Background

Providing appropriate assistance to problem gamblers in gaming venues requires effective interaction amongst problem gamblers, frontline staff, customer liaison officers and gambling support services. While the Queensland Responsible Gambling Code of Practice prescribes procedures for when a problem gambler seeks help, venue staff must use their best judgement when a patron merely hints at a problem, shows observable signs of problem gambling, or when family or friends express concern. There is scope for much variation in how staff members respond to problem gamblers with different levels of disclosure, yet the appropriateness of these responses can mean the difference between a patron resolving their gambling problem or not.

Aims

To 1) examine how, and how appropriately staff respond to and assist patrons with gambling problems in Queensland gaming venues, and how venues interact with local gambling help services to provide this assistance; and 2) identify any gaps in relevant staff skills, knowledge and training, any other facilitators and barriers to providing appropriate assistance, and best practice examples where possible.

Methods

A qualitative study based on about 130 interviews with staff and customer liaison officers from Queensland hotels, clubs and the four casinos, and with gambling counsellors throughout the state.

Outcomes

This study provides empirical evidence for government, industry and other stakeholders to inform improved venue practices so that problem gamblers receive optimum advice, assistance and support by gaming venues to resolve their gambling problems.