

# Impulsivity Mediates the Relationship between Gambling Problem Severity and Binge Eating



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## Introduction

Eating disorders frequently co-occur with gambling disorder (GD), particularly eating disorders associated with higher levels of impulsivity, such as binge eating disorder (BED)<sup>1</sup>. BED is characterized by a loss of control over eating habits.

Co-morbid GD and BED is associated with greater severity of gambling-related problems and psychopathology. Furthermore, both GD and BED are commonly associated with higher levels of impulsivity<sup>2</sup>.

Despite the association between co-morbid GD and BED and higher psychopathology, the mechanism in this relationship has not been examined. Given that impulsivity is a common feature of both BED and GD, there is reason to believe that impulsivity may be a mediator of this co-morbidity.

### Aim

Examine whether impulsivity mediates the relationship between gambling problem severity and binge eating severity.

### Hypotheses

- Higher levels of binge eating severity are associated with greater levels of gambling problem severity
- Higher levels of binge eating are associated with greater impulsivity
- Higher levels of impulsivity are associated with greater gambling problems controlling for binge eating severity
- Impulsivity mediates the relationship between gambling problem severity and binge eating severity

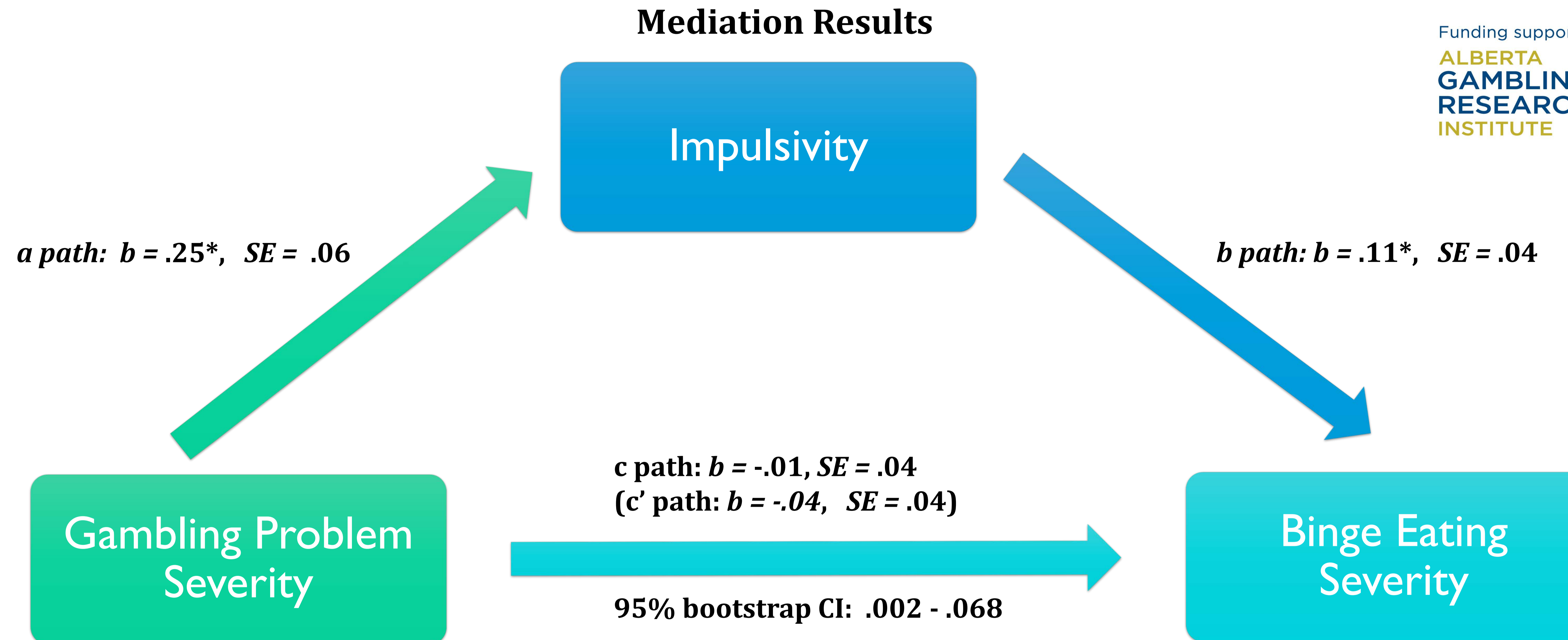
## Methods

### Participants:

210 disordered gamblers seeking treatment at the Gambling Outpatient Treatment Unit at the University of São Paulo, Brazil

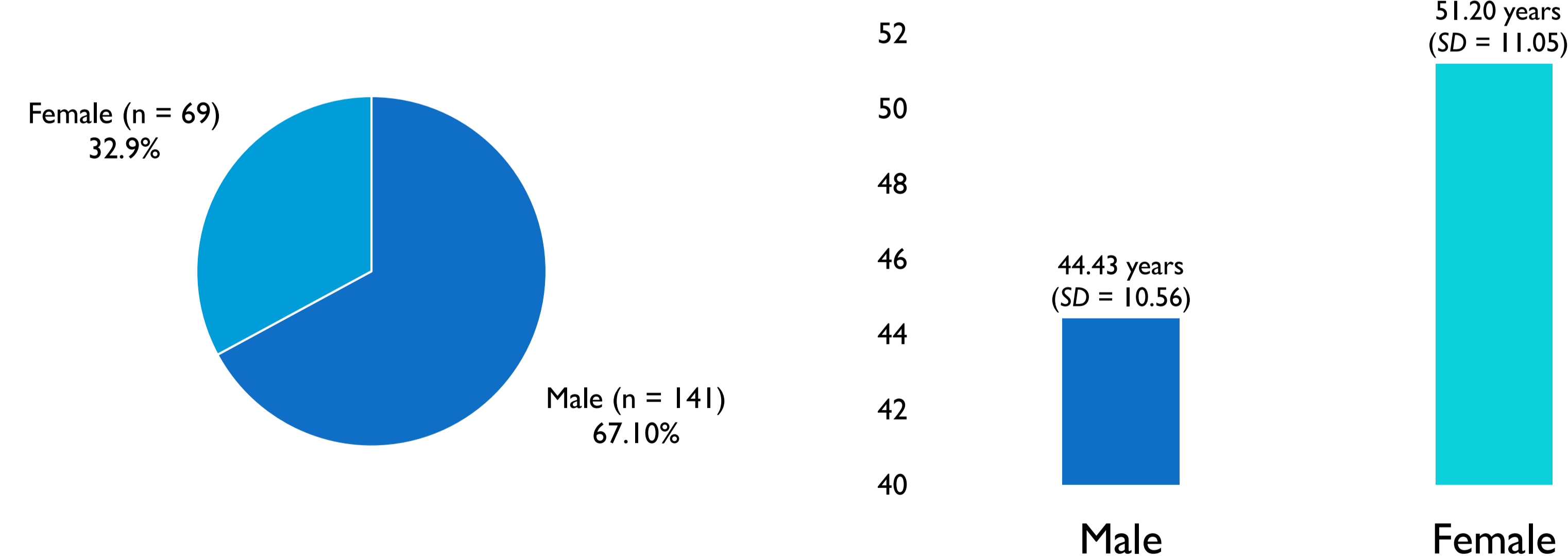
## Measures

- **Gambling Symptom Assessment Scale (GSAS):** Measures the severity of disordered gambling symptoms
- **Binge Eating Scale (BES):** Measures the severity of binge eating symptoms
- **Barratt Impulsiveness Scale - 11 (BIS-11):** Measures impulsivity, specifically measures cognitive, motor and non-planning facets

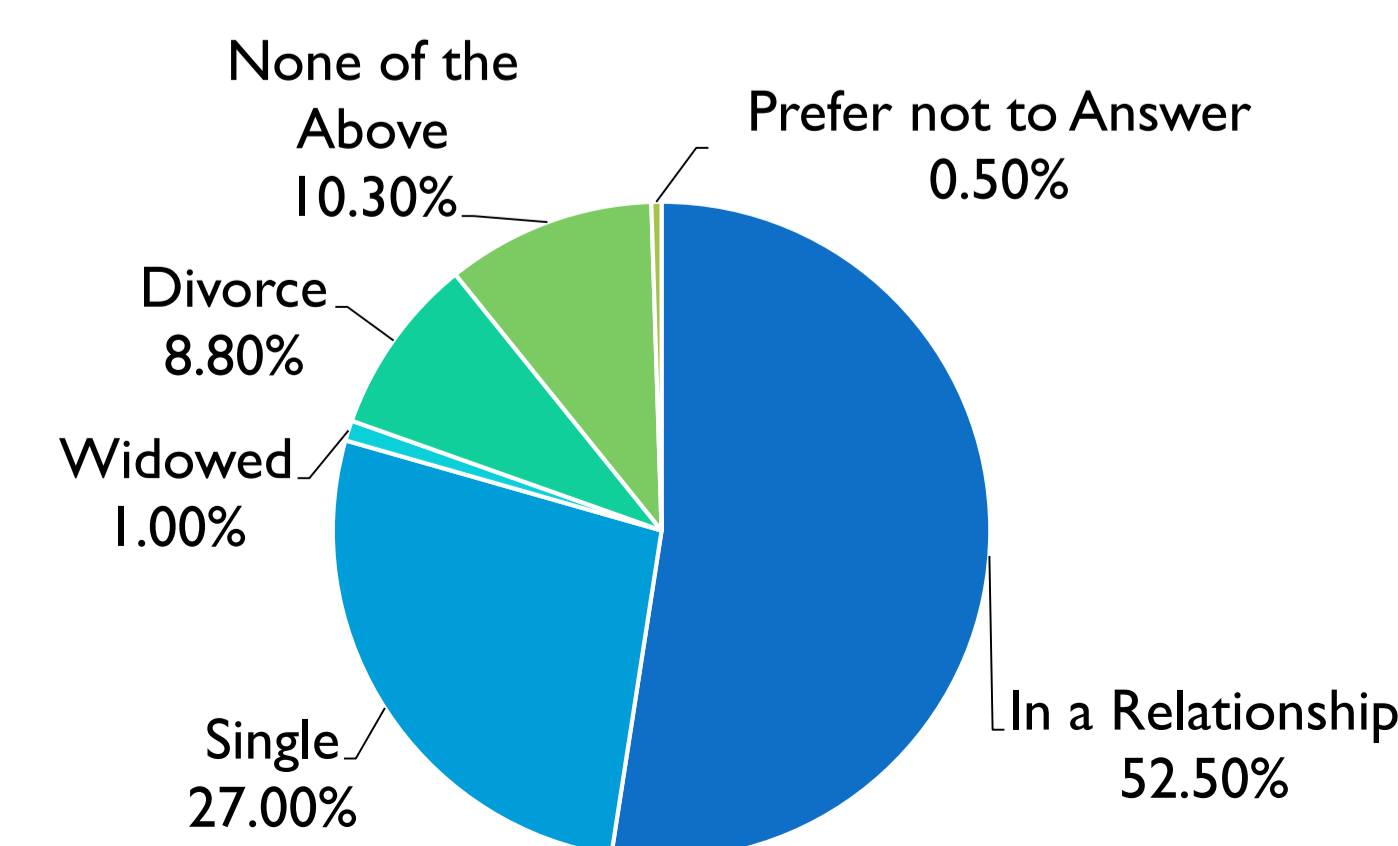


## Demographics:

### Sex



### Marital Status (n = 204)



## Discussion

In line with our hypotheses, and the existing literature<sup>3</sup> the results indicate that impulsivity may be a mediator between binge eating severity and problem gambling severity. Furthermore, impulsivity may be a shared feature that links co-morbid problem gambling and binge eating.

From a transdiagnostic perspective, targeting impulsivity during treatment may help reduce symptoms of both gambling and binge eating.

Future research should focus on specific mechanisms in which to treat the impulsivity which is common to both gambling and binge eating.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> von Ranson, K. M., Wallace, L. M., Holub, A., & Hodgins, D. C. (2013). Eating disorders, substance use disorders, and impulsiveness among disordered gamblers in a community sample. *European Eating Disorders Review*, 21(2), 148-154.
- <sup>2</sup> Kim, H. S., von Ranson, K. M., Hodgins, D. C., McGrath, D. S., & Tavares, H. (2018). Demographic, psychiatric, and personality correlates of adults seeking treatment for disordered gambling with a comorbid binge/purge type eating disorder. *European Eating Disorders Review*, 26(5), 508-518.
- <sup>3</sup> Kim, H. S., Cassetta, B. D., Hodgins, D. C., Tomfohr-Madsen, L. M., McGrath, D. S., & Tavares, H. (2018). Assessing the relationship between disordered gamblers with psychosis and increased gambling severity: the mediating role of impulsivity. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 63(6), 370-377.