"99% of Gamblers Lose in the Long Run": An Experimental Comparison of Novel and Pre-Existing Harm Prevention (Safer Gambling) Messages Warning About the Likelihood of Losing Money

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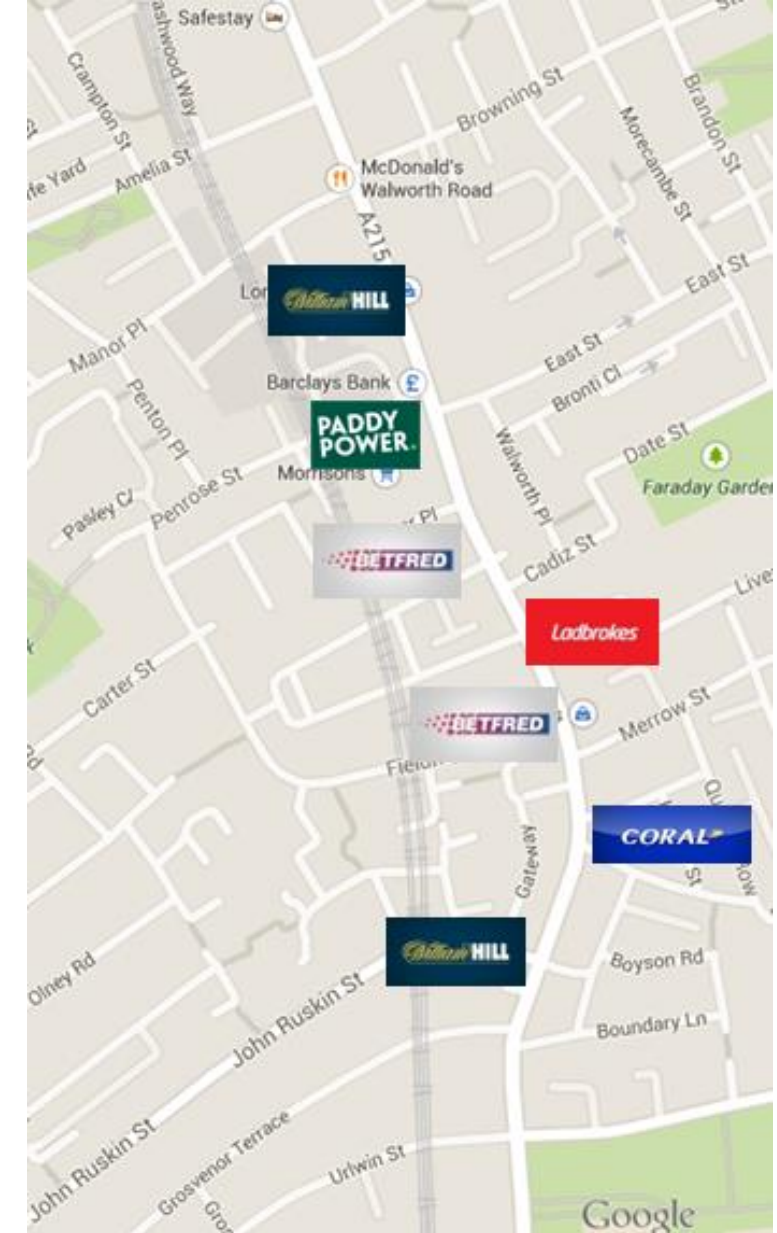
Declarations

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Gambling in the UK

This article is more than **6 years old**

Children 'bombarded' with betting adverts during World Cup

ITV ran almost 90 minutes of gambling ads from start of tournament until Croatia v England

FIFA WORLD CUP RUSSIA 2018

WORLD CUP BETTING TIPS

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UK Policy reform

Mandatory £100m a year taken from gambling industry, and allocated independently to:

50% treatment
20% research
30% prevention (e.g., commercials, static adverts, messages)

Consultation outcome

Government response to the consultation on the structure, distribution and governance of the statutory levy on gambling operators

Updated 27 November 2024

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Independent Australian messages (since 2023)

Imagine what you could be buying instead.   positive emotional

Think. Is this a bet you really want to place?   self-appraisal
What are you really gambling with?
What's gambling really costing you?

Chances are you're about to lose.   likelihood of losing warning
You win some. You lose more.
What are you prepared to lose today? Set a deposit limit.

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Other losing warnings

99% of gamblers lose in the long run

Rockloff et al., 2024

Gambling comes at a cost

GambleAware, 2024

Whether you win or lose, the gambling companies are always the real winners

Davies et al., 2022

What does gambling cost you? Stop in time

De Jans et al., 2023

Odds are: they win

Mills et al., 2023

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Totally novel warnings

Odds are: you lose (instead of "Odds are: they win")

Gambling adverts show people winning, but most gamblers lose overall

Newall, P., Walasek, L., & Ludvig, E.A. (2020). Equivalent gambling warning labels are perceived differently. *Addiction*.
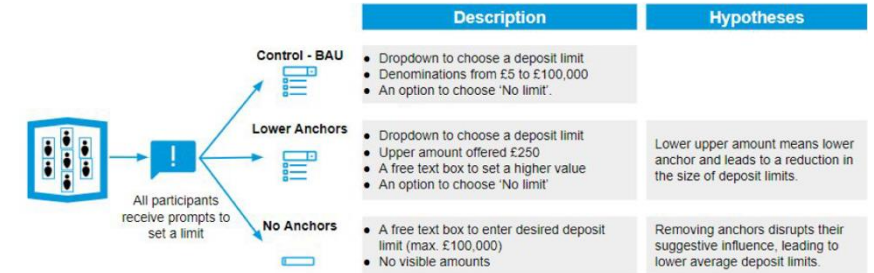
Torrance, J., Russell, A.M.T., Heath, C., & Newall, P. (2025). The effect of a brief intervention video on gambling advertising resistance: Results of a randomized, on-line experimental study. *Addiction*.

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Potential methodologies

Randomized controlled (field) trial

Simulated gambling task

Self-report study

"*This message is relevant to me*" and
"*This message is relevant to people experiencing gambling harms*"

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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Our study

4,025 UK-based gamblers recruited online via Prolific

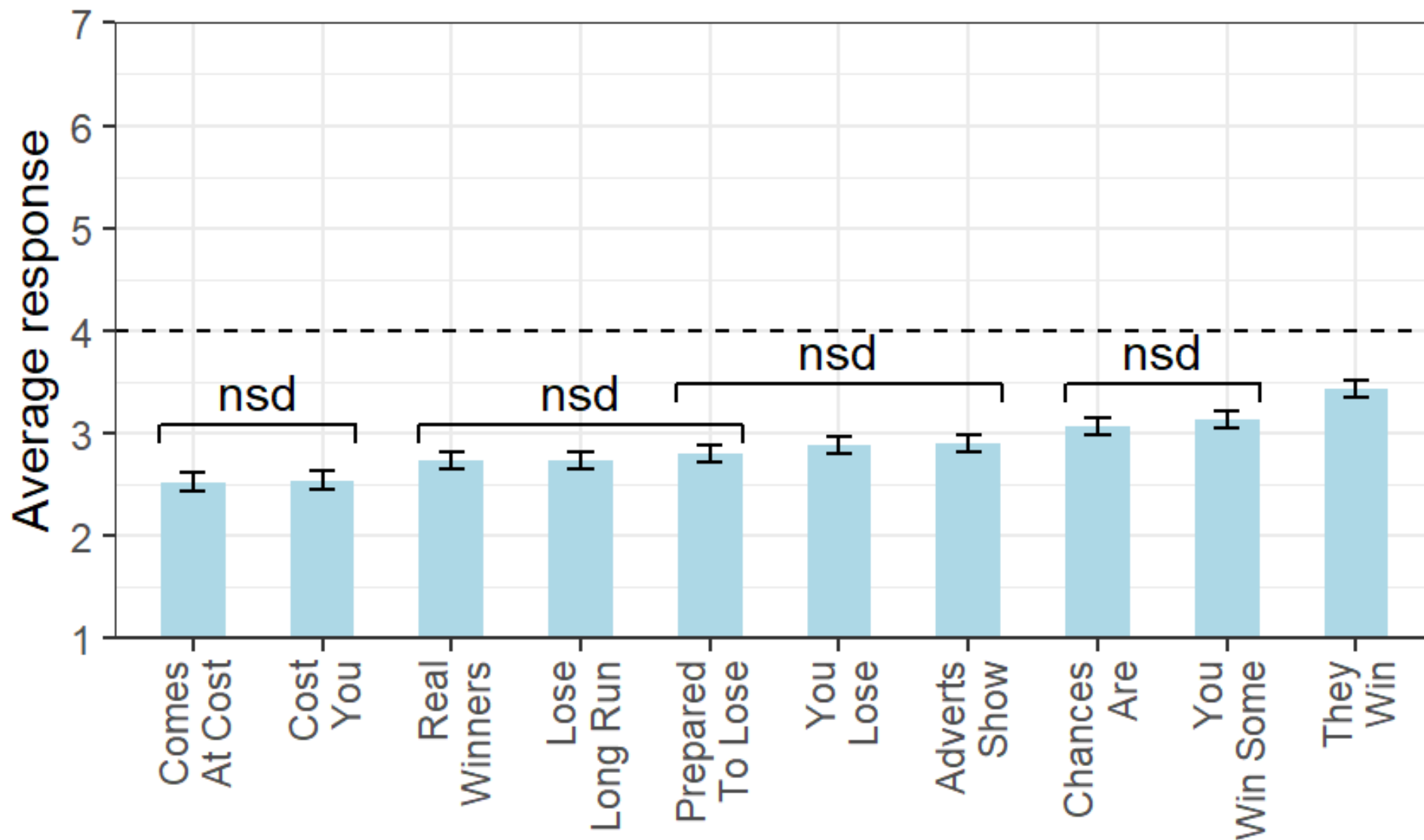Shown each of the 10 messages in random order

"This message challenges me to try to win at gambling" (<u>backfire!</u>)
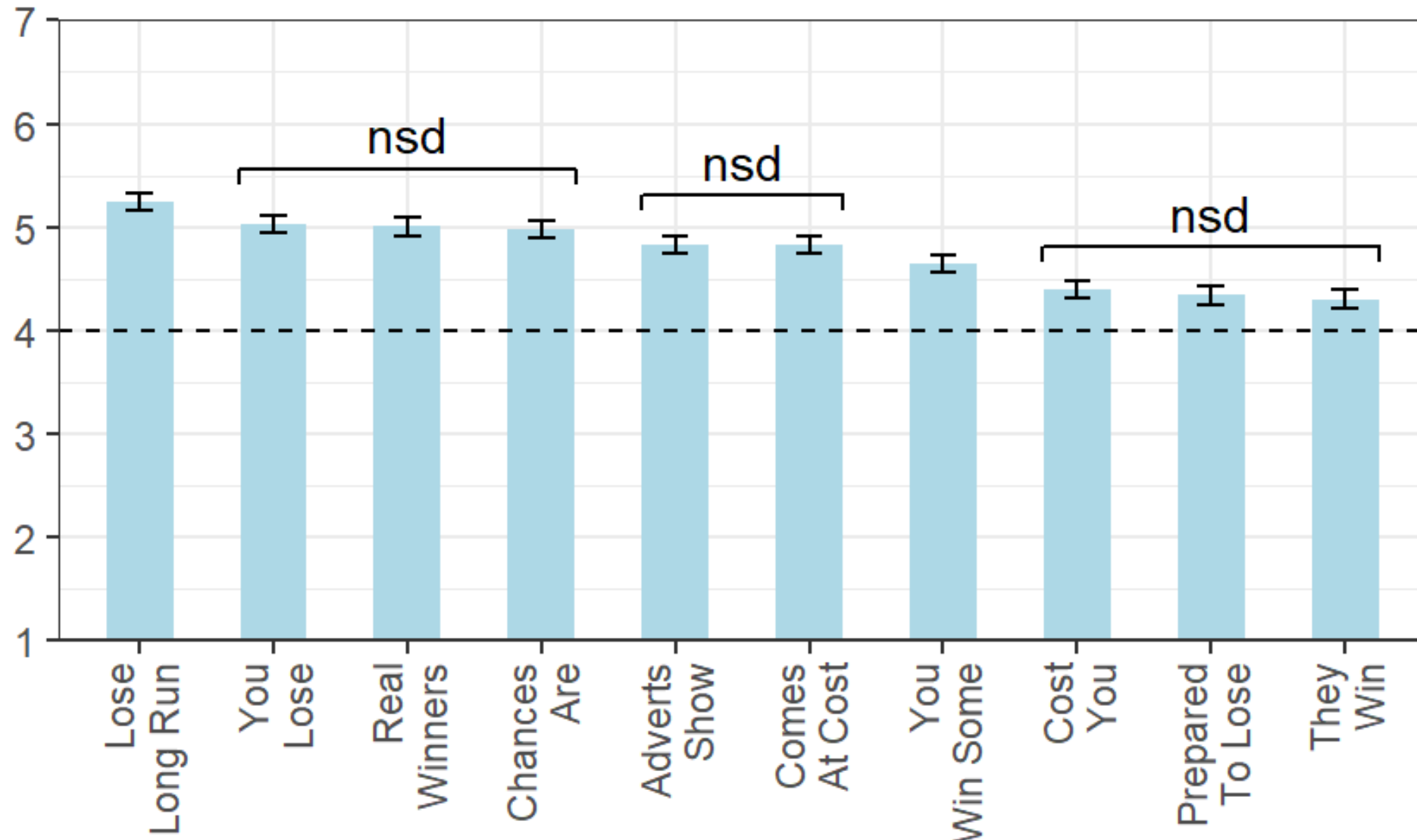
"This message makes me want to gamble less"
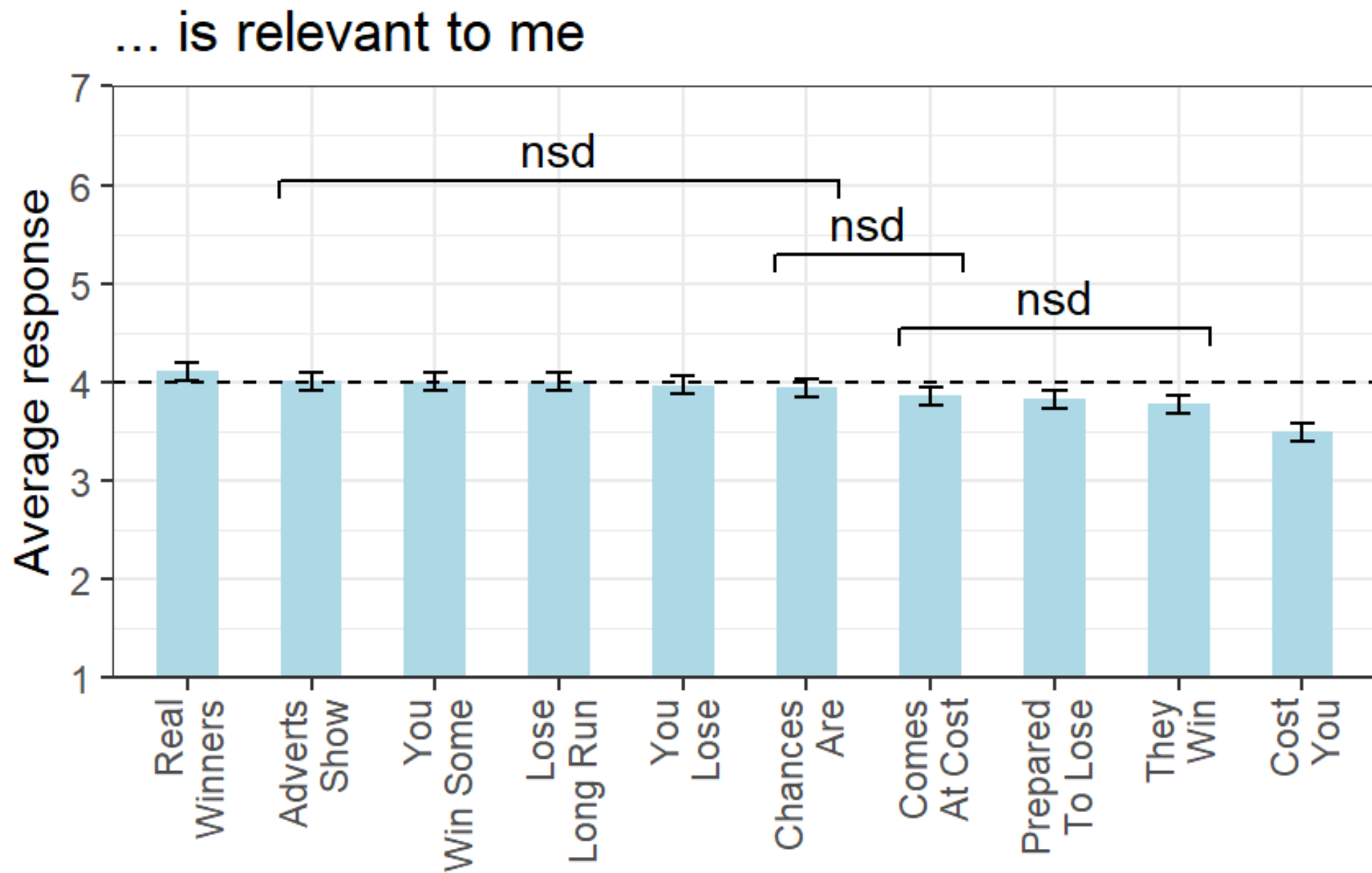
"This message is relevant to me"

"This message is relevant to people experiencing gambling harms"
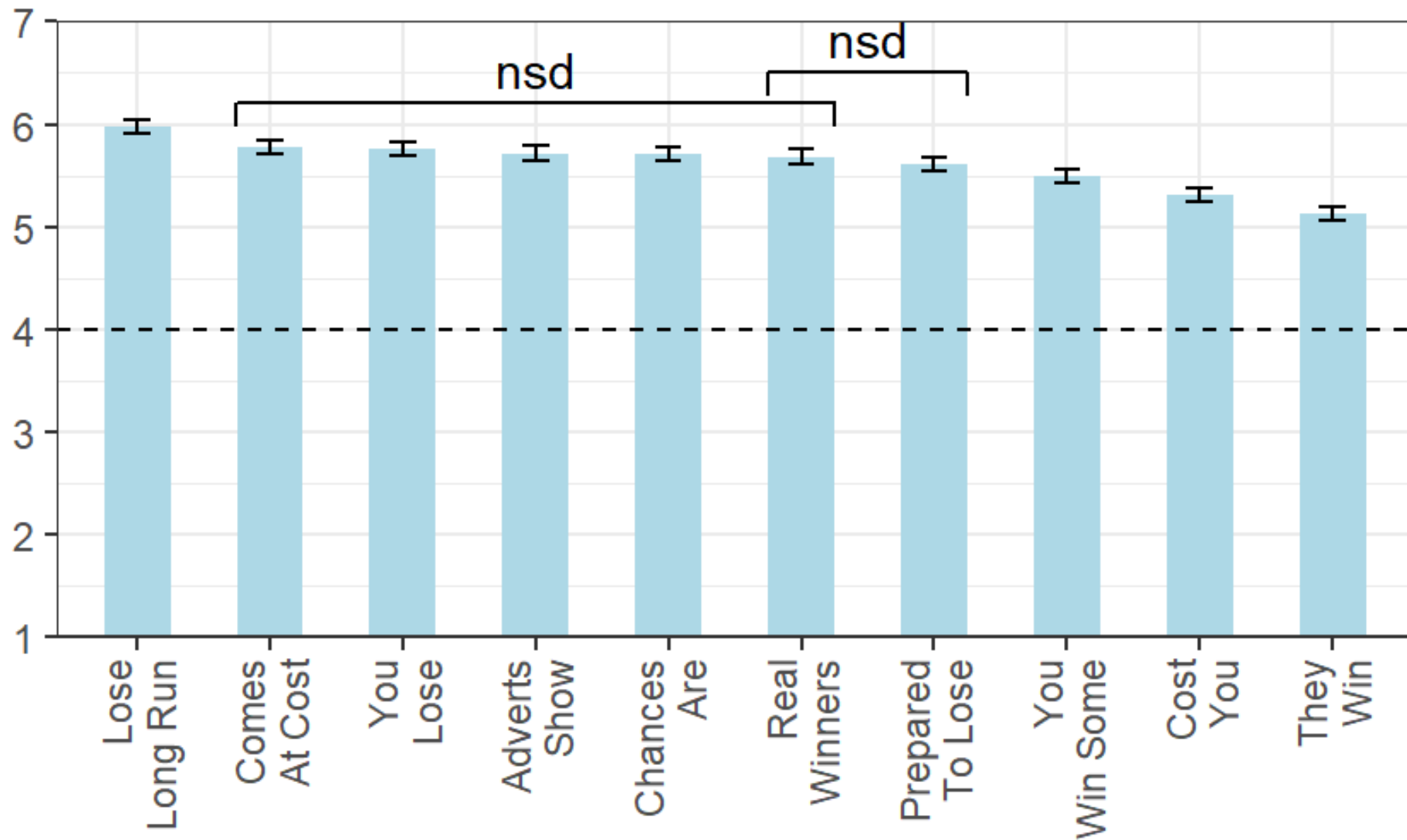
... challenges me to try to win at gambling

... makes me want to gamble less

... is relevant to me

... is relevant to people experiencing gambling harms

Averaging over the messages

Overall Rank	Average Rank	Message
1	2.5	99% of gamblers lose in the long run
2	3.25	Whether you win or lose, the gambling companies are always the real winners
3	4	Odds are: you lose
3	4	Gambling comes at a cost
5	4.5	Gambling adverts show people winning, but most gamblers lose overall
6	5.75	Chances are you're about to lose
7	6.75	You win some. You lose more
8	7.25	What are you prepared to lose today? Set a deposit limit
8	7.25	What does gambling cost you? Stop in time
10	9.75	Odds are: they win

Conclusions

The 5 messages in current use ranked the least well – research can help increase the effectiveness of this intervention!

However, messages not seen by no-risk gamblers as being relevant to them, suggesting that this intervention might work best if shown in environments with many high risk gamblers (e.g., online gambling platforms)

Thanks for your attention!

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6	5.75	Chances are you're about to lose
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10	9.75	Odds are: they win

Newall, P., Weiss-Cohen, L., Petrovskaya, E., Torrance, J., Palmer, M., & Xiao, L.Y. (2025).
"99% of gamblers lose in the long run": An experimental comparison of novel and pre-existing harm prevention (safer gambling) messages warning about the likelihood of losing money.
Collabra: Psychology.

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