

## **PUTTING WOMEN ON THE AGENDA! (2025 update)**

**What's new in research and clinical treatment for women suffering from Gambling Disorder and other Behavioural Addictions? Join our trans-cultural network – starting from a female point of view!**

**Share new ideas and research projects that you would like to present at upcoming ICBA conferences in our WOMEN SESSIONS!**

**Please use the following link / email address to join the network and get updates on all our proposals and activities: [fulvia.prever@gmail.com](mailto:fulvia.prever@gmail.com)**

### **Background**

It becomes more and more obvious that a **gendered approach to research, prevention and treatment is highly relevant** to gain a **better understanding** of and **be more responsive to female-specific aspects** of behavioural addiction. Literature and studies on Women and other Behavioural Addiction are still scarce, both in Europe and all over the world. Available data are frequently extrapolated from research studies in mostly male samples. Nevertheless, access of women to diverse gambling, gaming, social media and other opportunities of behavioural addictions is increasing, and consequently, more and more women are involved and develop related problems, and more women are affected by pathological gambling and other non-substance related addictions.

Obviously, women have a crucial role in family and society, and their gambling or other addictive behaviours, which are often underestimated, may have a deep **impact on their social and personal life**. One key issue is that women many women face grave barriers when seeking treatment and it is particularly difficult to find female-oriented treatment options. Worldwide, only a few – albeit interesting – female-specific treatment approaches have been studied and these remain unknown to most clinicians.

That is why it is so important to **learn from your experiences as researchers and clinicians** and to gather data from all over the world to enrich our shared understanding of these issues. That is our aspiration and our aim: to share our findings, to discuss and improve research and treatment for the women on whose behalf we are working on.

### **What did we do?**

Together with many other colleagues from across the globe, I have tried to build on this idea of an **international and transcultural network**. This network brought together many female professionals with diverse cultural and professional backgrounds and high expertise in gambling disorder and Behavioural Addictions among women

This produced an innovative manual "**Gambling Disorders in Women. An International Female Perspective on Treatment and Research**" edited by H. Bowden Jones and F. Prever, in 2017, then translated in several languages. (<https://www.routledge.com/Gambling-Disorders-in-Women-An-International-Female-Perspective-on-Treatment/Bowden-Jones-Prever/p/book/9781138188327>)

During the past decade, we have been represented in dedicated Women sessions and round tables at every conference and we are confident that these sessions are a fruitful opportunity to exchange knowledge.

For ICBA **2017** in **Haifa**, we prepared **our first session dedicated to women** with professionals from all over the world and we promoted the idea to **increase female participation within ISSBA board** to better to deal with this delicate topic. At ICBA **2018** in **Cologne**, we suggested to have a **slot dedicated to women on the ISSBA website** to facilitate connections, share your ideas and join this network. At

ICBA **2019** in **Tokyo** we had **many interesting presentations** about Women and Behavioural addictions, but

unfortunately it **was not possible to combine them all in one symposium**. This emphasized the **need to have a specific meeting space at future conferences**.

In **2020**, we were preparing for a worldwide exciting women sessions in **Nottingham**, gathering many of the most engaged female professionals in this field—then **a pandemic struck all over the world**.

## What did we learn

**Pandemic deeply affected our lives and existence, our physical and mental health**, in many ways. *Behavioural addictions played an important role in women's life during the various COVID-19 lockdowns. During the COVID-19 pandemic*, with prolonged lockdowns and the increase of anxiety and depression, women carried a particular burden, since they have a unique role in their families with heavy costs in term of stress. Most of them were working but also handling children care at home and elderly care outside, exposing themselves to higher risks of contagion; often they were facing difficult relationship within their home. This led to an increase of domestic violence in many countries and could provoke an urge to escape from a tough reality. Women paid the highest costs in this period and taking care of their health appears now even more important.

The long period of closure of casinos and other gambling venues could be seen as an opportunity for some female problem gamblers – but it might also provoke a **shift to online gambling, gaming, and other behavioural addictions** and to **new or intensified related problems**.

As clinicians, **we were tasked with finding new ways to engage with our patients** and clients to support them from a (physical) distance. For example, in our women's treatment group in Milano, we produced videos to describe our shared experience of this unprecedented time. **Our network was here – engaged and connected – sharing observations and ideas from each country and continent**.

## Where are we going to?

In those times, when international in-person conferences and meetings were difficult to organize, **we explored new ways to keep in touch, support ourselves during pandemic and promote our studies**; that's how a **new book on women's behavioural addictions** was born, and will be published in **June 2023!** <https://www.routledge.com/Behavioural-Addiction-in-Women-An-International-Female-Perspective-on-Treatment/Prever-Blycker-Brandt/p/book/9781032067025#>.

We tried to find **new tools, from a female perspective**, both **diagnostic and clinical ones**, to support women and improve research to be able to **provide evidence-based data and treatment options** tailored to the specific needs of women with gambling problems and other addictive disorders respectively. Moreover, we are looking to **implement women friendly policies**, protective from gambling and Behavioural Addictions harms in this specific population, both in European and International landscape

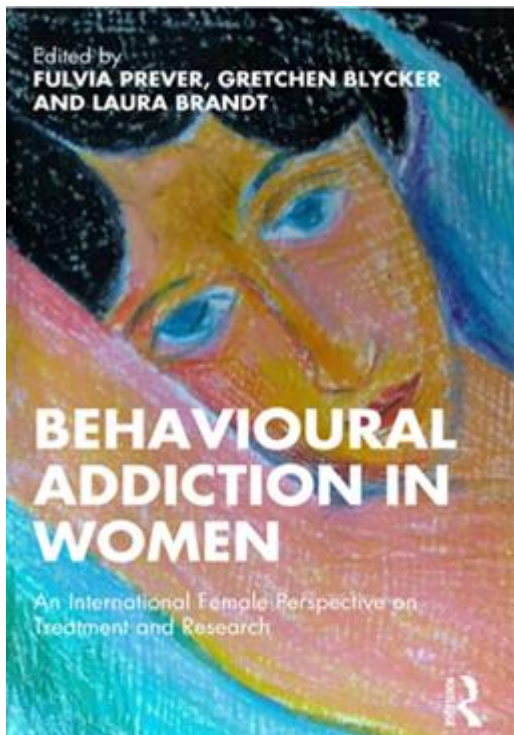
## Now

If **ICBA 2022** in **Nottingham** was the beginning of a **new “re-start”** experience in gender-specific research with a focus on women, **ICBA 2023** in **Seoul** and **Gibraltar 2024** consolidated and improved this experience and showed how this focus is getting more and more relevant in the international landscape.

We will continue pursuing a **global perspective on female-specific** aspects of behavioural addiction to provide the best contribution to women health, and **we will need all of you, sharing our experiences and knowledge to continue this important and adventurous path!**

**We cordially invite you to take part in the upcoming ICBA NANTES 2025 Women Symposium and Round Table!**

See you there!



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