

# Impulsivity as a Predictor of Co-occurring Problem Gambling and Compulsive Sexual Behaviours

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## Introduction

- Impulsivity is a key mechanism of many addictive disorders (Crews et al., 2009).
- Specifically, impulsivity is linked to problem gambling (PG) and compulsive sexual behaviour (CSB) (Cowie et al., 2019; Hodgins & Holub, 2015).
- Research suggests that PG and CSB often co-occur (Konkolý Thege et al., 2016).
- Less is known about the shared characteristics of impulsivity in individuals with comorbid PG and CSB. The goal of the present study was to examine facets of impulsivity that may account for the high co-occurring rates of PG and compulsive sexual behaviours found in the literature.

## Methods

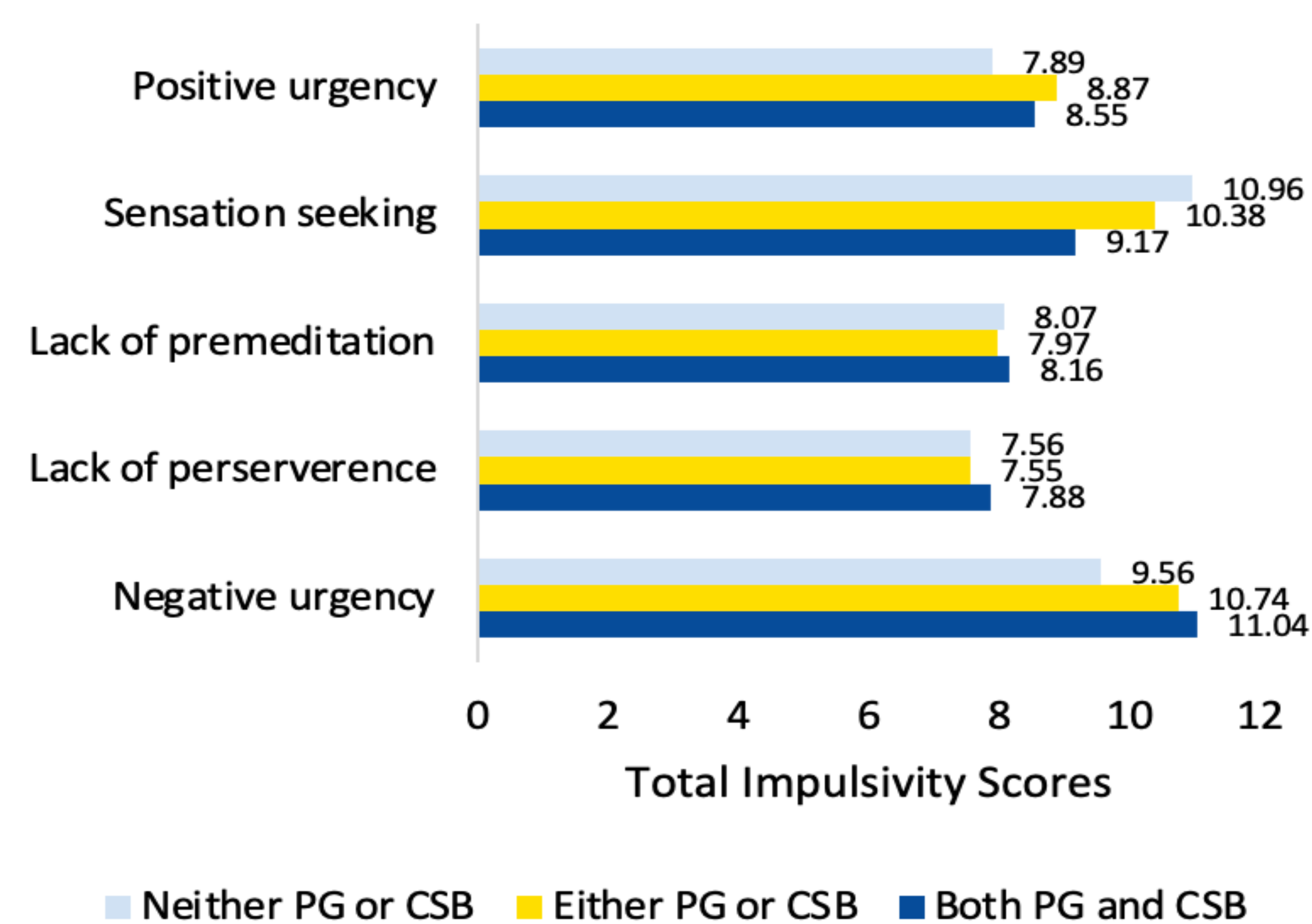
### Participants

- 143 Canadian university students who engaged in gambling and excessive sexual behaviours completed an online survey .
- Participants were classified by one of the following
  - 1) Neither PG or CSB ( $n = 45$ ).
  - 2) Either PG or CSB ( $n = 74$ ).
  - 3) Both PG and CSB ( $n = 24$ ).

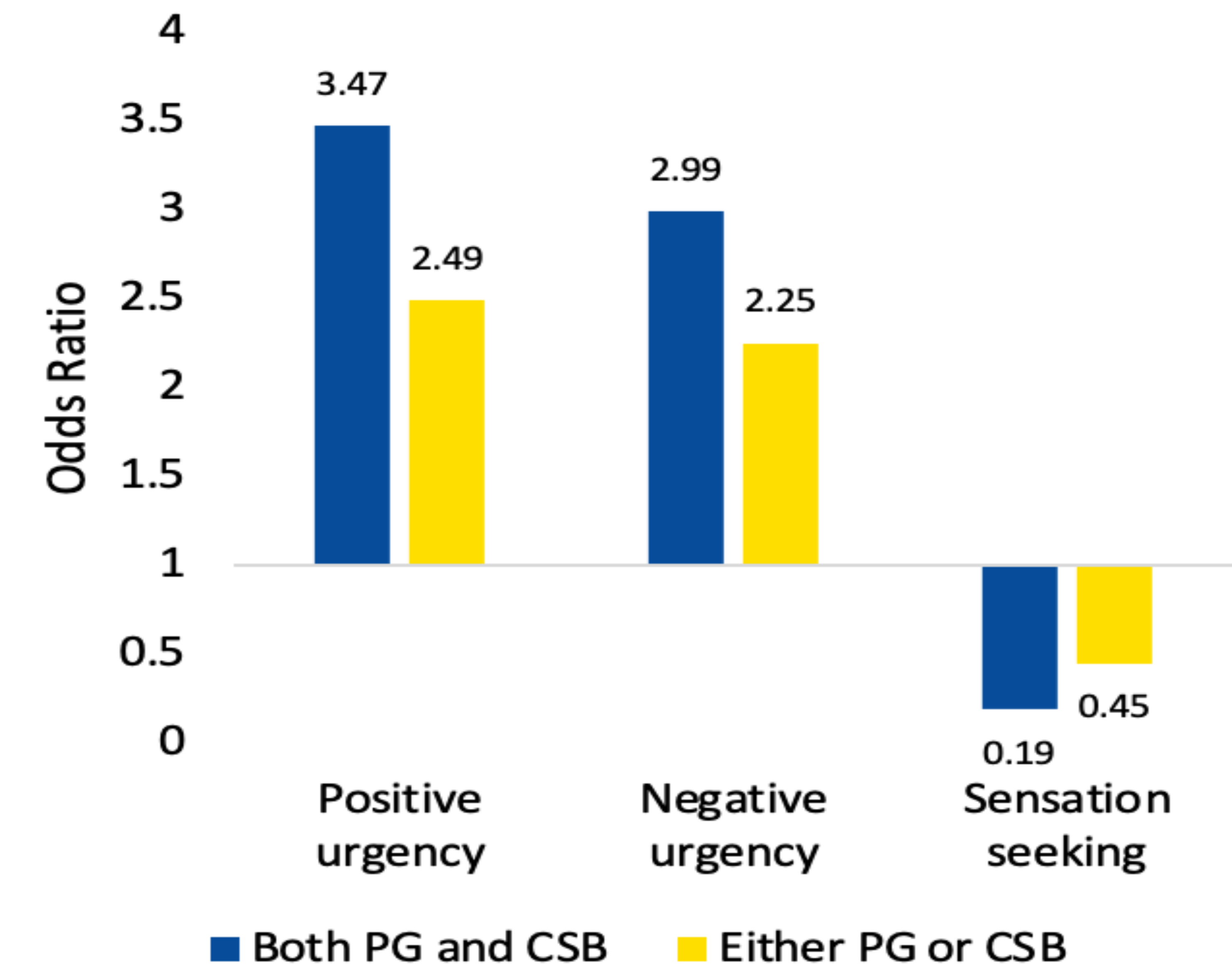
### Measures

- Screener for Substance and Behavioural Addictions (SSBA): PG) and CSB were both assessed using the SSBA (Schluter et al., 2018) with a score of 2+ as the threshold.
- Impulsive Behaviour Scale (UPPS-P) - Short Form: Impulsivity was assessed using the UPPS-P Short Form (Cyders et al., 2014).

**Figure 1.** Differences in total scores between groups across facets of impulsivity



**Figure 2.** Significant ( $p < .05$ ) predictors of PG and CSB with 'neither PG or CSB' as the reference group



## Data Analysis

- Chi square analyses were conducted to assess comorbidity between PG and CSB.
- A series of one-way ANOVAs were carried out to assess group differences in impulsivity across UPPS-P subscales.
- Multinomial logistic regression was used to assess whether facets of impulsivity predict comorbidity.

## Results

- PG was endorsed by 16.8% of the sample, CSB was endorsed by 68.5%.
- There were significant differences on sensation seeking scores and negative urgency scores (Figure 1).
- Multiple facets of impulsivity predicted co-occurring PG and CSB (See Figure 2).

## Discussion

- The results suggest that different facets of impulsivity may help to explain the co-occurrence of PG and CSB.
- Both positive and negative urgency predicted comorbid PG and CSB.
- Greater levels of sensation seeking were associated with decreased likelihood of co-occurring PG and CSB. This may suggest that though sensation seeking is most likely implicated in the initiation of PG and CSB behaviours, they are likely maintained by negative reinforcement cycles when they become problematic.
- Future research should seek to understand the facets of impulsivity in co-occurring PG and CSB in a general community sample.