How significant life events, psychological co-morbidity and related social factors contribute to increased levels of gambling and gambling problems

Background

While research has explored either the link between psychological co-morbidity and gambling, or the role of significant life events in problem gambling behaviour, there is a notable lack of research combining these concerns. Yet, this is an important area of research due to the complexity and interrelatedness of issues often involved for people experiencing a gambling problem.

Aims

The aim of the study is to analyse how levels of gambling and gambling-related problems are affected by significant life events, psychological co-morbidities and related social factors, amongst both recreational and problem gamblers. It examines whether people with gambling problems experience the effects of these factors to a greater extent than people who gamble recreationally.

Methods

The approach used to address the aims of the project is a comparative analysis of two groups of gamblers: those who gamble at problematic levels (n=20); and those who gamble recreationally (n=20).

The overall research design for this project incorporates a qualitative approach which seeks to interpret, understand and explain the meanings of participants' experiences. Adaptive grounded theory is drawn on to analyse data from the interviews, situating the experiences of participants within the wider social, cultural, economic and political systems (Layder, 1998).

Outcomes

This research provides a deeper understanding of how levels of gambling behaviour are affected by significant life events, psychological co-morbidities and related social factors, amongst both people who gamble recreationally and people experiencing problems with gambling, and assists in informing gambling-related policy in Victoria, including harm minimisation guidelines, prevention and treatment strategies.