



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES;
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE;
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY**

**EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS
INVOLVED IN SPORTS BETTING, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA;
A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: MESAY TESHOME (MD, 3RD YEAR
PSYCHIATRY RESIDENT)**

**A THESIS PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
PSYCHIATRY, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, COLLEGE OF HEALTH
SCIENCES, ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A SPECIALTY CERTIFICATE IN
PSYCHIATRY**

DECEMBER, 2023

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ACRONYMS

A. A. Addis Ababa

A.A.U Addis Ababa University

A.P.A American Psychiatric Association

U.K. United Kingdom

U.S. United States

IDIR A Social institution in Ethiopia used for mutual aid and grants cooperative insurance within specific community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank God for his guidance and relentless support. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the department of psychiatry, which assigned advisors to make my research fruitful.

I also like to thank Dr. Beakal Amare and Dr. Awoke Mihretu for their invaluable comments and help in the development of this research.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the respondents for sacrificing their time and actively participating in this study

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ABSTRACT

Background- Sports betting is the activity of predicting sports results and placing a wager on the outcome. It is one of the most popular, rapidly evolving, and attractive forms of gambling. The DSM-5 mentions sports betting as a form of gambling preferred by younger groups of individuals. Researchers have identified that sports betting is associated with an increased risk of gambling-related harms like relationship difficulties, crime, and physical and mental health problems. There are only a few cross-sectional surveys in Ethiopia that show the prevalence of sports betting. But inductive exploration of the reasons for their engagement and of their experience is not systematically explored. Hence, this study explored the perceptions and experiences of individuals involved in sports betting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Study objective-To explore the experiences of individuals engaged in sports betting.

Methods- A phenomenological approach of qualitative study was used. A purposive sampling technique was used to select study participants (n=13), and an in-depth interview was conducted using an interview guide. The data was transcribed, translated, and taken to open code for thematic analysis.

Results- We found that people engage in sports betting for reasons like financial interests, influence from peers and friends, and as a way of spending time and dealing with boredom. This study also identified several features that make sports betting more appealing, including ease of access, the possibility of gambling with a small amount of money, the benefit of avoiding confrontation and preserving friendships, giving football fans the opportunity to gamble on something they like, enabling people to test their knowledge about the sport, the availability of multiple options, and more rewards and reinforcements compared to other forms of gambling. Especially the betting game called keno has the potential to change traditional gambling into a very problematic and continuous form by increasing the event frequency. Subjective harms reported by the participants due to their involvement in sports betting include financial and psychosocial harms. Patterns suggestive of problematic betting found in this study include preoccupation and extensive planning, a tendency to bet successively and take more risky options after losing on a bet, unsuccessful attempts to quit, lying about involvement, social and occupational impairment, and negative emotional experiences.

Conclusion

Sports betting has emerged as a recent behavioral trend that raises concerns for many individuals. This behavior appears to transcend the boundaries of mere leisure activity, displaying characteristics indicative of problematic gambling. This study identified key features that indicate problematic sports betting, including preoccupation and meticulous planning, a proclivity to place consecutive bets, opting for riskier choices following a loss, persistent yet unsuccessful attempts to quit, and dishonesty about betting activities to families and friends. Furthermore, individuals engaged in problematic sports betting reported experiencing subjective harm. This includes financial implications and psychosocial consequences such as feelings of guilt, anger, and irritability that impacts interpersonal relationships and occupational performance. Additionally, participants expressed transient feelings of depression, a loss of self-respect, and a sense of inferiority linked to their involvement in sports betting. The multifaceted nature of these concerns highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding and intervention strategies to address the various dimensions of problematic sports betting behavior.

1)Introduction

1.1)Background of the study

Sports betting is the activity of predicting sports results and placing a wager on the outcome (Michael, 2020). According to the DSM-5 gambling involves risking something of value in the hopes of obtaining something of greater value and it is a more common activity among young and middle-aged people. DSM-5 also includes sports betting as a form of gambling preferred by younger group of individuals (APA, 2022).

Sports betting has a long history and has been around for centuries. Historians find it rather difficult to determine exactly when sports betting began. The earliest records of sports wagering date back more than 2,000 years. The Greeks introduced it to the world and along with the competition came the first records of betting. The Romans were the first to legalize sports betting. Since then, sports betting has continued to spread all over the world (Kyulyunkov, 2023).

Modern sports betting came about primarily from horse racing. In the UK, betting on horses became popular in the early 18th century. New World countries followed suit, and by the late 19th century, countries like the US, Canada and New Zealand had formally established laws to govern gambling (Fleming, 2023).

In recent decades, one of the biggest changes in sports betting has been addition of the internet. Adding sports betting to online gaming was a natural fit as well. In fact, sports fans find it much more convenient to place their bets online. With the availability of numerous sports betting sites, fans can shop around for the best odds as well as promotions being offered (Fleming, 2023).

The commercial growth and diversification of gambling in the past decade have led to increasing calls from public health researchers and advocates for public health responses to prevent and reduce gambling related harm although many governments are seeing it as a way of improving tax revenues, helping nations provide more services to their citizens (Fleming, 2023).

Researchers have identified some forms of gambling, such as sports betting are associated with increased risk for gambling related harms like relationship difficulties, crime, physical and mental health problems (McDaid, 2018). But there is still a lack of evidence on the full picture of sports betting to consider it as an addictive behavior.

Online sports betting is a relatively young industry in Ethiopia but is already rampant and is evolving rapidly. European football has a huge fan base in our country. Since being a football fan and perceived knowledge contribute a lot to involvement in betting the number of overall and problematic gamblers is likely to increase in the foreseeable future. Given this industry is targeting the young and productive part of the population it could have dire consequences at a country level. The impact their involvement in betting resulted in their motivation to work is alarming.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore the perceptions and problematic experiences of sports betting.

1.2)Statement of the problem

Gambling is increasingly recognized as a major international public health concern, and many countries now offer help for gambling problems, including professional treatment. The worldwide prevalence of serious problem gambling is estimated between 0.1 and 5.8 % (Bijker R, 2022). This prevalence suggests a considerable need for help among those experiencing problems related to gambling.

Researchers have argued the harm to health and wellbeing caused by gambling is comparable to that associated with major depressive disorder, substance abuse, and dependence (Fong, 2005). Individuals who engage in problematic gambling behaviors are at least twice as likely to experience another psychiatric condition at some point in their lives (Rosendahl, 2019). Also, young adults who are engaged in problematic gambling behaviors are reported to be at increased risk of developing a major mental disorder (Afifi, 2016). Suicidality is reported to be 5.3 times higher in individuals with problematic gambling behaviors than in those without problematic gambling behaviors (Wardle, 2020).

Recent trends suggest that sports betting is becoming a way of life in Africa, where there are few opportunities for meaningful employment for young people, and gambling seems like a logical way to make money. According to (McGee C. D., JAN 2023) gambling is legally regulated in 41 African countries, prohibited in seven and not registered in one nation. They also suggested an urgent need to address the regulatory void surrounding online forms of gambling and the promotion of gambling products in Africa. In some African countries like Kenya several estimates suggest up-to 76% of the young population is involved in gambling (Wangari, 2017).

Some researchers suggest several features of sports betting that makes it different from other forms of gambling and can lead to more addictive behavior (Meyersohn, 2023). Many sports bettors tend to perceive their wagers on games are safer and more informed by their own expertise and skills than luck. This may give them a false sense of control. Additionally, live betting within games (called in-play betting) reduces the delay between risk and reward, and is increasing the speed and frequency of wagers (Meyersohn, 2023). A Gambling Commission (2016) prevalence survey reported that individuals who bet in-play were more likely to be categorized as problem gamblers.

There are only a few cross-sectional surveys in Ethiopia that show the prevalence of sports betting. For example, one study reported that up to 31% of high school students in Addis Ababa were involved in sports betting (Tariku, 2013). But inductive exploration of the reasons for their engagement and of their practice is problematic and is not systematically explored. There are also controversies regarding the impact of sports betting as reflected in several media outlets in Ethiopia, several stakeholders presenting their opposing views on the matter. There appears to be some confusion on the government's side whether to license or close sporting betting business in the country. In addition, little is known about how sports betting is different from gambling. The perceived impact of sports betting on the lives of actors is also not well studied. Hence, this study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of individuals involved in sports betting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1.3. Significance of the study

Some studies suggest that sports betting is a rapidly spreading type of gambling globally, continentally and locally. But overemphasis on quantitative studies might introduce flawed evidence unless they are informed by qualitative studies. Qualitatively exploring the experience of individuals involved in sports betting would help us gain insight in to why individuals engage in those behaviors, what constitutes problematic sports betting, and whether those people perceive involvement in sports betting as problematic. It would also help us identify what subjective harm it might cause to their mental well-being. In addition, the study will be an input to clear out the existing controversy about sports betting both from the government and the public.

2.Literature review

When looking at sports betting from a global stand point, a systematic review examining whether sports betting behaviors differ among and between sports bettors in different countries and how problems may vary by country (Marc, 2022) concluded that psychosocial problems do not appear to differ greatly by country and sports betting was associated with elevated levels of problematic gambling. In addition, sports betting is easy to access, normalized, and contains many attractive features for sports bettors. Psychoeducation about potential risks of sports betting and encouragement of responsible gambling strategies could help lessen risky sports betting behaviors

Regarding features that make sports betting different and more addictive than other forms of gambling a recent scoping study identified 16 academic papers that referenced in-play sports betting (Griffiths, 2020)and concluded that in-play sports betting has the potential to be more harmful than more traditional ways of gambling. The review also identified theoretical papers that discussed the role of the structural characteristics of in-play sports betting. These papers argued that in-play betting had changed traditional sports betting from a discontinuous form of gambling into a more continuous one, and that the increased event frequency of in-play betting would be more likely to have an association with problem gambling than discontinuous (i.e., low event frequency) forms of gambling (Griffiths, 2020)

In addition, (Lopez-Gonzalez, 2017) reported that within a sample of 659 Spanish sports bettors, those who engaged in-play sports betting (compared to those who did not) reported significantly greater (1) problem gambling severity, (2) sport watching consumption, (3)consumption of junk food, (4) alcohol consumption when watching sport, and (5) watching sport to escape from everyday preoccupations. They concluded that in-play betting was associated with impulsivity, which occurred under circumstances where there was a high level of emotional involvement (i.e., watching a live sport and betting on it).

Another explanation that has been provided as to why sports betting may be associated with problem gambling is that betting features within live sporting events such as in-play betting and ‘cash out’ might make sports bettors more susceptible to experiencing cognitive biases (Griffiths, 2020). Furthermore, technological advancements along with narratives found within sports betting advertisements that enhance control could lead to an increase in perceived skill, causing bettors to place their wagers more uncontrollably (Lopez-Gonzalez, 2017).

A study about sports betting related gambling disorder: clinical features and correlates of cognitive behavioral therapy outcomes concluded that sports betting patients constitute a clinically important group due to the greater severity of the disorder compared to patients engaged in other forms of gambling. However, sports betting patients had better treatment outcomes in terms of lower likelihood of dropout, suggesting that early treatment maybe especially important for sports betting patients. In addition, the socio-demographic and clinical differences between those involved in sports betting and those involved in other forms of gambling suggest that the former may benefit from specific therapeutic approaches. As sports

betting becomes increasingly normalized and more easily accessible, further studies are needed to investigate the characteristics of those involved in sports betting.

Regarding the influence of social, environmental and marketing factors (Deans E, 2016) seminal research was conducted exploring the sports betting attitudes and behaviors of young men aged 20–35 years in Australia. The researchers found that socio-cultural factors such as the embedded nature of sports betting in young men’s social and peer environments, and commercial factors relating to young men’s interaction with betting marketing, could increase young men’s risk for harm associated with their sports betting engagement

In addition, (McGee, 2020) investigated the sports betting experiences of young men aged 18–35 years and recommended that more effective public health strategies were needed to address the influence of betting marketing, as well as independent risk assessments for betting products

Regarding its prevalence in different settings, a study was done in Poland on the prevalence of internet gambling and problematic internet gambling (Lelonek-kuleta, 2020). The study was done using a representative sample of the adult inhabitants of Poland. The results suggested that 4.1 % of the respondents were involved in internet gambling and 26.8 % could be classified as problem gamblers. The most popular internet gambling games were, sports betting and lotteries. The results also indicated that men, younger people, and people who earn less were more often involved in internet gambling

Regarding the clinical correlates (Valenciano-Mendoza, 2023) reported that problematic online sports betting, was associated with psychological/emotional distress, the use of alcohol and other substances, as well as the presence of other behavioral addictions. Regarding personality higher levels of impulsivity, sensation-seeking and positive and negative urgency have been reported among people betting on sports. Among the multiple factors analyzed, impulsivity (and more specifically negative urgency) was the measure that most distinguished non-sports-betting and sports-betting groups. They noted that one of the most significant statistical predictors of sports betting was sensation-seeking

Quantitative studies also indicate that there are a range of motivational factors for sports betting engagement that may increase young men’s risk for harm, such as to make money, to reduce boredom, and to demonstrate perceived knowledge of sport (Christian Nyemcsok1*, 2022)

In our continent Africa, A cross-sectional survey done in south west Nigeria, found the prevalence of gambling disorder among sports bettors to be around 30.5 %, the diagnostic accuracy of DSM-5 and ICD-11 were comparably similar and factors associated with gambling disorder was low educational level and poor employment status (Afe, 2021). They concluded the prevalence of gambling disorder was high, the DSM-5 based screening questionnaires showed good psychometric properties, with sensitivity and specificity comparable to the ICD-11 and there is a need to address educational and employment opportunities.

A study done in Uganda about alcohol consumption and sports betting among young male motorcycle riders in urban southwest Uganda reported among the enrolled 401 participants, 21.6% were involved in sports betting daily or almost on daily bases, Alcohol use was significantly associated with sports-betting with an adjusted risk ratio of 2.08 among moderate drinkers but not among heavy drinkers in comparison to low or non-drinkers (Nafibo, 2021). Cigarette smoking was significantly associated with sports betting with adjusted risk ratio of 1.85. They concluded that sports betting was common among those group of young, male motor cycle riders and associated with both alcohol consumption and smoking

Regarding marketing issues in Africa (Bunn, 2020)undertook a qualitative media analysis of articles from six major Malawian news outlets and concluded that Malawi has been exposed to sophisticated set of corporate strategies aimed at growing a sports betting market. Those strategies have been successful, and it was likely that range of foreseeable gambling-related harms were affecting Malawi.

In Ethiopia a cross-sectional study on the personal and environmental risk factors of problematic gambling among high school adolescents in Addis Ababa found that 31 % were involved in sports betting, 36.8 % of the participants were at risk for severe problematic gambling and 9.6 % were pathological gamblers (Tariku, 2013)

Another quantitative study done in Jimma town regarding problematic gambling and associated factors among sports bettors in Jimma town betting centers on a total of 414 participants found the overall prevalence of problematic gambling among participants was 53.9 % (Haji Abu, august 2022). In addition, the age group (25-31), unemployment, current alcohol use, positive attitude towards sports betting, easy availability of betting center, accessibility of internet service, media advertising such as DSTV, and Facebook/Telegram use were significantly associated with problematic gambling. They concluded problematic gambling is a public health issue that requires great emphasis, concerned actions from governmental and non-governmental organization are needed to mitigate the problem

A study done in Hawassa on the prevalence of sports betting and its relationship with young and adult psychosocial behavior (Girma, 2023) reported that all their respondents were males with an age range of 21-30, the commonest reason for betting was making money at 40%, followed by entertainment at 35.7 %, 17.9 % to avoid boredom, 5 % because there was no other significant thing to be done, and 0.7 % without a specified reason. In addition, 42.1 % of the respondents spent at least 2 hours daily on internet to check their team and the odds; 26.4% spend 2-5 hours; 4.3 % spent 0-2 hours. There was also a significant positive correlation between online gambling and high levels of psychological distress.

While many studies have quantitatively investigated the prevalence of the condition in various settings and tried to find demographic and individual risk factors for harms associated with sports betting, relatively few studies have qualitatively explored the individual experience of people involved in sports betting.

2.OBJECTIVE AND REASERCH QUESTION

2.1) GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- To explore the experiences of individuals engaged in sports betting in Addis Ababa city.

2.2) Specific objectives

- To explore the reasons people engage in sports betting
- To explore the individual's experience of problematic sports betting
- To explore the subjective harms due to sports betting engagement

2.3) Research questions

- Why do individuals engage in sports betting in Addis Ababa city?
- How is sports betting a problematic behavior among individuals engaged in sports betting in Addis Ababa city?

3) METHODS

3.1) Study design

A phenomenological qualitative study was conducted as it allows researchers to engage in flexible activities that can describe and help to understand complex phenomena, such as various aspects of human experience. The study explored the subjective experiences of individuals while they are engaged in online sports betting, and how they might think sports betting can be harmful.

3.2) Study setting

Addis Ababa is Ethiopia's capital located in the geographic epicenter of the country and surrounded by the regional state of Oromia. Addis Ababa is Ethiopia's largest city, playing a central political, economic, and symbolic role.

Online betting is administered by the Ethiopian lottery board. According to ethiopiabet.com there are more than 46 licensed online sports betting sites, and they have shops where one can legally place bets in person with a licensed bookmaker. Betting shops allow the gambler to place bets and retrieve his or her achieved winnings almost immediately. It also allows the person to watch a match and bet on it physically. The study was conducted at sports betting shops found in Addis Ababa.

3.3) Study population

Study participants were those who have self-reported being involved in sports betting. They were selected based on the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria

Inclusion criteria

- Individuals were 18 or older
- Individuals were able to participate in an interview conducted in Amharic language (able to comprehend and communicate their ideas to the interviewer with no barrier)
- Individuals were involved in sports betting for the past 12 months

Exclusion criteria

- Individuals who aren't willing to participate in the study
- Individuals with a speech or hearing problem

3.4) Sampling technique

Participants who were actively participating in sports betting during the time of visits were selected (those who were playing and leaving with tickets). We tried to select participants with different socio-demographic backgrounds including recruiting female, older and individuals with

high socio-economic status via contacts but it was largely unsuccessful and we ended up with convenience sampling which was one limitation. Though most of the participants had exposure to several betting corporates and had different gambling experiences, we didn't select betting shops considering the corporates they represent which was another limitation and elaborated in the limitations section.

3.5) Sample size

The study was conducted on thirteen participants which was the point at which theoretical saturation was reached (defined as information redundancy or the point at which no new themes or codes emerge from the data.).

3.6) Sampling procedure

Participants in the study were approached outside of the betting shops, contacted in person and if they fulfilled the inclusion criteria and willing to participate, an in-depth interview was conducted. The interviews took at places where the participants found convenient mostly, parks and cafeterias. Questions were asked in a way that could be easy to understand and explanations were provided at times as the participants weren't familiar with the topic. Leading or directive questions were avoided. The interviews lasted from 30 to 50 minutes.

3.7) Data collection method

A semi-structured interview schedule was created using a number of open-ended questions which encompassed a set of key areas. The interview consisted open-ended questions based on the established topic guide prepared in Amharic.

3.8) Data management and analysis

After the data was collected, the gathered information was transcribed verbatim after a minimum of three repetitions of listening and was translated into English from the Amharic language. The original Amharic transcripts and the translated versions were compared.

A total of thirteen participants were included in the result. The transcribed documents were imported into Open Code version 4.02 for coding (a tool for coding and categorizing qualitative data generated from interviews or observations) and thematic analysis. A thematic analysis is one that looks across all the data to identify the common issues that recur and the main themes that summarize all the views that are collected. It is also a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Accordingly, investigators coded the respondent's words, phrases, sentences, and memos relevant to the area of the study and systematically coded raw data openly.

After repetitive reading of the material, the themes were formulated, and the subthemes were categorized under their respective themes. Afterwards, the themes were defined and refined, and the findings were tested against the original data.

Dissemination and Utilization of Results

The results of the study will be presented to the Department of Psychiatry, AAU, as a part of the postgraduate thesis defense.

It will also be presented in different scientific forums, presented to concerned bodies and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

3.9. Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was sought from the scientific committee of the Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, College of Health Sciences, and Addis Ababa University prior to the initiation of the study. The purpose of the study was explained to all participants. Interview was carried out after informed consent was obtained.

The purpose and aim of the study were explained to all participants. All respondents' right of free choice was respected. Any harm from participating in the study was unlikely. Interview was carried out after informed consent was obtained using informed consent sheet. Every caution was taken to ensure that all participants felt comfortable and felt freedom to take a rest from the interview, reschedule the interview or withdraw from the study if they felt the need to without any negative effect on any component of their work.

Confidentiality was ensured by collecting the information using anonymous data collection tool and by giving code for a participant.

While conducting the interviews the principal investigator came across several participants whose patterns of involvement appear to be problematic, although formal assessment were not done to assess whether they fulfill criteria for a gambling disorder or another psychiatric comorbidity. Given the condition is new to our practice and considering the absence of well-studied interventions, we did not recommend any specific interventions at the time but potential benefits of having a formal psychiatric evaluation was discussed with few participants who were thought to be at risk of continued problematic betting.

4.)FINDINGS

Socio-demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Code Number	Age	Sex	Marital status	Religion	Number of years of involvement	Occupation
001	27	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	3 years	Daily laborer
002	24	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	1 year	Vocalist/Merchant
003	35	male	Single	Muslim	Six months	Security guard
004	32	male	Single	Muslim	5 years	Shoe maker
005	30	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	3 years	unemployed
006	37	male	Single	Muslim	5 years	Daily laborer
007	26	male	Single	Muslim	3 years	Student
008	22	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	3 years	unemployed
009	26	male	Single	Muslim	3 years	unemployed
010	28	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	3 years	Carwash
011	30	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	2 years	Driver
012	24	male	Single	Orthodox Christian	1 year and half	Unemployed
013	28	male	Single	Muslim	2 years	Driver

Participants were males, ranging in age from 22 to 37; all of them were single; seven of the participants were orthodox Christians; and the rest were Muslims. Most of the participants have been involved in betting for more than two years.

The results are presented in the following four major themes: reasons for engagement in sports betting, unique and attractive features of sports betting, individual experiences of problematic betting and subjective harms due to sports betting

4.1) REASONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

FINANCIAL INTEREST

According to many participants, involvement in sports betting and winning could be a means of changing one's life. They illustrated financial reasons as the main reason for their engagement;” *I have no especial feeling to it besides the thought of winning money. For example, if I have one hundred birr it could be a means of increasing it to say three hundred birr. It is about increasing what you have” (Age 35, security guard)*

One participant compared his motive with the reason some people go abroad; *you are young and want to change, it's like the people going abroad in search for a better life (Age 30, unemployed).*

According to other participants, the fact that betting allows wagers as low as ten birr is appealing given the value of that kind of money in the current financial land scape. *I never thought about quitting. Like I said you may win 10000 birr after betting with only 10 birr. You may win a million birr. How worthless is ten birr in the current market? (Age30, daily laborer).*

They also stressed the low probability of earning that kind of money through other means

“Who is going to give me that much money? Which job will earn me that much money?”(Age 37, daily laborer)

It was also emphasized by some participants as an alternative way of earning money for those who are unemployed to the extent of decreasing one's motivation for work with the hope of winning money via betting

“for example, if you correctly predict the results of ten matches at a time, the money you get might be more than 10000. Those things make you not to look for a job. The things that might make you not to look for a job is the money you can earn (Age 35, security guard).”

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Nearly all participants emphasized the importance of watching those around them, including their close friends, for their involvement in betting. According to participants, friends and acquaintances increase their likelihood of involvement by both directly telling them about their experiences and showing them how to bet as well as by observing them playing.

“It’s almost five years since I started; it was with the influence of someone else. People who were spending time with me used to gamble. They used to bet with a phone. They showed me and I started betting. Now I’m in a far worse condition than they are. There is a saying “you look like your friend”” (Age 32, shoemaker)

According to the participants, they heard different attractive stories about the entertaining and interesting nature of sports betting *“They are my friends, when I asked them about betting, they told me it’s a good thing for pastime, it will entertain you on top of that you will earn money” (Age 24, vocalist)*

Witnessing firsthand while their friends are winning was also described by some participants as irresistible, *“I remember the day I started I going to pay our electric bill, I saw them playing, I had two hundred birr in my pocket and I saw them playing, they were winning” (Age 24, vocalist)*

WAY OF SPENDING SPARE-TIME

According to the participants, being unemployed not only creates financial difficulties which predisposes those individuals attempt to earn something desperately but it also makes them to look for something where they spend their time. Participants mentioned the availability of games especially on the weekends. In sports betting, one has the opportunity to spend most of the weekend and some other days on an absorbing game.

Most people you find in betting are unemployed. Someone who has a job won’t have the time to stand there and buy the tickets (Age 37, daily laborer).

You become a victim when you are unemployed. Where will you find the time if you have a job? (Age 26, unemployed)

4.2) UNIQUE AND ATTRACTIVE FEATURES OF SPORTS BETTING

Nearly all the participants mentioned one or two unique features that made their experiences with sports betting different from other forms of gambling. Most of them were inclined to the idea that sports betting has features which makes it more attractive and potentially more problematic

CONVENIENCE

Most participants concur with the idea that one can access betting with a relatively small amount of money. Participants reported options and outcomes which allow bets as small as ten birr. This according to the participants, allows individuals with a range of financial capacity to participate. Contrasting ideas were presented regarding what this might implicate. A participant spoke admiringly of the opportunity presented with that kind of money.

You may feel nothing if you lose 10 birr at this point in time because of the inflation. On the other hand, you may win a million birr after betting with ten birr (Age 37, daily laborer)

The same participant expressed the harmful side of this for a person with financial difficulties as you can place a bet with 10 birr, which makes it cruel.

It's cruel because it takes what you have even if what you have is very little (Age 37, daily laborer)

In addition to the money, the fact that it is easily accessible with a phone was mentioned by most participants.

You place bets with your phone. Placing bets with your phone is very easy. You don't have to go to the betting shops to place bets (Age 32, shoemaker)

According to participants sports betting also allows a peaceful sense of competition among friends. The old practice of gambling face to face with a friend on a football match carries a risk of confrontations and series fights which can end friendships. Previously while watching a football match people used to ask others to gamble directly face to face.

"Now with the availability of betting you don't have to gamble among yourselves. All you have to do is go with your friend to one of the shops and place your bets separately and you don't have to take each other's money directly and can avoid conflict" (Age 30, unemployed).

BETTING HAS INTERESTING FEATURES

According to the respondents their experience while engaging in sports betting is different from other forms of gambling because it gives them the opportunity to bet on something they are used to and like.

The fact that the game is about something you like makes you happy. Besides it's a means of getting money (Age 22, student)

Almost all participants mentioned the importance of exposure to football (especially European top flight leagues) in the initiation and persisting with betting. Most concur with the idea that they preferably bet on football matches not only because they like the game but also because of the knowledge they gathered due to repeated exposure through the media and watching games.

"In betting, there are different kinds of sports handball, basketball, but what is nearly accessible

for us is football. We gamble because we watch football. If you for example ask me to bet on basketball or hand ball I don't know. I won't bet because of my fear of losing. Now, my thought is with football. Since I know the game, I understand it, I bet because of that" (Age 30, car wash)

There is a tendency to put personal prediction of results even before betting was introduced so that betting gives the opportunity to make it formal.

"Often, I like to predict results when I watch football. I used to make predictions like this team is going to win like this. With that occasion there was this betting game. I thought, why don't I put my predictions on a bet" (Age 30, car wash)

To the participants winning on a bet is more than just getting money. It's a means of testing one's own knowledge about sports and the ability to make predictions based on it.

"I can't tell you the feeling I have when I win. For example, I feel happier winning two hundred birr with betting than taking three hundred birr from you as a gift. I mean the fact that the results I predicted, the numbers I predicted are correct makes me happy" (age 24, vocalist)

BETTING IS LESS DEMANDING

Participants stressed the notion that they became very attracted to betting because of the level of effort required in earning the money. Besides since the money one earns from betting isn't hard-fought, he /she is more likely to become casual in spending it, according to the participants.

"It's very sweet because you earn the money without any effort" (Age 24, vocalist).

" When I mention about requiring less effort is like when you play pool for example, you spend energy, you spend time but this betting game called keno takes only three minutes" (age 35, security guard)

In this sense the betting game keno was mentioned by most of the participants. Not only the level of effort required but the short period of time between placing bets and seeing the outcomes is a desirable feature for someone who doesn't want to wait. There is also a perceived advantage over other forms of gambling like the local lottery game conducted by individuals.

"It decreases the required time. For example, I may not have enough money. Let's say all I've got is thirty birr. After betting with thirty birr, rather than waiting for him searching and collecting from hundreds of people, I prefer going to the keno shop and seal my fate in minutes whether good or bad. If I lose, I lose that's it" (participant two)

BETTING HAS MULTIPLE OPTIONS

Sports betting is diversifying and widening its scope. Participants mentioned the availability of different kinds of sports for betting like football, basketball, dart, and horse race. Most of the participants involve in betting on football games. Different leagues were mentioned including English, French, Spanish, German and even Asian leagues. Most of the participants bet on European top-flight games because of their exposure and perceived knowledge about those

leagues. According to the participants, there are numerous options even in a single match to bet on which increases one's chances of winning.

“There are more than thirty options for a single match to bet on, like which team will score, which player might be cautioned, which player might be sent off. You can place bets on all these options. It makes you think like “if I use one of these options, I may win more money than others.”” (Age 32, shoemaker)

At the same time one can also bet in line with two different outcomes which increases his/her chance of winning.

“What makes it interesting are things like double chance. There might be a team that you gave a double chance. Double chance means that team you are betting for either wins or draws. You can place your bet on both outcomes.” (Age 26 unemployed)

BETTING HAS MORE REWARDS

Most participants raised the prospect of winning more money after placing the same amount of wager compared to other forms of gambling which is presented as another factor contributing to their involvement. With betting you may win a lot of money.

“You may win a lot of money after placing a small amount like ten-twenty birr. You become excited about winning that kind of money” (Age 26, unemployed)

There are additional features in the game that increase the level of confidence on the side of the gambler and increase their involvement in betting according to the participants. Those features include giving considerable but less money for outcomes that are close to the gamblers predictions and refunding the money they spent on a bet if certain conditions are met.

“There is also consolation. For example, if I bet on four events and correctly predict three of them, they will give me consolatory money. If for example, I bet with ten birr they may give me eighty birr as a consolation. If you correctly predict two events out of four, they will refund the money you initially placed on bets. This makes you happy.” (Age 24, vocalist).

This procedure according to the participants not only increase their confidence when they bet but also makes them ruminate about what minor things went wrong in their predictions and what could happen if they everything went right.

There is a procedure called “angle” in betting. For example, if you place bets on 10 different games predicted correctly nine of them but lost one, they will give you an angle. They may give you 150 birr, if you initially gambled with 100 birr. This kind of experience encourages people and makes you think a lot about the single game that went wrong, which prevented you from winning a lot of money (age 30 unemployed).

4.3) INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCE OF PROBLEMATIC BETTING

BEING PREOCCUPIED WITH SPORTS BETTING

Most participants reported a preparatory stage which begins days to hours prior to the game. This involves a period in which the gambler goes through a lot of data; most of it is via the internet regarding the teams he is about to bet on.

“When you want to choose one of the two clubs, before you make the predictions you think a lot about it. What is their position in the league table? What is their current form? Those things make you think a lot.” (Age 28, carwash)

“You think a lot when the game time approaches. You make calculations in your mind. You say things in your mind like “if I place a bet like this I will win”. If there are games on the weekends you start preparing on Thursday and Friday.” (Age 32, shoemaker)

It also involves thinking a lot about finding ways of winning to the extent of preparing formulas. Those who are employed stressed the time-consuming nature of this experience and the negative impact it had on their work performance. Those who are currently unemployed reported it interfered with their ability to plan for the future and take job opportunities when they arrive.

“I’m a vocalist the bets and numbers come to my mind while I’m singing in a club. The numbers pass in front of my eyes. Sometimes I see it in my dreams. There were occasions that I told my friends, “I saw the numbers, 50, 1050 birr.”” (Age 24, vocalist)

According to the participants, as much as being a football fan influences one’s involvement in sports betting, once an individual starts to place bets on football matches his interest in watching games increases

“I was fed-up thinking about football. It makes you think about football all the time. It makes you think about it all the time. While going and coming from work “(Age 26 unemployed)

CHASING LOSSES

Another habit reported by most of the participants is, the tendency to place bets successively to win back the money lost on the previous bet. This is made possible by the availability of successive matches, especially on the weekends on which the person could go again.

“If I lose, I bet on the next game. You promise to yourself to improve what you missed on the previous game. The game itself creates an urge to bet frequently. You say things like I shouldn’t have predicted like this.” (Age 37, daily laborer)

Participants mentioned the feeling one experiences after the loss as the main reason behind their subsequent bets and also forces them to entertain more risky options

After losing you will become emotional and bet with bigger money in order to get back the money you lost. Because of your emotions you start to bet with bigger money and smaller matches. You increase the amount of money you bet and decrease the number of matches you have to wait to win the money. (Age 37, daily laborer)

Another participant shared a similar experience of not letting the loss go

“After losing on a bet, you start to fight because you are a man. After losing all the money you brought, you start to ask your gambling friend for a loan. Since Gamblers tend help each other out by nature, he will give you some loan to try your luck. If you lose, you will leave the place (Age 30, unemployed)”

Almost all participants mentioned this habit of “placing bets until you get it right’ is worse with the betting game called keno. With this game the results of the bets are displayed every two-three minute and the gambler has the opportunity to bet again within a very short interval.

“You may have to wait 90 min if you want to bet on a football game but with keno you can place bets almost every minute and it’s available almost 24 hours. It takes what you have got.” (Age 37, daily laborer)

“But in keno you can place a bet all day long and every day. Since the game is available all day long, even if you lose one bet you can try again immediately. With the motive of getting your money back you will end up placing multiple bets and you will go home with an empty pocket.” (Age 32, shoemaker)

UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO QUIT

Participants described a desire to quit their involvement in sports betting and previous attempts to quit with variable degree of success. Some of them mentioned attempts to quit which didn’t last for more than few days. The temporary feeling of guilt and disinterest disappear as soon as one has the access to money.

“I thought I lost my desire. I used to watch movies at home with the time that I had. But after getting money I start to play again as a fresh gambler. Isn’t this an addiction on its own?” (Age 35, security guard)

Participants emphasized the importance of watching others bet, especially win as an important factor in their continued involvement in betting

I tried to stop on many occasions. I think the reason that I didn’t succeed at quitting is because of the way I spend my time. Your success depends on the way you spend your time. After deciding to stop betting, if you see someone placing bets it creates a thought in your mind like “If I place my bets like this, I may earn better money than him” (Age 32 shoemaker)

The same participant shared his difficulty to quit by comparing it to other forms of addiction

“I’m dependent on it. I don’t have a good attitude towards it. Its impact on people’s lives is like tobacco addiction. Just like you smoke knowing its impacts on your health, you gamble though you know it is harming you.” (Age 32, shoemaker)

Another participant shared the experience of difficulty to quit because of his continued involvement in watching football. The game is a reminder for betting.

“I tried multiple times. But the things that I told you, there is an influence of watching the game. For example, I remember betting when I watch games. That made it difficult for me to quit.” (Age 30, car wash)

LIE ABOUT INVOLVEMENT IN BETTING

Most of the participants reported they lie about their involvement in sports betting in one way or another. The lie is towards family members most of the time or friends who are critical of the behavior.

“I lie in a lot of ways. For example, your family might call while you are in the mood with betting. You won’t say I’m gambling. Also, it might be with your girlfriend. Those people who does not want you to be involved. You lie to those people because they would be upset.” (Age 26 unemployed)

It had an impact on my social life. First it makes me lie. I lie because it is a shameful place to be and I tell people “I’m somewhere else” when they call me. (Age 30, unemployed)

SUBJECTIVE HARMS DUE TO SPORTS BETTING

FINANCIAL HARM

According to participants, most of the difficulties they had because of betting revolve around the financial loss. Participants explained different scenarios in which the financial difficulties they had because of betting contributed to the various negative emotions, interpersonal and family problems. The financial difficulties resulting from betting was incriminated by participants as the cause of stagnation in their lives.

“Like I said, my reason to stop would be losing money. You work hard but it’s like you haven’t done anything. That part of it makes you think about quitting.” (Age 30, carwash)

Similar experience of ‘working and wasting the money on betting’ was reported by another participant. *“For me it is very harmful. For example, now I brought the money that I was saving in my account. I do this thing usually. It is like, the fact that I’m working has no value if I waste my money on this.” (Age 24, vocalist)*

Participants also reported financial difficulties that range from interfering with their recreational activities, compromising their businesses to interfering with their basic activities.

“If you have a job, Sunday is your off day. If you lose your money on a bet, you don’t have anything to go out and chill with. You stay around your neighborhood. When I lose, I’m forced to spend my time here” (Age 30, car wash)

“The money I’m playing with was supposed to be for work. But now they are the ones working with my money. Yes, they are working with it. For example, recently we sold a printer. What did we do with the money? We are betting with it. You may come here and play with the money you were supposed to buy shoes with. When you lose you become angry and say I could have bought something with it.” (Age 24, vocalist)

Participants shared experiences in which the financial difficulties they found themselves in interfered with activities they consider basic

“You drink coffee with 10 birr. There were times where I wanted to but didn’t have 10 birr for coffee.” (Age 24, vocalist)

“IDIR” (a Social institution in Ethiopia used for mutual aid and grants cooperative insurance) is a basic responsibility for me. There are times where I struggle to pay 100 birr monthly for my IDIR. My employed is a member of the IDIR that I attend. I feel ashamed when I say I don’t have any money in front of him” (age 32, vocalist)

NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Sports betting was associated with different experiences which indicates its negative impact on the participants mental wellbeing. Participants reported various negative emotional experiences which resulted from their involvement in betting.

Guilt was one of the universal findings among the participants. Nearly all participants reported experiencing guilt because of their involvement in sports betting. For most individuals, the guilt results from losing money and arises when they are in need.

“I feel guilty, especially when I play with the money that I saved in my account. I think to myself, “Why am I doing things like this? Why not play only with the money I had in my pocket? Why did I bring that money?” For example, I may lose 500 birr on betting and later need one hundred birr for something. I start to say “if I hadn’t lost that 500 birr on gambling, I would have the hundred birr I needed and in addition to that I would have left over money for other needs like breakfast.” (Age 24, vocalist)

For some participants, the guilt results because of the time they are wasting. *“Like I told you, I spend more than five hours per day. If you take the average, if you spend it on work. It makes a huge difference. Maybe it’s something that foreigners brought to steal our time.” (Age 35, security guard)*

Others reported guilt originating from going against their religion. Muslim participants explained the need for prohibiting oneself from engaging in such activities as one of the principles of the religion.

“I have guilt one hundred percent. I’m a Muslim. Let alone taking someone else’s money from gambling, you are not allowed to claim interest when you save your money in a bank. It is a strict sin. It’s considered as something which could work seriously against you. It is not acceptable by Allah. The money doesn’t belong to you. I’m involved in betting knowing this fact. Considering the fact that it’s forbidden.” (Age 32 shoemaker)

Another Christian participant shared his perception of winning money with betting as pushing gods will

“There is a feeling of guilt but you will get used to it. When I see it from a religious perspective, I don’t feel good about it. You always want to receive something from your God. Also, you need to take only what he has given to you. But this is like pushing his will aside. It’s like walking on his instructions. I feel bad when I pray.” (Age 22, unemployed)

The other consistently reported feeling is anger. According to the participants, it may last for days and is more intense in situations where the gambler came close to winning a huge amount of money. For most of the participants it is associated with a tendency to bet on the next game until the gambler gets it right or run out of money.

Once, I remember I wasn’t employed at the time; I placed a bet in line with the club Manchester city. They won 14 consecutive matches but lost the final match. I was going to win 17000 birr. It was in 2011 E.C. How big was 17000 birr at the time? It was a lot. I was sweating at the time. I was unable to fall asleep it’s like I lost the money from my own pocket (age 37, daily laborer)

A participant emphasized the impact of his anger after losing on a bet on his interaction with others *“losing on a bet, makes me angry. I may not replay to greetings properly. Normally, i could have gone to the guy and give him a warm greeting. You may wish he ignores you and not say hi. I would be afraid not to create a bad impression” (age 24, vocalist)*

Another participant shared a similar experience of impairing post-bet anger and rumination *“It makes you very angry. It won’t go out of your mind for days. It makes you emotional, by nature I prefer silence. I don’t want others to be around at those times.” (Age 22, unemployed)*

Although it only lasts until the next venture most participants also reported feeling down/depressed after a loss. The feeling arises according to them, when they think about other activities which require money.

“I feel depressed on the day of the loss. When I run out of money, the feeling is beyond capacity. It’s different from other times. You lose interest in talking to others, you lose interest in going outside, you prefer to stay home and sleep. It makes you lose interest in everything.” (Age 30, car wash)

“When I lose after placing bets I feel down. I feel down when I have no money to do the things that I want. I feel down whenever I remember betting is the reason that I lost my money but it doesn’t persist.” (Age 32, shoemaker)

“There were lots of moments that spent lying on my bed because I was in a bad mood. You won’t get along with others after wasting your money on gambling. You spend your time home alone with the intention of avoiding conflict with others. Because you aren’t in a good mood, you avoid people until you get out of it (Age 26, unemployed)”

Participants also emphasized the impact of their involvement in sports betting on the way they perceive themselves. Its financial implications are incriminated in this regard. Participants reported the amount and the pattern they lose their money contradicts with the expectations they have of themselves. The desperate financial situations they find themselves in force them to take loans from families and friends.

“I wasn’t satisfied with the money he gave me at the time. I never asked my brother for money before. Normally, I would never ask my brother for money. It is not something I would do normally. It makes you ask the person you would never ask. It makes you lose the respect you had for yourself.” (Age 37, daily laborer)

Participants also reported feelings of inferiority because the way and amount of money they lose reflects badly on their ability to function independently as adults.

“I feel like I’m inferior to others and that’s the main reason I want to stop. I don’t have extra expenditures, my own family or responsibility. I was supposed to save a lot of money and achieve better than others. The amount of money that I earn is a lot better than most people. People earning smaller money lead a much better life because they use it properly.” (Age 32, shoemaker)

These negative feelings originating from their experience during betting were nearly always accompanied by feeling of being taken advantage and exploited by the gambling corporations and the government at large. Most participants mentioned they have insight regarding the manipulative nature of the game. The evidences participants presented for this include early reinforcements given by the corporates to encourage a new gambler, the less overall probability of winning, the fact that many individuals may win lose it on subsequent bets nevertheless, and the fact that they are given consolation but unable to withdraw it as cash.

“They will re-take the money. Even those who claim to have won a lot of money have lost lots of times before finally succeeding. For example, if you ask a person who won 200,000 birr, he would tell you he managed to win that money after losing a lot of times. If you take time and think about it, the amount that you lost is much more than the amount you won. We the players won’t think about it but those who designed it will.” (Age 37, daily laborer)

Consequently, for some of the participants the joy of winning goes beyond winning money and include; a sense of successful revenge and satisfaction.

“When I win, when I return the money I lost, taking revenge on them makes me very happy. It’s not like I’m bringing my money here to save it. They are taking my money. When I get them, I feel happy. It’s a feeling like revenge” (Age 24, vocalist)

SOCIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL IMPAIRMENT

Participants also mentioned the negative impacts their involvement in sports betting had on their motivation and performances at work. Difficulty getting along with people at work including customers was one of the incriminated reasons presented by the participants

“After losing, on the following day, I feel down and angry. It interferes with your work. I wash cars and i may not treat my customers properly” (Age 30 car wash)

Wasting time was another factor mentioned to interfere with their jobs

It has some impact. I’m a vocalist, and I may not practice as long as I should. It takes some of my time. (Age 24, vocalist)

Participants also mentioned early departure from work to buy the tickets and follow matches

“For example, if there is a match today, it’s a must to stop working and buy the tickets. That part interferes with your work” (Age 30, car wash)

The prospect of winning money like their friends was mentioned as the reason behind their lack of motivation.

“The feeling I have right now, the Motivation I had for work had declined significantly from previous times. I think most individuals feel like this. The hope of getting money this way decreases your motivation for work.” (Age 35, security guard)

Interpersonal relationship is another area affected by wasting time due to betting (as it takes, they time they were supposed to give for their families and friends)

“You may not have the time for your friends. There may also be a conflict. I remember occasions where I forgot I had to meet my friend; he usually calls and yells at me” (age 24, vocalist)

Similar to occupational performance their relations with others is also affected by the negative emotions they experience after losing on a bet or things going against them

“There are times where I would argue with my family members while waiting for the results of the bets I placed. If things are not going my way, I tend to argue and fight with my family which is not my normal way of behaving.” (Age 32, shoemaker)

Participants also reported their families do not like their involvement in betting and there is a conflict because of it

“Your family does not want stuff like this. Since they opened the shops everywhere you are likely to be seen by one of your family members. They say to me why are you involved in stuff like this? I reply don’t bother me; I’m playing with my own money. They are not happy about it. (Age 32, shoemaker)”

“Sometimes I come home very late at night, like I said, your mood might not be right after you lose and you start to talk to yourself starring at the moon. You don’t want your family to see your change in mood. You stay outside until that goes away.” (Age 26, unemployed)

An individual’s affiliation to betting changes their attitude towards money and makes them greedy according to the participants. Friendship is all about reaching out for one another at times of need and crisis. The affection one develops for money forces the gambler to lose this connection.

“When you friend is in need he asks for a loan. Betting takes that away. It makes you greedy. You want from others instead of giving. You will have no real friendships. The game becomes your friend.” (Age 30, unemployed)

6) DISCUSSION

In this study, the experiences of individuals involved in sports betting were explored. The study was designed with the intention of exploring the reasons individuals engage in those behaviors, what kinds of harm they sustain, and what problematic patterns they constitute. Most participants in the study were involved in sports betting for more than a year and had frequent exposure, which makes them a good candidate to explore the various aspects of sports betting. The study identified four major themes: reasons for involvement in sports betting, attractive features of sports betting, subjective harms due to sports betting, and individual's experiences of problematic betting.

Participants in this study mentioned several reasons responsible for their engagement in sports betting, like financial interests, including a means of earning money and changing one's life, hearing attractive and dramatic stories about people winning huge amounts of money, influence from their peers and friends, and as a way of spending time to mitigate the boredom associated with unemployment. Another qualitative study (Griffiths, 2020) done on 17 young individuals reported the importance of various factors in people's involvement in in-play betting, like its association with more excitement, making the game more intense, and allowing the gambler to use his gambling skills. They also emphasized the importance of the cash-out features because they allow the individual to recoup from losing a bet. In a systematic review (Marc, 2022), factors mentioned include the ease of access one has, the fact that it is becoming normalized, and having many attractive features that may contribute to involvement in sports betting.

In this particular study according to the majority of the respondents unique and attractive features of sports betting include its convenience (including the ease of access one has via his/her mobile phone, allowing a person to gamble with a small amount, and the fact that it allows gamblers to avoid direct confrontation), its interesting nature in the sense that it allows individuals to place a bet on something they like (football for most of the participants), and enables them to test their knowledge about the sport, the availability of multiple ways to bet which increases the perceived chance of winning and its potential rewards (the prospect of winning a lot of money for a very small wager). Other studies proposed explanations (Griffiths, 2020) regarding the attractive features, including experiencing cognitive biases due to features like in-play betting and cash-out, which were not replicated in this study as most of the participants didn't find those features appealing. Regarding this topic, Lopez-Gonzalez (2017) pointed out that technological advancements and narratives found within sports betting advertisements that enhance control could lead to an increase in perceived skill, causing bettors to place their wagers more uncontrollably.

Consequences that the participants perceive as harmful outcomes of their involvement in sports betting include psychosocial harms like experiencing guilt resulting from the financial implications and contradicting their religion, anger, and feeling down, which affect their interpersonal relations and occupational performance. According to the DSM-5, jeopardizing relationships or career opportunities due to gambling is among the least often endorsed criteria and most often occurs among those with more severe gambling disorders. Loss of self-respect and a sense of inferiority because of their failure to meet certain expectations were also among the findings of this study. In other studies, problematic online sports betting, as compared to non-problematic online sports betting, was associated with more psychological and emotional distress (Valenciano Mendoza, 2023). Likewise, the use of alcohol and other substances, as well as the presence of other behavioral addictions, have been reported. Higher levels of impulsivity, sensation-seeking, and positive and negative urgency have been reported among people betting on sports (Cooper et al., 2021).

Regarding an individual's experience of problematic betting, most of the participants reported preoccupation, which mostly takes the form of extensive planning regarding possible ways of winning, chasing losses as shown by the tendency to bet successively and taking more risky options after a losing bet, a desire to stop in most cases but unable to do so due to peer and environmental influences, and lying about their involvement in sports betting to families and friends due to the shame associated with participation in gambling.

According to the DSM-5, the most frequently endorsed criteria for gambling disorder are related to preoccupation with gambling and "chasing" losses, which were also found among most of the participants in this particular study. Similar to findings in this research, DSM-5 points out that a pattern of "chasing one's losses" may develop, with an urgent need to keep gambling (often with the placing of larger bets or the taking of greater risks) to undo a loss or series of losses. The other findings of this study, including the desire to stop without succeeding and lying to conceal the extent of involvement, were also among the problematic behaviors diagnostic of a gambling disorder.

7) LIMITATIONS

The inability to include female despite efforts by the research team to recruit female gamblers (also seen in other studies) is one possible limitation, given the different social roles and expectations associated with being female in our community. Future research should attempt to recruit female participants.

Inability to include married participants despite attempts could also be one possible limitation; perhaps this could be an indicator that betting is affecting this group of individuals. In addition inability to include participants with different economic backgrounds, and older individuals is another limitation.

Attempts were made to select participants from betting shops around different parts of A.A. In the process doing the research we have come to learn that betting companies and their respective shops differ with the variety of sports they offer, the odds they provide and betting limits.

Though most of the participants had exposure to several betting corporates and had different gambling experiences we didn't select betting shops considering the different corporates they represent. This is another limitation given the betting sites we visited during the interviews may not truly be representative of those generally found in Addis which might affect its generalizability.

8) CONCLUSION

Sports betting has emerged as a recent behavioral trend that raises concerns for many individuals. This behavior appears to transcend the boundaries of mere leisure activity, displaying characteristics indicative of problematic gambling.

This study, without disregarding its limitations, identified key features that indicate problematic sports betting, including preoccupation and meticulous planning, a proclivity to place consecutive bets, opting for riskier choices following a loss, persistent yet unsuccessful attempts to quit, and dishonesty about betting activities to families and friends.

Furthermore, individuals engaged in problematic sports betting reported experiencing subjective harms. This includes financial implications and psychosocial consequences such as feelings of guilt, anger, and irritability that impact interpersonal relationships and occupational performance. Additionally, participants expressed transient feelings of depression, a loss of self-respect, and a sense of inferiority linked to their involvement in sports betting.

Findings of this study like preoccupation with sports betting that is preparatory of the behavior, repeated efforts to reduce or stop betting, the great deal of time that is wasted, and continuation of involvement despite knowledge of having a recurrent social, financial and psychological problems are suggestive of behavioral addiction.

9) RECOMMENDATION

The multifaceted nature of these concerns highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding and intervention strategies to address the various dimensions of problematic sports betting behavior. Based on these particular research findings, we recommend quantitative studies that indicate the burden among the population.

Building on this qualitative study to understand sport betting more, the importance of early intervention from professionals could also be helpful.

It may also be valid to consider programs that are aimed at increasing the insight of the young population into the possible harmful effects of this game.

For mental health professionals, advocating for the issue so that it would receive due attention and more expensively studied is also recommended.

APPENDICES

Participant consent form

I, (the participant whose ID is coded,) have received and do understand the information about the study and the manner of my participation in the interview verbally and in written form.

I hereby consent to participate in the interview being audio-recorded.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Interviewer' signature:

Date:

Thank you for your cooperation!!!

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የተሳታፊ ፊርማ:-

ቀን:-

የቃለ-መጠይቅ አድራጊው ፊርማ:-

ቀን:-

ለትብብርዎ አመሰግናለሁ!!!

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

- **Intro**, my name is Mesay Teshome. I am a 3rd year psychiatry resident at the Addis Ababa University (AAU). As part of my training, I am studying the perception and experience of individuals involved in sports betting in Addis.
 - **Aim**: The study aims to explore the subjective experience of those involved in sports betting
 - **Benefits**: The study may not have any direct and/ or immediate benefit to you, but your participation is very important for the outcome of the study and the positive insight it aims to create.
 - **Risks**: You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and your decision to participate or not will not have any consequence. Confidentiality will be maintained at all stages of the study.
 - **Incentives**: compensation fee will be provided for participating in the study.
-
- The interview will be tape recorded and will be later transcribed into Amharic and translated into English
 - The interview will take about 1 hour. You can skip questions you don't want to answer. You can ask for clarifications if questions are not clear for you. You can at any time ask for break, can reschedule or withdraw from the participation with no consequences
 - If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact the Principal Investigator with the following phone no: 0922954732

የምርምራ ተሳታፊዎች መረጃ ቅጽ

•ሰላም መሳይተሾም እባላለሁ።በአዲስ አበባ ዩንቨርሲቲ የጤና ሳይንስ ኮሌጅ የአዕምሮ ህክምና ክፍል የመጨረሻ አመት ሰልጣኝ ሃኪም ነኝ። ከስልጠናየም ጋር በተያያዘ ሰዎች በሰፈርት ቤቲንግ (ወርርድ) ሲሳተፉ ስላላችው ልምድ እያጠናሁ እገኛለሁ

•የጥናቱ አላማ፡ሰዎች በ ሰፈርት ውርርድ ሲሳተፉ ያላችውን ልምድ ማጥናት

•ጥቅሞች፡ በዚህ ጥናት ለእናተ በቀጥታ የምታገኙት ባይኖርም የእናንተ መሳተፍ ምርምሩን ለማካሄድ እናያመጣል ተብሎ የሚታሰበውን አስተዋጿ ለማሳካት ያግዛል።

•አደጋ፡ በጥናቱ የሚሰራው በፈቃድኝነት ላይ ሲሆን በጥናቱ ላይ በመሳተፍ የሚመጣ ጉዳት የለም።ሚስጥር በሁሉም የጥናት ደረጃዎች ይጠበቃል።

• ማካካሻ፡በዚህ ጥናት በመሳተፍ ለሚያሳልፉት ጊዜ ክፍያ ይሰጥዎታል።

•ይህቃለ-መጠይቅ በድምፅ ይቀዳል ቀጥሎም ወደፅሁፍ ተቀይሮ ወደ እንግሊዝኛ ይተረጎማል።

- ቃለ-መጠይቁ እስከ 1 ሰዓት ሊፈጅ ይችላል።
- በቃለ መጠይቁ ወቅት ያለተረዱት ጥያቄ እንዳብራራ ይጠየቁኝ።መመለስ የማይፈልጓቸው ጥያቄዎች ካጋጠሙዎት ማለፍ ይቻላል።በመሃል ማረፍ ካስፈለጎት ወይም ሌላ ቀጠሮ ቢያስፈልግ ያሳውቁኝ።
- ከተሳትፎዎት በማንኛውም ጊዜ ያለምንም ችግር አቋርጠው መውጣት ይችላሉ።
- ከጥናት ጋር በተያያዘ ለሚኖረዎት ማንኛውም ጥያቄ አጥኘውን ከታች በተጠቀሰው አድራሽ ማነጋገር ይችላሉ።
0922954732

Topic guide

- 1) When and how did you start to engage in sports betting?
- 2) How do you feel about being involved in sports betting?
- 3) What are the things about sports betting you find exciting or pleasurable? How do you think they contribute to your involvement in sports betting?
- 4) Were you ever involved in other forms of gambling?
 - 4a) If yes, tell me your experience?
 - 4b) How do you compare your experiences while being involved in sports betting and other forms of gambling? What makes sports betting different?
- 5) How often do you place bets? How do you think involvement in sports betting impacted the way you spend your time?
- 6) How do you think your involvement in betting impacted your financial situation?
- 7) How is it like losing a bet for you?
- 8) Have you ever tried to stop your involvement in sports betting?
If yes, tell me about your experience?
- 9) Tell me about the emotional experiences you had during your involvement in sports betting?
- 10) Have you faced any problems at work, school or in your interpersonal relationships as a result of your involvement in sports betting?

የርዕስ መመሪያ

- 1) ስፖርት ቤቱን መቼ እና እንዴት ጀመሩ ?
- 2) እንዳጠቃላይ ስለ ስፖርት ቤቱን ምን ይሰማዎታል?
- 3) በስፖርት ውርርድ ወቅት ደስታ የሚፈጥሩና እርሶ እንዲሳተፉ የሚገፋፉ ነገሮች አሉ? ስለነርሱ ይንገሩኝ?
- 4) ከቤቱን ወይም ሌላ የ ቁማር መንገድ ሞክረው ያውቃሉ ?
 - ሀ) መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ እንዴት አገኙት?
 - ለ) በቤቱን ወቅት የነበሩትን ልምድ በሌላ የቁማር ጨዋታ ወቅት ከነበሩት በንጽጽር ሲያዩት እንዴት አገኙት?
- 5) በቤቱን ውርርድ በመሳተፍ የጊዜ አጠቃቀም ላይ ለውጥ አለ?
- 6) በቤቱን መሳተፍ ከጀመሩ በኋላ እንደ አጠቃላይ ገንዘብ አዎጣጦ ላይ ለውጥ አለ?
 - ሀ) መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ ስለሱ ይንገሩኝ
- 7) በ ቤቱን ውርርድ ወቅት ተበልተው ያውቃሉ? እስቲ ስነበረዎት ልምድ ይንገሩኝ?
- 8) ቤቱን ለማቆም ሞክረው ያውቃሉ? ለመተው ያሰቡበት ምክንያት ምን ነበር? እስቲ ስነበረዎት ልምድ ይንገሩኝ?
 - ሀ) መልሱ አዎ ከሆነ እስቲ ያብራሩልኝ?
- 9) በስፖርት ቤቱን ባሎት ተሳትፎ ምክንያት የስሜት ለውጥ ኖሮ ያውቃል? እስቲ ስነበረዎት ልምድ ይንገሩኝ?
- 10) በስፖርት ቤቱን ላይ ባሎት ተሳትፎ ምክንያት በስራ፡ በትምህርት ወይም ከሰዎች ጋር ባሎት ግንኙነት ላይ የደረሰ ችግር አለ? ያብራሩልኝ?

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