The Intergenerational Association between Parents' Problem Gambling and Impulsivity-Hyperactivity/Inattention Behaviors in Children.

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Abstract

Despite the well-established association between problem gambling and ADHD core categories of impulsivity-hyperactivity and inattention, the link between parents' problem gambling and impulsivity-hyperactivity/inattention (IH/I) behaviors in children has not been investigated. This study investigated the association between parents' problem gambling and children's IH/I behaviors while controlling for potential confounding variables. A population-based prospective cohort followed-up from kindergarten to age 30, the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Kindergarten Children (QLSKC), provided data over three generations. Among 1358 participants at age 30, parents with a child aged 1 year or older (N = 468; Mean age = 4.65 years; SD = 2.70) were selected. Generalized Linear Models included measures of grandparents' and parents' problem gambling, parents' IH/I behaviors in childhood, and a host of risk factors and comorbidities to predict IH/I in children. Intergenerational bivariate associations were observed between grandparents' problem gambling, parents' IH/I in childhood and problem gambling at age 30, and between parents' IH/I, problem gambling, and children's IH/I behaviors. Parents' problem gambling predicted children's IH/I behaviors above and beyond the effects of covariates such as family and socioeconomic characteristics, alcohol and drug use, depression symptoms and parents' gambling involvement. Parents' IH/I behaviors in childhood also predicted children's IH/I and had a moderating, enhancing effect on parents' problem gambling association with their offspring's IH/I behaviors. Problem gambling is a characteristic of parents' mental health that is distinctively associated with children's IH/I behaviors, above and beyond parents' own history of IH/I and of typically related addictive, psychopathological or socioeconomic risk factors and comorbidities.