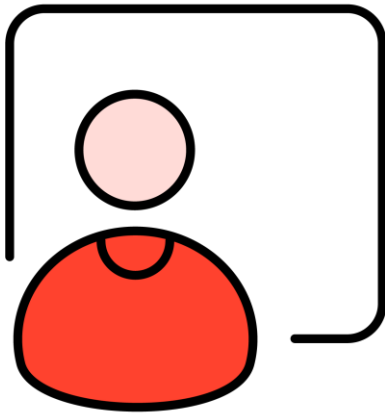




A systematic review of gambling amongst elite athletes with a focus on females

Anca-Maria Gherghel – Research Manager

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Gambling by Gender

Men have been found to gamble more than women (Gambling Commission, 2023)

There has been a significant increase in women participating in gambling activities in the UK (Gambling Commission, 2023)

Significant differences between men and women gambling (McCarthy et al., 2019)

Athletes Gambling

Athletes are at a significantly higher risk of developing a gambling problem (Hakansson et al., 2023)

In certain European countries, athletes can be up to 6 times more likely to engage in problematic gambling behaviour (Turk et al., 2023)

Engaging in risk-taking behaviours, trying to capture the thrill and euphoria (Lim et al., 2017)

Research Question:



What is known about elite athletes and gambling and what methodologies have been used?

Inclusion criteria

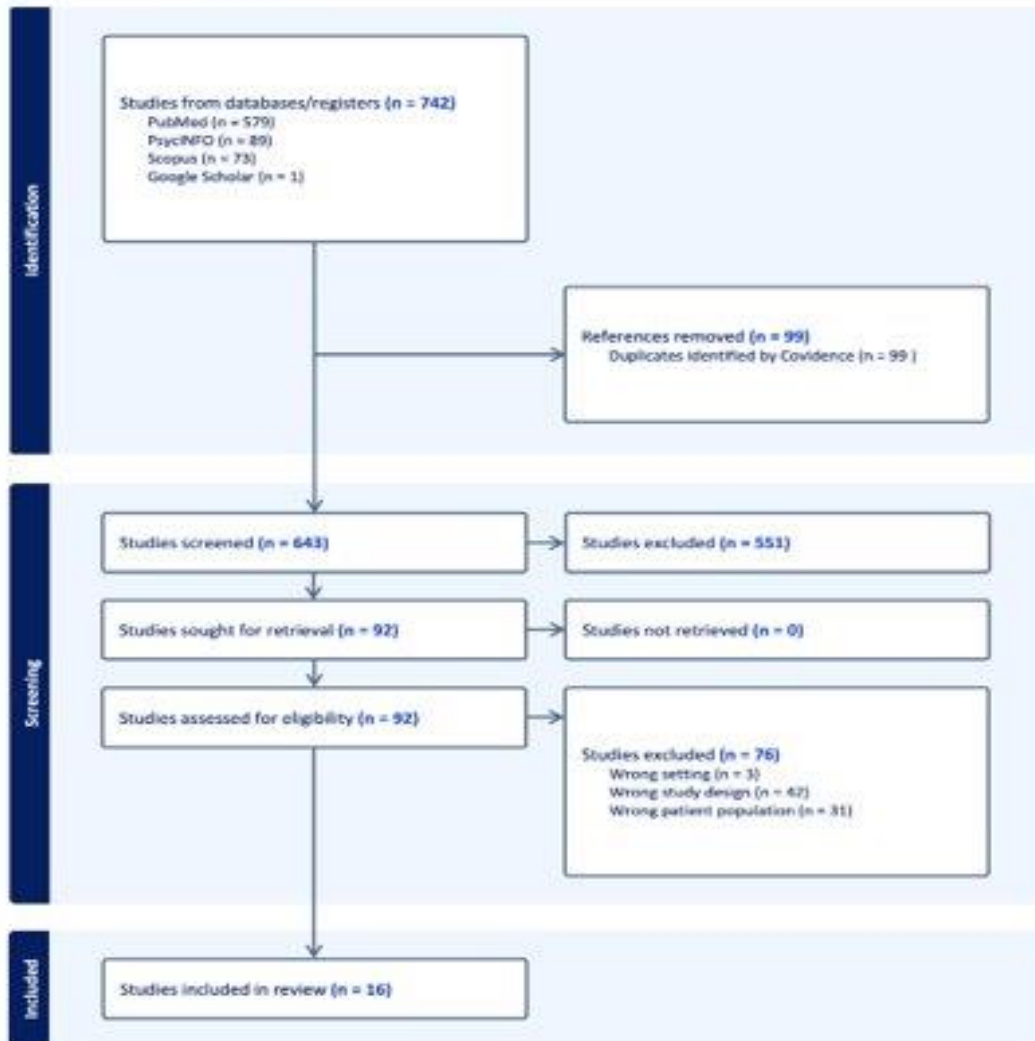
Only empirical studies investigating gambling amongst elite athletes

Book chapters or peer-reviewed journal articles

Only papers in Romanian and English were considered for inclusion

No restrictions were applied with respect to year or place of publication

Elite female athletes and gambling



PRISMA flowchart of the search and selection process.

- Covidence was used to conduct the review
- Main search databases: PubMed, PsycINFO, Scopus and a further control search was carried out on Google Scholar
- The search was carried out between 1st and 20th of June 2023
- 742 papers identified initially but only 16 met the inclusion criteria
- Search words used: 'gambling athlete' and 'gambling sport actor'

Key Findings from the Systematic Review

12 of the 16 studies identified in the systematic review were based on a quantitative research design

Only 4 qualitative studies on gambling amongst elite athletes, male athletes only

Only 6 studies had gender balanced samples, and they were all based on a quantitative research design

Quantitative studies employed the survey method to collect data; online or paper-based questionnaires

Qualitative studies mainly used interviews to collect data

Key Findings from the Systematic Review

Higher problem gambling rates among athletes than the general population for both genders

Higher problem gambling rates for male athletes when compared to female athletes

Gambling culture at sports clubs was identified as a key factor influencing male athletes to gamble but it can not be concluded whether this is also the case for female athletes

Problem gambling is more common in team sports

There is an association between salaries and increased gambling and problematic gambling

Qualitative Study Informed by the Review



Lack of qualitative studies on female athletes gambling and studies investigating gambling cultures in sports clubs

Qualitative study investigating gambling culture in elite female sports clubs

Semi-structured interviews with elite female athletes playing rugby union, cricket and football in England

15 interviews conducted with six female cricketers, five female rugby union players and four female footballers

Data analysed using thematic analysis

Themes



- Normalisation of sports betting
- Motives for gambling (why female athletes would engage in gambling)
- Opening-up about gambling issues
- Education and support (received from clubs and sporting organisations)
- Gambling participation (themselves and others in their teams)
- Gambling industry funding (views on sponsorship and advertising in sport from the industry)

Key findings from the interviews – Normalisation of sports betting

Every participant believes sports betting is a normalised activity in the UK

Female athletes are exposed to gambling everywhere in their lives, especially horse racing and football bets

“

‘I do think it is massively normalised and people are always doing like fantasy 11 and all that with football so yeah I am around a lot and people talk about it a lot’

(Participant 9 – cricket)

“

‘I think it's part of the culture. So people, I know that place bets it something they just do every Saturday or every time their football team are playing. They'll place a bet it's as normal as like going to the pub to watch the game it's just part of the ritual’

(Participant 1 – rugby)

“

‘It's obviously still a big thing for people to like gamble on the sports industry, and like matches and horse racing and all. You know all that sort of thing.’

(Participant 4- football)

Key findings from the interviews – Normalisation of sports betting

There are conversations around gambling in their teams

“

‘I guess it's actually quite a big part of conversations [sports betting] that I'm thinking about now that people say we put a bet on a football game or the races’

(Participant 7 – cricket)

“

‘We've obviously had Cheltenham, a couple of weeks ago. So everyone was obviously talking about it. So yeah, I think it's just a normalised normal activity to do. Probably in workplaces as well, everyone will pop a bet on... I hear the conversations and getting on the conversations whenever they talk about what horses they're gonna pick and stuff like that’

(Participant 11 – rugby)

“

‘There's been quite a few times where players have gone and put as I said, accumulators are normally the one that that get spoken about that they won X amount on an accumulator on a weekend’

(Participant 2 - football)

Contribution to knowledge and future steps



- The systematic review helped identify significant gaps in research and motivated research on gambling amongst female athletes
- First qualitative study to investigate gambling culture within female sports clubs
- Provided a base to understand that gambling is a normalised activity for female athletes and that a gambling culture exists in female sports clubs
- In the process of designing a quantitative study informed by the systematic review and the qualitative study
- Study investigating the predictors of problem gambling for elite female athletes



Any questions?

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