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Relapse prevention in the treatment of slot-machine pathological gambling: Long-term outcome

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## SUMMARY

The aim of this paper was, on the one hand, to determine the efficacy of stimulus control and exposure with response prevention in stopping pathological gambling and, on the other hand, to test the comparative effectiveness of two therapeutic modalities (individual and group) for relapse prevention, relative to a control group, in order to maintain abstinence. The sample consisted of 69 patients selected according to DSM-IV criteria. At the first part of the study, an one-group design with repeated measures of assessment (pre and posttreatment) was used. At the second part, a multigroup experimental design with repeated measures (pretreatment, posttreatment and 1, 3, 6 and 12-month follow-up) was used. All treated patients gave up gambling at the end of the first part of the study. In the second part results related to relapse showed a success rate higher in both individual and group relapse prevention than in the control group. These results raise the necessity of using relapse prevention programs in the treatment of pathological gambling. Implications of this study for clinical practice and future research in this field are discussed upon.

Key-words: Pathological gambling. Slot machine. Treatment. Stimulus control. Exposure with response prevention. Relapse prevention.

Pathological gambling is a behavioral disorder that was first classified as a nosological entity with specific diagnostic criteria in the *DSM-III* (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Currently, pathological gambling is categorized in the *DSM-IV* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) as an impulse control disorder. It is a psychological addiction characterized by emotional dependence on gambling and by a chronic and progressive failure in resisting the impulse to gamble. As a consequence, important alterations occur in the family, social, working and personal environments of pathological gamblers, which interfere with normal functioning in daily life. At the same time, other associated clinical problems are not rare, such as depression, increased risk of suicide, and alcohol abuse (Báez, Echeburúa & Fernández-Montalvo, 1994; McCormick & Ramírez, 1988).

Pathological gambling is a disorder of great social relevance. According to epidemiological studies in Spain (Becoña, 1993; Irurita, 1996; Legarda, Babio & Abreu, 1992), the prevalence rate ranges between 1% and 3% of the population, with an additional 3%-4% of individuals at risk. Those figures are similar to those obtained in other countries (*cf.* Bland, Newman, Orn & Stebelsky, 1993; Volberg & Steadman, 1988, 1989). The main therapeutic demand in our environment comes from the slot machine gamblers (Echeburúa, 1992; Echeburúa & Báez, 1994a).

From a clinical point of view, the therapeutic objective in the treatment of pathological gambling, as it usually is in addictive disorders generally (Echeburúa & Báez, 1994b), is abstinence. As far as the effectiveness of therapy is concerned, there have been few controlled studies. Furthermore, most of the studies refer generally to combinations of techniques in which the effective component cannot be always isolated (Blaszczynski, 1985, 1993).

However, three lines of research can be delineated in the treatment of pathological gambling: *imaginal desensitization* —a variant of systematic desensitization—, designed to Behavior Therapy, 2000, Vol. 31, Issue 2, pp. 351-364.

cope with the psychophysiological hyperactivation (*cf.* McConaghy, Armstrong, Blaszczynski & Allcock, 1983, 1988; Blaszczynski, McConaghy & Frankova, 1991); *cognitive restructuring*, justified by the high number of cognitive disorders present in the gamblers (*cf.* Sylvain & Ladouceur, 1997); and, finally, *in vivo exposure with response prevention and control of stimuli*, designed to face the craving for gambling and to increase expectations of self-effectiveness regarding the capacity to control gambling (Echeburúa, Báez & Fernández-Montalvo, 1994, 1996). The results obtained with these techniques have been satisfactory in assessments done after treatment. In some cases, even a rate of 100% abstinence has been reached (*cf.* Echeburúa *et al.*, 1996). However, as happens in other addictions, a substantial percentage of individuals (around a third) relapse in the first months after therapy. Therefore, relapse prevention is the main challenge for the treatment of addictive disorders.

However, there is no controlled research on relapse prevention in pathological gambling. Thus, the main goal of this study is to compare the differential effectiveness of two specific kinds of relapse prevention —individual and group modality—, after treatment and based on Marlatt & Gordon's model (1985), with a control group without relapse prevention. All participants, the control group included, were treated in the first phase of the study with control of stimuli and *in vivo* exposure with response prevention, which, according to some previous studies (Echeburúa *et al.*, 1994, 1996), seems to be the most adequate treatment for the initial cessation of this kind of problem.

Therefore the most important target of this study was to implement a strategy to maintain abstinence from gambling in the long term. The main hypotheses were as follows: a) all patients will give up gambling in a short term after being treated in the first phase of the study; b) treated patients with relapse prevention will improve more than non-treated patients in the long term; and c) individual modality will be superior to group modality in this second phase.

With respect to measures, because we can not have objective tests in the assessment of

this disorder, self-reports have been used. Nevertheless, data obtained from the patient have been contrasted with information given by the family. In that way, as has been stressed in some studies (Blaszczynski *et al.*, 1991; Lesieur & Blume, 1987), validity is increased.

## **METHOD**

### **Subjects**

The sample for this study consisted of patients who sought treatment at the Pathological Gambling Center of Rentería (Basque Country) during the period from February 1994 to March 1996.

According to the criteria for admission to the study, the patients had to: a) meet the diagnostic criteria of pathological gambling according to the *DSM-IV* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994); b) have a score equal to or above 4 on the spanish version (Echeburúa, Báez, Fernández-Montalvo & Páez, 1994) of **South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS)** (Lesieur & Blume, 1987) in order to prevent false positives; c) not be suffering from another psychopathological disorder; and d) gamble primarily with slot machines. The adoption of the last two requirements corresponds to the goal of focusing on "pure" gamblers (unafflicted by other clinical disorders) and on a homogeneous sample regarding the type of gambling involved.

After screening the 104 subjects who came to the therapeutic programme for pathological gambling during this period of time, the sample was reduced to 69 subjects (60 men and 9 women). All selected patients gave their informed consent to take part in the study. The main reasons for exclusion from the study of the 35 other gamblers were the following: a) they suffered from another serious behavioral disorder (mainly alcoholism and schizophrenia) ( $N=17$ ); and b) they gambled in other ways than with slot machines ( $N=14$ ).

The sample selected ( $N=69$ ) reported a mean age of 36 years ( $SD=13.7$ ) and the ratio men to women (6-7/1) was similar to that in other clinical studies (Echeburúa *et al.*, 1994, 1996; McConaghy, Blaszczynski & Frankova, 1991; Sylvain & Ladouceur, 1997). The socioeconomic level of the sample was middle and lower class. Gambling behavior is characterized in mean

values as being frequent (5 days/week), entailing a considerable amount of money spent (19,000 pts./week, approx. \$127 US at current rate of exchange), and involving a substantial amount of time (8 hours/week). Moreover patients were heavily in debt (mean: 700,000 pts., approx. \$4,670 US at current rate of exchange).

## **Experimental Design**

This study had two parts. The method used in the first part was a *one-group design*, with repeated measures of assessment (pre and posttreatment). Thus, the 69 patients of the sample received the same therapy (stimulus control and *in vivo* exposure with response prevention). The goal of this treatment, carried out in an individual modality, was to obtain total abstinence of gambling and in this manner, to pass to the second part of the study: relapse prevention.

At the second part, a *multigroup experimental design* (with two treatment groups and one control group) with repeated measures (pretreatment, posttreatment and 1, 3, 6 and 12-month follow-up) was used. Thus, at the end of the first part of the study, once gambling behavior was interrupted, patients were randomly assigned to the three groups. The treatment modalities used were the following: a) individual relapse prevention; b) group relapse prevention; and c) control group with no treatment.

## **Procedure**

### *Assessment*

In the selection phase, an interview based on the diagnostic criteria of the *DSM-IV* (APA, 1994) and the *SOGS* were used as screening tests in order to determine which subjects would take part in the study. For ethical reasons, patients who were excluded also received therapeutic treatment, but were not included in the study.

The pretreatment assessment measures were administered to the patients before beginning the initial treatment programme. Three assessment sessions, with a duration of one hour, were carried out with each patient and the content of the therapy was explained to them. When initial therapy was finished, a posttreatment assessment session was carried out in order

to establish therapeutic results and to select the patients who would take part in the second part of the study. The requirement for the second part of the study was total abstinence of gambling. The patients who met this criterion were randomly assigned to one of the three modalities. Moreover, this assessment session was the initial assessment of the relapse prevention programme. The following evaluations -always in the format of a personal interview- took place when the relapse prevention programme was finished and in the 1-, 3-, 6- and 12-month follow-ups. The control group was assessed at the same times as the experimental groups. All the assessments were conducted by an independent assessor, an experienced clinical psychologist who was unaware of the therapeutic modality in which the patient was involved.

### *Treatment*

The therapist who carried out the assessment and treatment of all of the patients (the second author of this paper) is a clinical psychologist with five years of experience in cognitive-behavioral treatment of pathological gambling.

### **Assessment Measures**

#### *Interviews*

The diagnosis of pathological gambling was made according to *DSM-IV* diagnostic criteria. In addition, a structured interview on gambling history was carried out (45 minutes) in the first assessment, the objective of which was to gather data related to the beginning and subsequent development of the gambling problem.

#### *Assessment of Dependency on Gambling*

The assessment tool, related directly to pathological gambling, was the **South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS)** (Lesieur & Blume, 1987). The **SOGS** is a screening questionnaire composed of 20 items which are related to gambling behavior, loss of control, the sources for obtaining money and the emotions involved. The range is from 0 to 20. According to Lesieur & Blume (1987), a score higher than 5 (the cut-off point) serves to identify probable pathological gamblers. The four-week test-retest reliability is .71 and the internal consistency is .97. From the

perspective of convergent validity, the correlation with the clinical assessment of pathological gambling according to the diagnostic criteria of the *DSM-III-R* (American Psychiatric Association, 1987) is .94, and it is .60 with the assessment by a patient's family member. This tool is used only in the first assessment because it is not a test sensitive to therapeutic change (Echeburúa *et al.*, 1996).

In this study the spanish version of *SOGS* was used. This assessment tool has a test-retest reliability of .98 and the internal consistency is .94. The convergent validity with *DSM-IV* criteria is .92. The range of spanish version is from 0 to 19. A score higher than 4 (the cut-off point) serves to identify probable pathological gamblers (Echeburúa *et al.*, 1994).

Some relevant information about gambling dependent variables was also gathered: the amount of money, the frequency, and the time dedicated weekly to gambling on average. The patient's perception of the seriousness of the *frequency*, *time* and *money* invested in gambling was also evaluated, along with the *frequency of thoughts* about gambling and the *subjective need to play*: this is called the **patient's subjective indicator**. The scores for each variable vary from 0 (nothing) to 4 (very much) on a Likert-type scale, and the summed total ranged from 0 to 20. These same questions were asked of patient's families to compare to patient self-report. This is called the **family member assessment**.

#### *Assessment of Associated Psychopathological Symptoms*

In addition to gambling-related measures, other psychopathological indicators habitually associated with gambling were evaluated: depression (*BDI*), anxiety (*STAI*) and lack of adaptation to daily life. Tools were used that have been shown to be sensitive to therapeutic change.

The **Inadaptation Scale** (Echeburúa & Corral, 1987) reflects the extent to which gambling affects different areas of daily life: work, social life, free time, marital adjustment, and family adjustment. This tool, with 6 items that range from 0 to 5 on a Likert-type scale, is also composed of a global scale which reflects the degree of global inadaptation to daily life. The

range of the total scale is from 0 to 30 (the higher the score, the greater the inadaptation). The version used in this study is described in Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa (1997).

### **Therapeutic Modalities**

*Stimulus control and gradual "in vivo" exposure with response prevention.* The control of stimuli refers basically to maintaining control of money (not taking money with him/her, except what is strictly necessary; reporting all expenses to a relative; managing income, etc.) and to avoiding *situations or routes of risk* as well as gamblers' friends. As treatment advances, the control of stimuli is gradually faded, except avoiding gamblers' friends.

The gradual "in vivo" exposure with response prevention forces the subject to experience *the desire to gamble* and to learn how to *resist* this desire in a gradually more self-controlled way. The aim of systematic exposure to cues and situations of risk is to make the cues lose their power to induce urges and gambling behavior.

These two techniques were used sequentially in an individual therapy format. The control of stimuli can stop gambling behavior, but if planned exposure is not carried out, the probability of relapse in the relatively near future is greater. A detailed diary of the sessions, along with the corresponding homework, is included in Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa (1997).

*Individual relapse prevention.* The first goal of this program is to train the patient to identify high-risk situations for relapse; the second goal is to provide him/her adequate strategies for coping with problematic situations. In this way, the patient learns to identify and to discriminate the risk situations which can lead to an initial lapse in gambling. The usual high-risk situations which are contemplated at this programme are social pressure, negative emotional states (e.g., anxiety, depression and anger) and interpersonal conflicts. These three situations are the main risk factors for relapse (*cf.* Marlatt & Gordon, 1985).

However, the programme also includes the confrontation of each patient with specific high-risk situations, as well as an educational intervention about some factors which may

contribute to relapse: alcohol abuse, irrational expectations about gambling, lack of money planning, lack of pleasure activities, and so on. Finally, an individualized exposure programme for high-risk situations is elaborated. The goal of exposure is to practice the confrontation strategies in a systematic way and so, to increase self-efficacy expectations. A detailed diary of the sessions, along with the assigned homework, is included in Fernández-Montalvo & Echeburúa (1997).

*Group relapse prevention.* The characteristics of this modality (group size ranged from 4 to 7 persons) are the same as the individual modality. The only difference is that duration of sessions is higher than individual modality (2 hours each session) because of the demands of group treatment, specifically the development of cohesion between group members, discussion of greater variety of situations, and provision of individual attention for each patient.

## **RESULTS**

The total sample was made up of 69 subjects, who proved to have a strong dependency on gambling. The average score on the SOGS was 10.5 ( $SD=2.5$ ), with a range from 6 to 15.

In this study *therapeutic success* was defined as abstinence or the occurrence of only 1 or 2 episodes of gambling during the 12 months following therapy, provided that the total amount of money spent was not greater than a week's worth of gambling in the phase prior to treatment. In the determination of *failures*, both individuals whose gambling exceeded these criteria and the drop-outs were included.

### **Results of initial treatment**

All subjects of the sample ( $N=69$ ) gave up gambling after receiving the initial treatment (stimulus control and exposure with response prevention) (first part of the study). Thus, 100% were abstinent and so, were included in the second part of the study.

### **Results of relapse prevention**

#### *Rate of Success and Failure*

At the 3-month follow-up the patients treated in the two experimental conditions

showed a rate of success of 91%, higher than that of the patients who belonged to the control group (61%). This difference was statistically significant ( $X^2=9.28$ ;  $p<.01$ ) (**Table 1**). This difference was maintained at 12-month follow-up. At this time, the two therapeutic groups were equally effective with a rate of success of 82.6% in the individual treatment and of 78.3% in the group treatment. Both modalities were significantly higher than control group (56%) ( $X^2=6.05$ ;  $p<.05$ ).

**PLACE TABLE 1 HERE**

*Results of Gambling Dependent Variables and of the Psychopathological Measures*

*a) Between-Group Analysis*

The means, the standard deviations and the *F*-values of the gambling dependent variables and of the psychopathological measures studied at different times in the assessment are shown in **Tables 2** and **3**, respectively.

**PLACE TABLES 2 AND 3 HERE**

Concerning the gambling variables, there were some significant between-group differences in the subjective indicator and in the family-member assessment. In the case of the subjective indicator, differences began at the 1-month follow-up ( $F=3.90$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and were maintained up to the 12-month follow-up ( $F=4.05$ ;  $p<.05$ ). In the case of the family-member assessment, differences were only detected at the 12-month follow-up ( $F=3.80$ ;  $p<.05$ ). The post-hoc *LSD* test at the 12-month follow-up revealed the superiority of the therapeutic groups with respect to the control group and the lack of differences among the two therapeutic groups.

Concerning the psychopathological measures, the *ANOVA* revealed significant differences in anxiety and depression, which were maintained up to the 12-month follow-up. The post-hoc *LSD* test, at this assessment, revealed the superiority of the two therapeutic groups for reducing both anxiety and depression and the lack of differences among the two therapeutic groups in both variables.

*b) Within-Group Analysis*

In **Tables 4 and 5** *F*- and *t*-values are shown, at each assessment interval, of the *ANOVA* of repeated measures for the main gambling dependent variables and the psychopathological measures of all of the groups.

#### **PLACE TABLES 4 AND 5 HERE**

In all subjective gambling variables (subjective indicator and family-member assessment) in the two experimental groups, both an improvement between the pre- and posttreatment phases and a continuation of the therapeutic results up to the 12-month follow-up were seen. On the other hand, no changes were observed in the control group, although a tendency to become worse at follow-up was seen.

Concerning the psychopathological variables (anxiety, depression and inadaptation), in the two experimental groups a significant improvement was seen between the pre- and posttreatment. Likewise a continuation of the therapeutic results, except in inadaptation (which tended to increase), up to the 12-month follow-up was seen. In contrast, in the control group there was no remission of psychopathological variables.

#### *Drop-outs, therapeutic failures and relapses*

The total number of drop-outs in all phases of the study was 10, which constituted 14.5% of the subjects who initiated treatment. There were no significant differences among the different modalities -not even between the experimental groups and the control group- regarding the different time of the therapeutic programme in which the subjects dropped out, though they tended to take place, as usual in all addictive disorders, within 3-months of follow-up.

Once the differential characteristics of the patients who dropped-out of the study were analysed, only anxiety differentiated them significantly from the rest ( $t=2.24$ ;  $p<.05$ ). The mean anxiety of the subjects (when they came to treatment) who dropped-out ( $M=39.6$ ;  $SD=4.50$ ) was greater than that of those who continued ( $M=29.5$ ;  $SD=9.89$ ).

The relapses between posttreatment and the 12-month follow-up affected 10 subjects (14.5% of the sample treated). The relapses took place significantly more often in the control

group ( $N=6$ ) than in experimental groups ( $N=2$  in both individual and group modalities). The total number of therapeutic failures (drop-outs and relapses) was 29% (20 subjects) of the initial sample. From a qualitative point of view, most failures appeared to be distributed through the entire follow-up period, but with a notable incidence (65% of the cases) during the three first months after therapy. Therapeutic failures were more frequent in the control group ( $X^2=6.05$ ;  $p<.05$ ).

## **DISCUSSION**

The advantages of this study include the equivalence of the groups in the pre-treatment in all evaluative measures, the coherence of the results obtained on the different variables measured and the homogeneity of the sample and its size. Likewise, the therapeutic success with multiple dependent variables (money, frequency, time, subjective indicator of the patient and family's assessment) was emphasized, and appropriate instruments to assess these domains were included. On the other hand, in this study, in order to avoid an overestimation of the probability of success, the rate of drop-outs is included in the calculation of failures, consistent with Blaszczynski's suggestion (1993).

This is the first controlled study of pathological gambling in which a programme of relapse prevention is specifically tested. In some studies, relapse prevention is included as an additional component of the treatment of pathological gambling (*cf.* González, 1989; Bujold, Ladouceur, Sylvain & Boisvert, 1994; Ladouceur, Boisvert & Dumont, 1994; Lesieur & Blume, 1991; Mercadé, González, Pastor & Aymamí, 1990; Schwartz & Lindner, 1992; Sylvain & Ladouceur, 1997; McCormick & Taber, 1991). However, in this kind of multicomponent therapeutic programme, it is difficult to isolate the specific importance of relapse prevention, as well as the importance of other components.

Pathological gambling is a disorder that can be treated successfully, in spite of the level of impairment associated with the disorder. In fact, in this study, the control of the stimuli and Behavior Therapy, 2000, Vol. 31, Issue 2, pp. 351-364.

the *in vivo* exposure with response prevention reached a rate of 100% abstinence when the intervention was completed. These results match those obtained in a previous study from our group (Echeburúa *et al.*, 1994, 1996), which heightens confidence in this finding. Therefore, the combination of these two techniques is, nowadays, the treatment of choice to achieve the total cessation of gambling behavior, as well as improvement in the associated psychopathological variables.

From the perspective of relapse prevention, the results demonstrate the clear superiority of both modalities, without any difference between individual and group format, over the control group. To be exact, at the 12 month follow-up, the control group presents a rate of relapse of 47.8%, despite the fact that every individual was abstinent after receiving the initial treatment. This number is much higher than what was noted in the therapeutic groups (17.4% in the individual form and 21.7% in the group mode). In light of these results, it seems necessary, therefore, to finish the programme of treatment of pathological gambling with a specific intervention to prevent relapse. In short, the intention is to show the patients how to identify the situations with high risk to relapse, as well as adequate strategies to cope with those situations.

In any case, the results obtained in the 12 month follow-up of this study are better than those found with other type of therapeutic approaches (*cf.* McConaghy *et al.*, 1983, 1988; Blaszczynski *et al.*, 1991; Echeburúa *et al.*, 1994, 1996; Sylvain & Ladouceur, 1997).

Apart from *effectiveness*, an important conclusion of this study regards *efficiency*. From the point of view of cost-benefits, the possibility of implementing the intervention in a group format saves a great amount of costs, because a greater number of patients can be treated without diminishing the quality of the intervention.

As far as the therapeutic course is concerned, the initial treatment succeeds in bringing rapid improvement in every variable studied, both gambling variables (to which the program is specifically directed) and psychopathological variables. Later, when relapse prevention is

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applied, improvement continues, although slower, in both types of variables. These results are stable until the 12 month follow-up. The control group, by contrast, does not increase improvement after initial treatment, but shows a tendency towards deterioration.

Often, the family perceives changes in the individual, both positive and negative, later than does the patient him/herself (*cf.* **table 2**). From a cognitive perspective, relatives -used to suffering from the lasting addiction of the patient and his frequent lies- are distrustful about the improvement and require enough time to change their overlearned perceptions about the gambling dependency of the patient.

The rate of drop-outs in this study is 14.5% of the total of the sample, which is clearly below the 50% rate reported by Greenberg & Rankin (1982), below the 70% rate in Anonymous Gamblers according to Brown's study (1987), below the 30% rate in the investigation by Lesieur & Blume (1991), and below the 22% rate in the study by Echeburúa *et al.* (1996). Therefore, we can conclude that the programme presented here is perceived as attractive by the patients.

It is not possible to forget that there still exists 19.5% of individuals for whom, despite receiving an intervention to prevent relapse, the treatment fails. Because of that, a very interesting line of research is the detailed study of therapeutic failures to determine variables that can predict relapse. The treatment of this mental disorder may improve as a result.

Finally, in this study there are some limitations. First, all treated patients are slot-machine pathological gamblers. Although these are the most frequent treatment seekers in clinical samples, they may not be totally representative of the larger population of problem gamblers. Second, in this study gamblers with comorbid psychopathological disorders were not included. These individuals are prevalent in clinical practice. Third, it may be interesting for future research, when comparing individual and group treatment, to balance not only the number of sessions, but also the total amount of time of therapy in both modalities. And fourth, Behavior Therapy, 2000, Vol. 31, Issue 2, pp. 351-364.

in this study we have focused only on the occurrence of relapse (which is the most relevant variable), not on the severity (e.g., money invested in gambling). This last point deserves more attention in future research.

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**TABLE 1: RATE OF SUCCESS AND RESULTS OF *CHI-SQUARED* IN THE ASSESSMENT CONTROLS (N=69)**

Assessment	Individual treatment	Group treatment	Control group	$\chi^2$
	----- N (%)	----- N (%)	----- N (%)	
<b>Post.</b>	23 (100%)	23 (100%)	21 (91.3%)	4.11
<b>1 month</b>	22 (95.7%)	21 (91.3%)	17 (73.9%)	5.36
<b>3 months</b>	21 (91.3%)	21 (91.3%)	14 (60.9%)	9.28 **
<b>6 months</b>	20 (87%)	20 (87%)	13 (56.5%)	7.97 *
<b>12 months</b>	19 (82.6%)	18 (78.3%)	12 (52.2%)	6.05 *

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

**TABLE 2: MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND F-VALUES OF GAMBLING DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

	<b>Individual treatment</b> ----- <b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Group treatment</b> ----- <b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Control group</b> ----- <b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>SUBJECTIVE INDICATOR</b> (0-20)				
Pretreatment	1.9 (1.6)	2.2 (1.9)	1.7 (0.9)	0.25
Posttreatment	0.6 (1.3)	0.8 (1.6)	1.5 (3.4)	0.84
1 month	0.4 (1.2)	0.6 (2.3)	3.7 (7.1)	3.90 *
3 months	1.0 (4.1)	1.0 (2.7)	4.9 (7.5)	4.10 *
6 months	1.1 (4.1)	1.1 (3.5)	5.3 (8.1)	4.05 *
12 months	1.5 (4.1)	1.1 (3.5)	5.3 (8.2)	3.53 *
<b>FAMILY ASSESSMENT</b> (0-20)				
Pretreatment	1.7 (2.1)	2.1 (2.1)	1.8 (1.2)	0.29
Posttreatment	1.1 (1.9)	1.4 (1.8)	1.2 (3.2)	0.12
1 month	1.2 (2.2)	1.5 (3.6)	3.7 (6.9)	1.77
3 months	1.2 (4.1)	1.5 (4.1)	4.8 (7.3)	2.95
6 months	1.3 (4.1)	1.8 (3.4)	5.5 (8.3)	2.94
12 months	1.4 (3.8)	1.2 (3.4)	5.4 (8.2)	3.80 *

\*  $p < 0.05$

**TABLE 3: MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND F-VALUES OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL VARIABLES**

	<b>Individual treatment</b> ----- <b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Group treatment</b> ----- <b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>Control group</b> ----- <b>Mean (SD)</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>ANXIETY (STAI) (0-60)</b>				
Pretreatment	15.3 (12.1)	14.6 (5.2)	15.7 (12.5)	0.06
Posttreatment	7.3 (11.3)	7.1 (3.3)	14.6 (12.1)	4.25 *
1 month	5.1 (9.2)	6.1 (5.4)	13.7 (11.5)	5.69 **
3 months	5.2 (9.3)	4.3 (5.5)	14.9 (12.1)	8.19 ***
6 months	4.7 (9.1)	4.4 (7.8)	13.7 (12.4)	5.77 **
12 months	4.2 (8.9)	4.2 (8.1)	11.6 (9.3)	4.83 *
<b>DEPRESSION (BDI) (0-63)</b>				
Pretreatment	8.3 (4.5)	8.1 (4.4)	9.7 (8.1)	0.48
Posttreatment	3.3 (4.6)	4.1 (3.4)	6.1 (8.2)	1.37
1 month	2.6 (3.6)	4.1 (5.7)	6.5 (8.6)	2.06
3 months	2.3 (4.3)	3.1 (4.9)	7.1 (7.9)	3.85 *
6 months	1.8 (4.5)	2.8 (5.3)	7.3 (8.2)	4.63 *
12 months	2.3 (5.2)	2.6 (5.3)	6.3 (6.6)	3.01 *
<b>INADAPTATION (EI) (0-30)</b>				
Pretreatment	8.3 (5.8)	9.1 (5.6)	8.2 (6.2)	0.13
Posttreatment	6.1 (4.5)	7.1 (6.1)	6.6 (8.8)	0.10
1 month	4.5 (4.6)	5.4 (6.2)	8.7 (10.1)	1.95
3 months	3.1 (5.9)	3.1 (5.6)	7.5 (9.5)	2.56
6 months	2.5 (5.4)	3.1 (7.1)	7.4 (10.1)	2.42
12 months	3.2 (7.1)	3.1 (7.1)	7.1 (10.2)	1.65

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

**TABLE 4: WITHIN-GROUP COMPARISONS (*F*- AND *t*-VALUES) IN GAMBLING DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

	<b>INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT</b>	<b>GROUP TREATMENT</b>	<b>CONTROL GROUP</b>
<b>SUBJECTIVE INDICATOR</b>	<i>F</i> = 2.84	<i>F</i> = 5.56 **	<i>F</i> = 3.80 *
	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>
	-----	-----	-----
<b>Pre.-Post.</b>	6.99 *** (++++)	6.20 *** (++++)	1.00
<b>Post.-12 months</b>	1.48	0.60	2.14 *
<b>FAMILY ASSESSMENT</b>	<i>F</i> = 1.12	<i>F</i> = 2.10	<i>F</i> = 4.27 *
	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>
	-----	-----	-----
<b>Pre.-Post.</b>	3.04 ** (+)	4.74 *** (++++)	1.00
<b>Post.-12 months</b>	0.62	0.40	2.34 *
Nominal signification: * <i>p</i> <0.05 ** <i>p</i> <0.01 *** <i>p</i> <0.001 Bonferroni for 2 comparisons: + <i>p</i> <0.025 ++ <i>p</i> <0.005 +++ <i>p</i> <0.0005			

**TABLE 5: WITHIN-GROUP COMPARISONS (*F*- AND *t*-VALUES) IN PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL VARIABLES**

	<b>INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT</b>	<b>GROUP TREATMENT</b>	<b>CONTROL GROUP</b>
<b>ANXIETY (<i>STAI</i>)</b>	<i>F</i> = 22.8 ***	<i>F</i> = 24.4 ***	<i>F</i> = 3.35 *
	<i>t</i> -----	<i>t</i> -----	<i>t</i> -----
<b>Pre.-Post. Post.-12 months</b>	4.76 *** (+++) 1.75	6.80 *** (+++) 1.92	1.00 1.50
<b>DEPRESSION (<i>BDI</i>)</b>	<i>F</i> = 30.6 ***	<i>F</i> = 16.8 ***	<i>F</i> = 3.86 *
	<i>t</i> -----	<i>t</i> -----	<i>t</i> -----
<b>Pre.-Post. Post.-12 months</b>	7.07 *** (+++) 0.50	4.97 *** (+++) 1.20	1.00 0.11
<b>INADAPTATION (<i>Inadaptation Scale</i>)</b>	<i>F</i> = 8.33 ***	<i>F</i> = 7.24 **	<i>F</i> = 0.42
	<i>t</i> -----	<i>t</i> -----	<i>t</i> -----
<b>Pre.-Post. Post.-12 months</b>	4.82 *** (+++) 2.15 *	2.98 ** (+) 2.19 *	1.00 0.04
Nominal signification: * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$ Bonferroni for 2 comparisons: + $p < 0.025$ ++ $p < 0.005$ +++ $p < 0.0005$			