

CLINICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GAMBLING DISORDER IN A TERTIARY PSYCHIATRY CLINIC

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Gambling disorder is a behavioral addiction that affects individual's, and it has become an increasing public health concern. The widespread use of internet and mobile technologies has led to an increase in online gambling, resulting in earlier onset and a higher rate of clinical presentations. This study aimed to describe the sociodemographic and clinical characteristics of individuals presenting with gambling-related problems to the Cerrahpaşa Department of Psychiatry, including active gamblers and first-degree relatives of gamblers.

METHODS: This study was conducted with approval from the Ethics Committee (Decision No: 1566935; Date: 03.02.2026). A total of 20,545 initial psychiatric evaluations between 2023 and 2025 were screened. Cases were identified through electronic record searches for "gambling" and related terms in clinical notes.

RESULTS: Among 20,545 psychiatric evaluations, 112 patients presented with gambling-related problems, of whom 92 met diagnostic criteria for gambling disorder and included in the analysis. The sample was predominantly male (93.5%). The proportion of gambling disorder cases increased over time, accounting for 0.28% of all psychiatric admissions in

2023, 0.45% in 2024, and 0.67% in 2025. Most patients had completed high school (56.6%) or higher education (30.3%). Nearly half (48.9%) had no psychiatric comorbidity, while depression (28.3%) and anxiety disorders (12.0%) were the most frequent comorbid conditions. Online gambling was reported by 88.7%, and gambling-related debt was present in 85.1%. Follow-up attendance was observed in 43.2% of patients, while 56.8% did not return for follow-up. Among individuals who presented for psychiatric evaluation because a first-degree relative was engaged in gambling behavior (n = 51), the majority were female (%84.1). Depression and anxiety disorders were the most frequently identified diagnoses.

CONCLUSIONS: Gambling-related psychiatric presentations have increased over time, particularly among active online gamblers. These findings highlight the substantial clinical and familial burden of gambling disorder and emphasize the need for early identification, targeted interventions, and family-oriented treatment approaches.

Keywords: Gambling disorder, addiction, pathological gambling