Gamblers at Risk and their Help Seeking Behaviour

Background

Only about 10% of problem gamblers seek professional help for their gambling problems, despite a range of free treatment services available in all Australian states and territories. Gamblers appear to only use help services as a last resort, when circumstances have reached their most critical. However, there remain many unanswered questions, especially motivators and barriers to help seeking and use of informal sources of help and self-help measures.

Aims

A national study to examine, identify and analyse gambler formal and informal help seeking behaviour, associated barriers and motivators, and the role of external and internal factors in utilising professional, non-professional and self-help sources of assistance for gambling problems.

Methods

This mixed methods study captures samples from different stages of change in decision-making about seeking help for gambling problems. Key methods comprise a national telephone survey of regular gamblers (N=300), national telephone survey of callers to gambling helplines (N=250), survey of problem gamblers in treatment (N=100), interviews with recovered problem gamblers (N=10), and interviews with Indigenous and CALD gamblers, problem gamblers, family members and counsellors (N=100).

Outcomes

This study is the first comprehensive examination of help seeking for gambling problems across Australia. It develops evidence based guidelines to enhance help seeking behaviour by at risk and problem gamblers, and to assist jurisdictions in developing policy for help seeking behaviour enhancement.