

Autism, Gambling and Gaming Disorder

Autism and Gambling:

Overall, there is a lack of research into autism and gambling behaviours with some contradictory evidence.

However, the study with highest ecological validity shows:

Autism scores correlated with disordered gambling behaviours, even when ADHD was controlled for. Autistic individuals present particularly high levels of attentional impulsivity (acting without thinking), but not other types of impulsivity (Grant and Chamberlain, 2020).

The following factors are thought to contribute to gambling related harms for autistic people:

- Perfection Striving (Greenaway and Howlin, 2010)
- Difficulties with decision making e.g. information overload, especially when there is uncertainty (Luke et al., 2012; Fujino et al., 2017)
- Difficulties with executive functioning e.g. planning (Chamberlain et al., 2023)
- Preference for repetitive activities (Finberg et al., 2018)
- Slower decision making (Kervin et al., 2021)

Autism and Gaming Disorder:

Gaming disorder is more common in autistic individuals than non-autistic individuals (Engelhardt et al., 2017; Paulus et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2021)

The following factors are thought to contribute to gaming disorder for autistic people:

- Gaming may be a restricted interest (Mazurek & Engelhardt, 2013)
- Difficulties with attention switching
- Less social pressure during gaming- possibility for online friendships and sense of community (Benford & Standen. 2009)
- Hyperfocus (Charnock et al., 2024)

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