Predictors of Treatment Goal Outcome for Problem Gamblers who Received a Brief Motivational Intervention

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BACKGROUND

- Rates of treatment-seeking for problem gamblers in Canada is roughly 18%.[1]

- Reported treatment barriers include: [2]
  - Intent to self-treat
  - Shame and stigma
  - Minimization or denial of problem.
  - Concerns about treatment (i.e., content, quality, availability, and practical issues).

- Brief treatments (BTs)[3] are short-term interventions that focus on effective change without recurring, intensive treatment.

- Motivational interviewing (MI)[4] is a client-centered intervention that aims to resolve ambivalence toward change.

- Understanding the prognostic features affecting treatment outcomes is important for several reasons, including:
  - Helping to determine treatment choice.
  - Informing treatment adaptations
  - Adjusting treatment methods to prevent dropout

- Focusing on treatment goal outcomes (TGOs) is important
  - More client-centered and may be more achievable for some individuals.

- The purpose of the current study was to explore predictors of TGOs in a large, brief treatment study.

METHODS

A sample of media-recruited disordered gamblers (*N* = 314) were randomly assigned to one of four conditions:

1. Combined telephone MI and self-help workbooks **(BT)**
2. Combined telephone MI and self-help workbooks with telephone booster sessions **(BBT)**
3. Self-help workbooks only **(WO)**
4. Waitlist **(WL)**.

Assessment Measures
Gambling severity.
- The NORC DSM–IV Screen for Gambling Problems (NODS)[5]

Psychiatric co-morbidities.
- The Primary Care Evaluation of Mental Disorders (PCEMD)[6]

Outcome variables
Five follow-up assessment periods:
- 6 weeks • 12 weeks • 24 weeks
- 36 weeks • 52 weeks
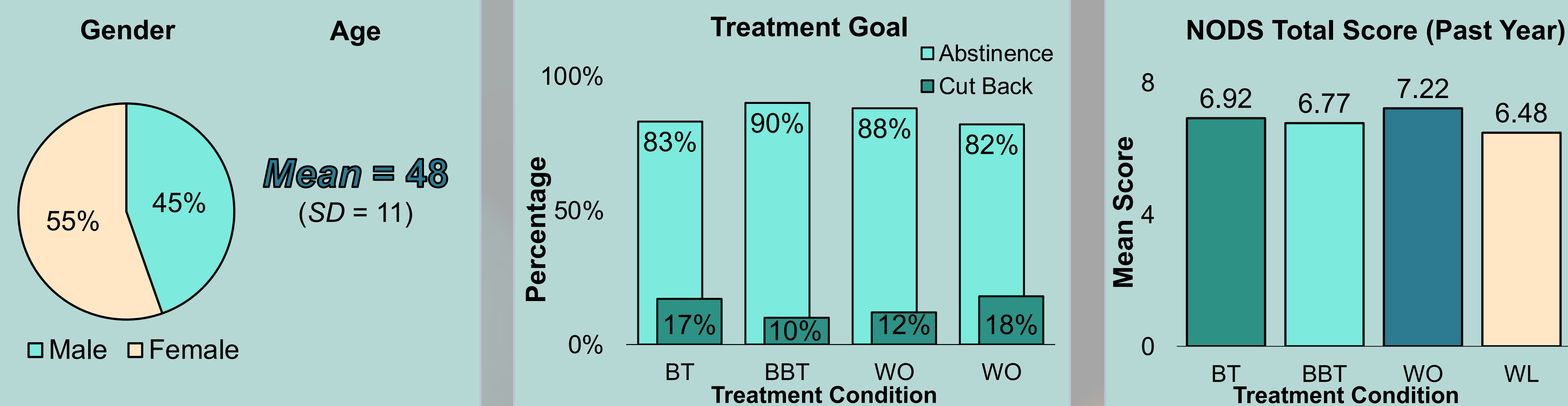
Each follow up involved:
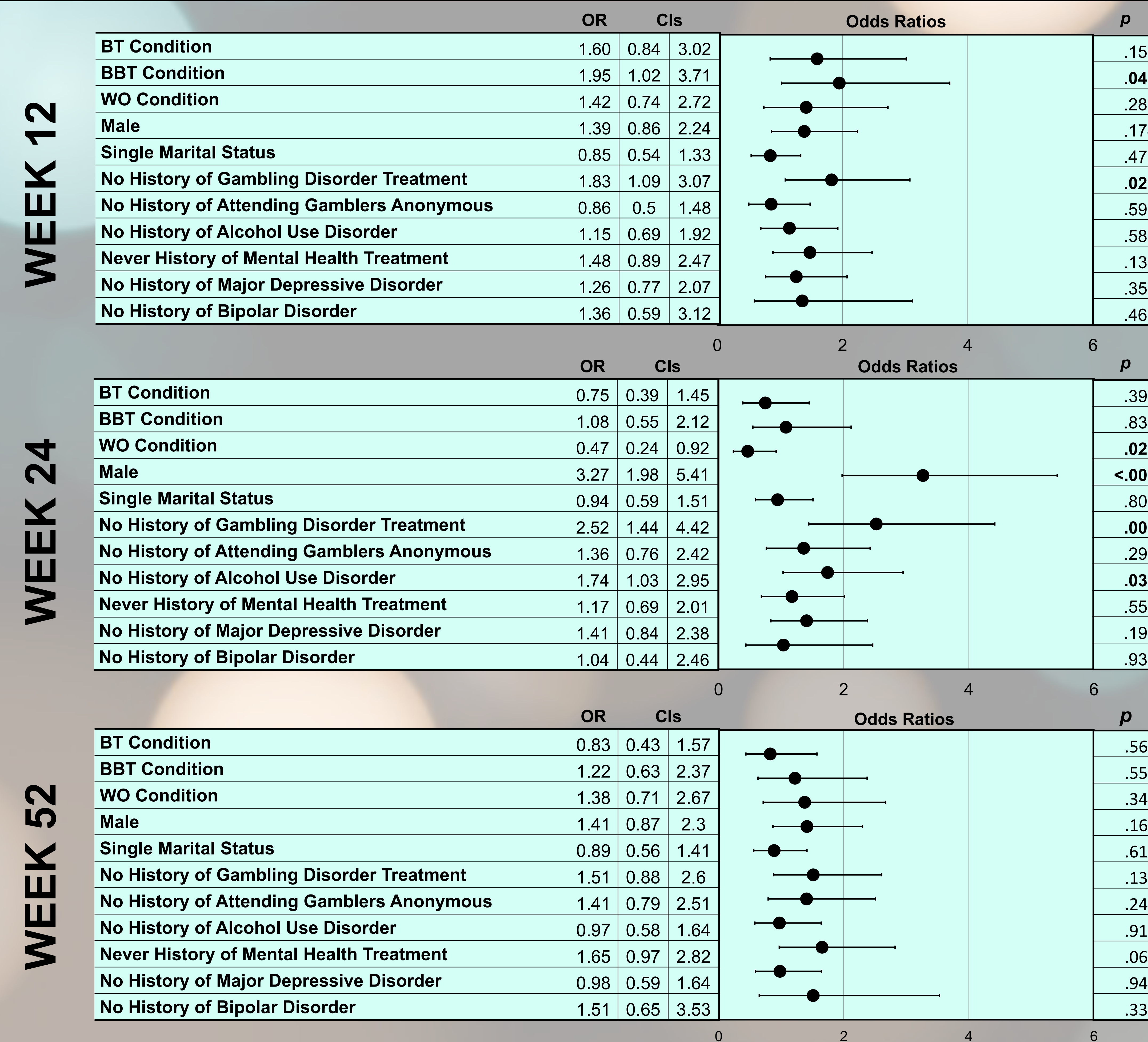- Assessment of present treatment goal and completion status

Statistical Analysis
Ordinal Regressions
- Predictors of TGOs (not, partially, mostly, or completely met) at the 12-week, 24-week, and 52-week follow-ups.

RESULTS: *Demographics*

Gender — 55% Male, 45% Female

Age — Mean = 48 (SD = 11)

Treatment Goal (Abstinence / Cut Back) by Treatment Condition:
- BT: 83% / 17%
- BBT: 90% / 10%
- WO: 88% / 12%
- WO: 82% / 18%

NODS Total Score (Past Year) by Treatment Condition:
- BT: 6.92
- BBT: 6.77
- WO: 7.22
- WL: 6.48

RESULTS: *Regression*

WEEK 12

	OR	CIs		Odds Ratios	*p*
BT Condition	1.60	0.84	3.02		.151
BBT Condition	1.95	1.02	3.71		**.042**
WO Condition	1.42	0.74	2.72		.289
Male	1.39	0.86	2.24		.174
Single Marital Status	0.85	0.54	1.33		.472
No History of Gambling Disorder Treatment	1.83	1.09	3.07		**.023**
No History of Attending Gamblers Anonymous	0.86	0.5	1.48		.590
No History of Alcohol Use Disorder	1.15	0.69	1.92		.581
Never History of Mental Health Treatment	1.48	0.89	2.47		.133
No History of Major Depressive Disorder	1.26	0.77	2.07		.357
No History of Bipolar Disorder	1.36	0.59	3.12		.469

WEEK 24

	OR	CIs		Odds Ratios	*p*
BT Condition	0.75	0.39	1.45		.390
BBT Condition	1.08	0.55	2.12		.831
WO Condition	0.47	0.24	0.92		**.028**
Male	3.27	1.98	5.41		**<.001**
Single Marital Status	0.94	0.59	1.51		.808
No History of Gambling Disorder Treatment	2.52	1.44	4.42		**.001**
No History of Attending Gamblers Anonymous	1.36	0.76	2.42		.296
No History of Alcohol Use Disorder	1.74	1.03	2.95		**.038**
Never History of Mental Health Treatment	1.17	0.69	2.01		.559
No History of Major Depressive Disorder	1.41	0.84	2.38		.199
No History of Bipolar Disorder	1.04	0.44	2.46		.937

WEEK 52

	OR	CIs		Odds Ratios	*p*
BT Condition	0.83	0.43	1.57		.561
BBT Condition	1.22	0.63	2.37		.557
WO Condition	1.38	0.71	2.67		.341
Male	1.41	0.87	2.3		.164
Single Marital Status	0.89	0.56	1.41		.617
No History of Gambling Disorder Treatment	1.51	0.88	2.6		.135
No History of Attending Gamblers Anonymous	1.41	0.79	2.51		.245
No History of Alcohol Use Disorder	0.97	0.58	1.64		.918
Never History of Mental Health Treatment	1.65	0.97	2.82		.065
No History of Major Depressive Disorder	0.98	0.59	1.64		.946
No History of Bipolar Disorder	1.51	0.65	3.53		.338

DISCUSSION

- **Results of the current study:**
  - *At the 12-week follow-up:*
    - Individuals without previous gambling treatment, and those randomized to the BBT condition had better TGOs.
  - *At the 24-week follow-up:*
    - Males, individuals without a comorbid alcohol use disorder diagnosis, individuals without previous gambling treatment, and those randomized to the WO condition had better TGOs.
  - *At the 52-week follow-up:*
    - No significant predictors emerged.

- Four predictors of TGOs were observed all of which suggest that specific populations may require tailored treatment approaches.
  - E.g., Women, and individuals with comorbid substance use or past gambling treatment.

- Although BBT assignment initially predicted better TGOs, its predictive abilities were surpassed by the WO condition at the 24-week follow-up.

- The absence of significant predictors at the 52-week follow-ups suggests predictor effects were not sustained.

- **Future research suggestions:**
  - Focus on treatment process variables (e.g., treatment habituation and compliance) and their relation to pre-treatment variables. Clinical implications may include:
    - Prediction of treatment response and which patients are most likely to experience poor TGOs.
  - This could inform:
    - The adjustment of current treatment methods and the development of alternative treatments
    - Ultimately, this could lead to improved patient outcomes.

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