Background
Given that more women are gambling, developing gambling problems and seeking help for these problems than in the past, current information is warranted on the type and variety of controls women exert on their gambling, and their maintenance and transition along the gambling continuum from recreational to at-risk and problem gambling.

Aims
To take a grounded theory approach to identifying influences that encourage or discourage women to gamble and that result in some women becoming recreational gamblers while others develop gambling-related problems.

Methods
This qualitative study 1) develops a comprehensive literature review for publication and 2) conducts in-depth interviews with 20 women poker machine players, 10 of whom are recreational gamblers and 10 of whom have experienced gambling problems and received treatment.

Outcomes
Because gender differences are apparent in other health behaviours, a deeper understanding of these differences for gambling will inform gender appropriate harm prevention, harm minimisation, public health and treatment strategies for women.