Background

There is strong evidence to suggest that problem gamblers have increased rates of mental disorders, including depression, suicide ideation, anxiety disorders and substance abuse. While the direction of causality remains unclear, there does appear to be a relationship between problem gambling and co-morbidities. However, associations between gambling and co-morbidities are poorly understood. Studying the patterns of co-morbid disorders will lead to better understanding of these relationships, and in turn to better treatment of causal factors.

Aims

A national study to 1) determine the temporal relationship between problem gambling and other co-occurring disorders; and 2) examine whether the presence of a particular morbid condition or a series of co-morbidities predict the development or presence of problem gambling.

Methods

Primary methods include expert focus groups and interviews (N=60), a survey of problem gamblers in treatment (N=300), a longitudinal national telephone survey (N=620), and expert interviews on public health strategies (N=20).

Outcomes

This study is the first comprehensive examination of gambling and co-morbid disorders in Australia and will advance knowledge and inform governments and other stakeholders on the best public health strategies for use in the mental health and addiction sectors.