Background

The gambling literature has largely ignored recreational gamblers as a population of study. As such there is no common vocabulary or shared taxonomy of the different dimensions of game experience for recreational gamblers. The public health conceptualisation of gambling recognises that gambling behaviour lies on a continuum from healthy to problematic. Yet problem gambling research has dominated the field. This study focuses on the enjoyment that recreational gamblers get when participating in the most popular and profitable form of gambling in Australia. Given the variety of gaming machines and gaming machine players, this enjoyment is likely to be a multi-dimensional concept that will include domains such as flow, immersion, anticipation, frustration, imagination, socialisation and other experiences related to both positive and negative affect. This information has not been examined before in a gaming machine context but has a precedent with the digital computer gaming experience.

Aims

To measure the experience of recreational gaming machine play.

Methods

Key methods comprise focus groups with recreational gamblers to identify the dimensions of their gaming experience. These qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to yield a number of constructs for later quantitative testing.

Outcomes

This study will generate a large number of individual items that lend themselves to quantitative testing via questionnaire. Data reduction techniques (e.g., factor analysis) will then be undertaken to create the final questionnaire. This questionnaire can then be used in a range of public health studies to assess the relationship between the gaming experience and measures of life satisfaction, well being etc.