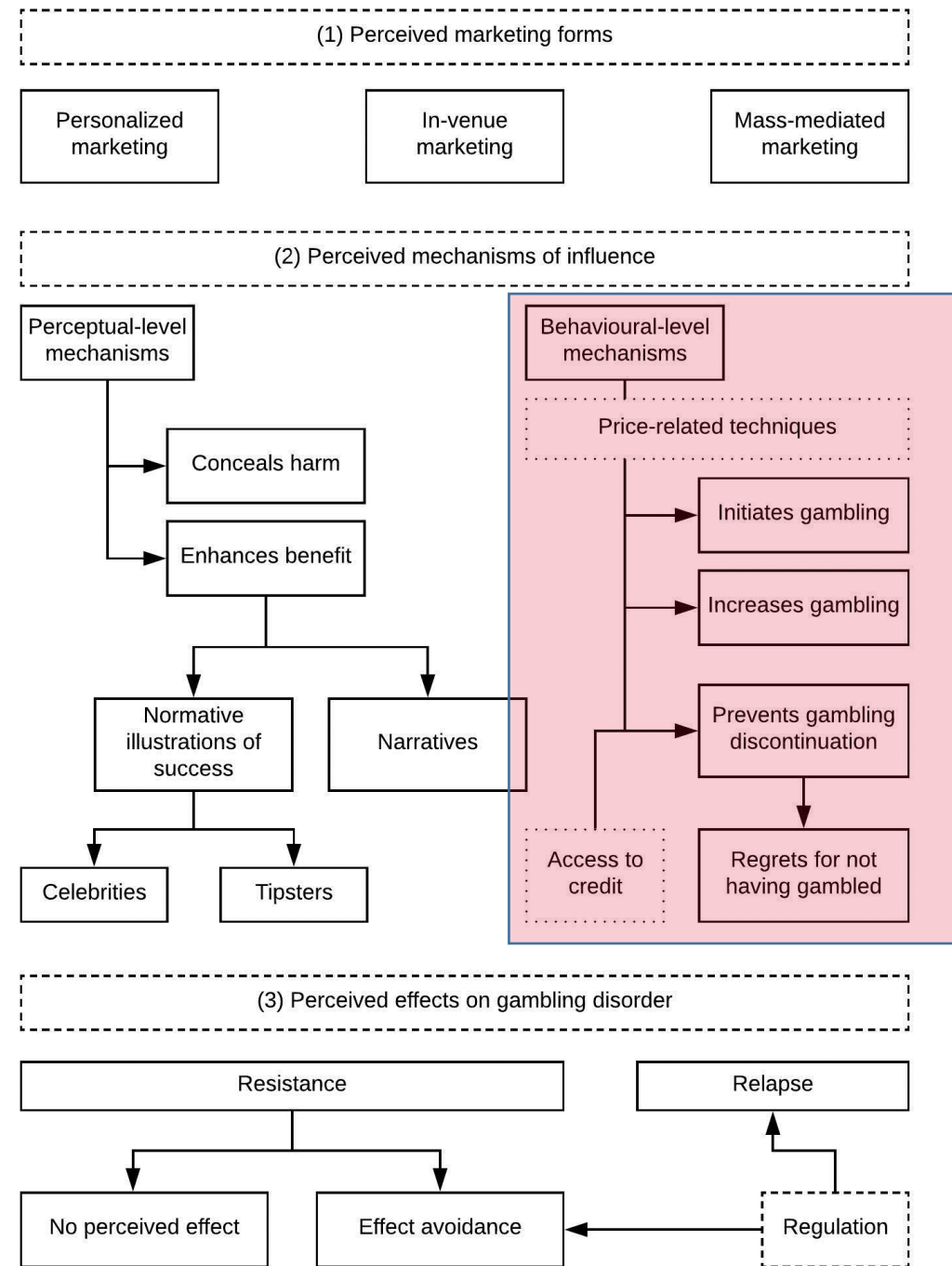
7. Mean age = 33.2 (SD=9.3)

8. Thematic analysis



Results:// price-related promotions

Price-related promotions are seen as extremely difficult to resist



Results:// Personalised advertising

1.



Periodic emails
with bonuses
attached

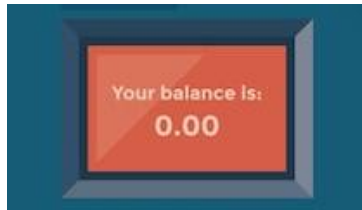
Results:// Personalised advertising

1.



Periodic emails
with bonuses
attached

2.



Bonuses when no
funds in the account
or weeks without
gambling

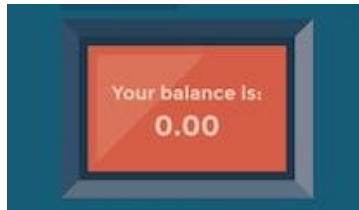
Results:// Personalised advertising

1.



Periodic emails with bonuses attached

2.



Bonuses when no funds in the account or weeks without gambling

3.



Bonus rewarded as a response to a gambler's demand

Results:// Personalised advertising

1.



Periodic emails with bonuses attached

2.



Bonuses when no funds in the account or weeks without gambling

3.



Bonus rewarded as a response to a gambler's demand



form of credit?

Results:// Personalised advertising

4.

The screenshot shows a mobile banking interface for 'My Checking 0123'. It includes a search bar, current balance of \$1,898.33, and a list of transactions including a deposit and an internet fund transfer.

Search Transactions	
Accounts: My Checking 0123	
Search Transactions	
Current Balance ⓘ	\$1,898.33
Available Balance	\$1,898.33
UPCOMING ACTIVITY (0)	
PENDING TRANSACTIONS	
Deposit	\$1,472.97
	\$1,898.33
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2015	
Internet Fund Transfer	-\$496.23
	\$425.36

Unsolicited deposits

Results:// Personalised advertising

4.



The screenshot shows a mobile banking interface for a checking account. It displays the current balance as \$1,898.33 and an available balance of the same amount. There is a pending deposit of \$1,472.97 and a pending internet fund transfer of -\$496.23. The interface includes a search bar and navigation options.

Search Transactions	
Accounts	My Checking 0123
Search Transactions	
Current Balance ⓘ	\$1,898.33
Available Balance	\$1,898.33
UPCOMING ACTIVITY ⓘ	
PENDING TRANSACTIONS	
Deposit	\$1,472.97
	\$1,898.33
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2015	
Internet Fund Transfer	-\$496.23
	\$425.36

Unsolicited deposits


5.



VIP treatment

Results:// Personalised advertising

4.



The screenshot shows a banking app interface for 'My Checking 0123'. It displays a current balance of \$1,898.33 and an available balance of \$1,898.33. Under 'UPCOMING ACTIVITY', there is a pending deposit of \$1,472.97. Below that, under 'PENDING TRANSACTIONS', there is a deposit of \$1,898.33. At the bottom, under 'MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2015', there is an internet fund transfer of -\$496.23.

Search Transactions	
Accounts	My Checking 0123
Search Transactions	
Current Balance	\$1,898.33
Available Balance	\$1,898.33
UPCOMING ACTIVITY	
PENDING TRANSACTIONS	
Deposit	\$1,472.97
	\$1,898.33
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2015	
Internet Fund Transfer	-\$496.23
	\$425.36

Unsolicited deposits

5.



VIP treatment

6.



Reminders of missed bets

Results:// Missed bets



//

[The media] frame everything as a bet. I remember when Leicester City won the league. They didn't talk about football [soccer], they just talked about odds. And they were always trying to compare [Leicester winning the championship] with ... I don't remember ... ah yes, with sighting the monster of Loch Ness. Sighting the monster was more likely than Leicester winning the league. These things captured your attention. Not like, I'm gonna get rich but, thinking, there's people out there who have become rich.

(Madrid, 32 years)

Results:// In-venue marketing

1.



List of winners

Results:// In-venue marketing

1.



List of winners

2.



Complimentary food and drinks

Results:// Complimentary food/drinks



//

Participant: *Last year I was awarded a roscón de reyes [in Spain, traditional oval cake to celebrate the arrival of the three Magi to Bethlehem] in the shop. I had gambled away €20 that day, the ones I had to use to buy it. I was in the roulette and they brought me a roscón.*

Researcher: *Was it given to you or was it like a lottery?*

Participant: *I can't remember. I think they just gave it to me. I was desperate, I had to go back home without it. This way I didn't have to lie.*

(Madrid, 34 years)

Results:// In-venue marketing

1.



List of winners

2.



Complimentary food and drinks

3.



Encouragement by employees

Results:// Marketing avoidance

- **Unavoidable** (e.g., bonus in a pizza box in a hospital)
- Television advertising **avoided by**: (1) switching channels; (2) watching sports with no gambling ads; (3) turning down volume; (4) leaving the room
- Episodes of marketing-prompted **relapses**:
 - (1) Having lunch with family by a betting terminal
 - (2) Receiving an email with a bonus right **after a voluntary self-exclusion period**

Discussion://

- Sports bettors in recovery **want to be left alone**; this is not always possible.
- Predominance of **free money**, which is difficult to resist. In Spain, 39% of marketing cost come from bonuses (DGOJ, 2018)
- Most problem gamblers agree about strict gambling regulation/prohibition, but **feel ambivalent** about personalised and in-venue strategies
- **The right to stop gambling**

Thanks : !!

hlopez@idibell.cat
@hibailogo

Lopez-Gonzalez, H., Griffiths, M.D., Jimenez-Murcia, S., & Estévez, A. (2019).
The perceived influence of sports betting marketing techniques on
disordered gamblers in treatment. *European Sport Management Quarterly*.
DOI: doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2019.1620304