

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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## Alcohol habits among subjects with gambling disorders in Italy

In a recently published paper, Ferrara *et al.*<sup>1</sup> reported data on gambling disorders (GD) among young Italians, aged 10-16 years, collected by Massachusetts Adolescents Gambling Screen (MAGS 7). The results highlighted that 127 out of 322 (39%) participants were gamblers. Of them, 15 (11.8%) were pathological gamblers.<sup>1</sup> The paper contains interesting findings on the prevalence and distribution of GD in Italy, but other factors should be taken into account in describing such complex phenomenon.

Mental health problems affect about 1 in 10 young people. They range from depression and anxiety to conduct disorders. A part of conduct disorders is represented by GD and alcohol use disorder (AUD).<sup>2</sup>

Kovács *et al.*<sup>3</sup> reported that comorbid GD symptom severity was an important factor in chronic AUD, and AUD patients with comorbid GD symptoms exhibited a more maladaptive personality constellation than singular AUD patients. The authors concluded emphasizing the need of special attention for comorbid GD symptoms in AUD, since treatment recommendations and prognosis for them may also differ.<sup>3</sup>

AUD has a causal role for a significant number of deaths and diseases worldwide. Despite these data, medical attention to AUD remains inadequate and patients are not always treated in multidisciplinary environments.<sup>4</sup> In both hospitals and outpatient practices, a related alcohol problem is only identified in a minority (about 10-15%) of cases. As a result, treatment of the underlying pathology, which has motivated the patient to access the service results inappropriate and ineffective.<sup>5</sup> For this reasons the efforts against inappropriate alcohol intake should be well planned, as highlighted by the Italian Society on Alcohol.<sup>6</sup>

In conclusion, the work by Ferrara *et al.*<sup>1</sup> is a warning to plan campaigns aiming to evaluate mental GD among young Italians. I suggest that also comorbidities and especially AUD, should be carefully investigated and included in planning interventions.

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## Mental health in young people and the potential benefits of social media

The prevalence of many mental health disorders has risen recently. Most prominent in young people are anx-