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ATTENTIONAL BIAS AND PATHOLOGICAL GAMBLING. VALIDATION OF GAMBLING-RELATED PICTURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DOT-PROBE TASK

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**Background:** There is a growing trend to consider pathological gambling (PG) as an addictive behavior. Attentional bias (AB) occurs when the attentional channeling is directed towards emotionally valued stimuli despite an individual's effort to ignore them. This paradigm has been widely used to assess other addictions such as alcoholism and cocaine misuse. AB has been assessed in PG using the modified Stroop procedure. Despite that, to date, other procedures such as the dot-probe task have not been used.

**Objective:** To develop a dot-probe task to assess AB in PG.

**Methods:** We selected 38 gambling-related pictures that were validated using the Self-Assessment Manikin Visual Analogical Scale (SAM-VAS). This scale measures the pleasure, arousal, and dominance associated with a person's affective reaction to a wide variety of stimuli. We applied the scale to 20 subjects who met DSM-IV criteria for PG and to 20 matched control subjects.

**Results:** From 38 preselected pictures, 25 had an affective valence and enough intensity to be selected for the subsequent development of the dot-probe task.

**Conclusions:** To date, the modified Stroop procedure has been the only task carried out to assess AB in gamblers. These gambling-related pictures will be used to develop a dot-probe task to assess AB in pathological gamblers. In addition, we will assess the Eye movement task and Event-related Potentials, as direct measures of AB.