



## **FINAL REPORT**

# **The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

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# Table of Contents

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<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 1. The Study</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.1 Introduction and Background.....	10
1.1.1 Asians in New Zealand .....	10
1.1.2 Aims and Objectives of the study .....	13
1.1.3 Strengths and limitations of the study.....	14
1.2 Methods .....	15
1.2.1 An ecological approach.....	15
1.2.2 Addressing Asian problem gambling in an acculturation framework .....	17
1.2.1 Resiliency and a strengths-based approach.....	17
1.2.2 Research Design .....	18
1.2.3 Recruitment and Sample.....	21
1.2.4 Data analysis .....	24
1.3 Ethics .....	24
1.4 Cultural Advisory Group .....	24
1.5 Research team.....	25
1.6 Summary.....	25
<b>Chapter 2. Literature Review</b> .....	<b>27</b>
2.1 Gambling as a global issue .....	27
2.1.1 Gambling and Problem Gambling in New Zealand.....	28
2.2 Antecedents and etiology of gambling and problem gambling for Asian people .....	32
2.2.1 Cultural and historical influences.....	32
2.2.2 Values, beliefs and the conceptualisation of gambling .....	34
2.2.3 The role of gambling cognitions & psychological states.....	38
2.2.4 Immigration and settlement issues .....	39
2.3 Asian sub-groups disproportionately affected by gambling .....	41
2.4 Help-seeking for Gambling .....	44
2.5 Summary of Literature Review .....	45
<b>Chapter 3. Results: Asian Culture and its Role in Gambling</b> .....	<b>47</b>
3.1 Asian collectivism .....	47
3.2 Asian conceptualisations of gambling and problem gambling .....	48
3.2.1 Gambling as a social activity .....	48

3.2.2	Gambling as a negative activity.....	50
3.2.3	Belief systems and values.....	51
3.3	Summary – Asian Culture and its Role in Gambling.....	54
<b>Chapter 4.</b>	<b>The Role of Migration, Settlement and the Environment in Problem Gambling amongst Asians.....</b>	<b>56</b>
4.1	Acculturation and settlement stress.....	56
4.1.1	Cultural and language differences.....	56
4.1.2	Financial stress.....	59
4.1.3	Family stress.....	63
4.2	Social environment factors.....	67
4.2.1	Social isolation.....	67
4.2.2	Gambling culture.....	72
4.3	Personal/Cultural factors.....	75
4.3.1	Lack of knowledge about gambling.....	75
4.3.2	Misconceptions about legality and fairness.....	76
4.3.3	Peer influence.....	76
4.4	Summary – The Role of Migration, Settlement and the Environment.....	77
<b>Chapter 5.</b>	<b>Coping Behaviours, Impacts and Consequences of Gambling for Asian People and their Families.....</b>	<b>80</b>
5.1	Functional coping strategies employed by Asian gamblers and their families.....	80
5.1.1	Recognising and acknowledging that there is a problem.....	80
5.1.2	Taking action.....	82
5.2	The use of dysfunctional coping strategies by Asian gamblers and their families in response to problem gambling.....	83
5.2.1	Denial, pretending and ignoring problem gambling behaviour.....	84
5.2.2	Escapism.....	86
5.2.3	Aggression.....	86
5.2.4	Resigned acceptance of one’s lot.....	87
5.3	Consequences of problem gambling for Asian gamblers and families.....	87
5.3.1	Loss of social connections.....	87
5.3.2	Loss of financial security.....	88
5.3.3	Prostitution and crime.....	89
5.3.4	Addiction and vicious cycle.....	90
5.3.5	Mental health issues.....	91
5.3.6	Family conflict.....	95
5.3.7	Consequences for Asian International Students.....	99
5.4	Impacts of problem gambling on Asian families and communities.....	100
5.4.1	Family impacts.....	100
5.4.2	Community impacts.....	101

5.5	Summary.....	102
<b>Chapter 6.</b>	<b>An Ecological Approach to Reducing Problem Gambling amongst Asians.....</b>	<b>105</b>
6.1	Utilising Asian Cultural Strengths .....	105
6.2	Building Trust .....	106
6.3	Normalising Help-seeking.....	108
6.3.1	Change perceptions of help-seeking.....	108
6.3.2	Provide culturally appropriate services.....	112
6.4	Educating Asian Communities.....	112
6.4.1	Create awareness about the dangers of problem gambling .....	113
6.4.2	Dispel misconceptions about gambling behaviours .....	114
6.4.3	Provide information on services .....	115
6.4.4	Coping strategies and management of stress .....	116
6.4.5	Developing new goals.....	116
6.5	Creating a supportive social and institutional environment .....	117
6.5.1	Providing Social support .....	118
6.5.2	Enhancing family support.....	120
6.5.3	Increasing support from Government and other agencies .....	121
6.6	Enhancing resilience .....	127
6.7	Summary.....	130
<b>Chapter 7.</b>	<b>Conclusions .....</b>	<b>132</b>
7.1	Antecedents and etiology .....	132
7.2	Risk and resiliency .....	133
7.3	Similarities and differences amongst ethnic and other groups .....	134
7.4	Learnings and implications .....	137
7.5	Gaps and next steps .....	138
<b>References</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>152</b>
Appendix A:	Participant Information Sheets.....	152
Appendix B:	Consent Forms.....	158
Appendix C:	Confidentiality Form .....	162
Appendix D:	Focus Group and Interview Schedule.....	162
Appendix E:	Project flyers .....	168

## List of Tables

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Table 1: Breakdown of Focus Group Discussions by Ethnicity (Phase 2 Stage B) ..	20
Table 2: Breakdown of Individual Interviews by Ethnicity (Phase 3) .....	21
Table 3: Break-down of focus group participants (Phase 2 Stage B) by ethnicity, age, gender and years in New Zealand .....	22
Table 4: Break-down of face-to-face interview participants (Phase 3) by ethnicity, age, gender and years in New Zealand.....	23
Table 5: Break-down of participant gambling status according to ethnicity (Phase 3) .....	23
Table 6: Mean gambling prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals for adult populations (Source: Shaffer & Hall, 2001, p. 169).....	28
Table 7: Summary of Asian Culture and its Role in Gambling.....	54
Table 8: Summary of the Role of Migration, Settlement and the Environment.....	77
Table 9: Summary of Coping Behaviours, impacts and consequences of gambling on Asians .....	102
Table 10: Summary of an Ecological approach to reducing problem gambling amongst Asians.....	130
Table 11: Similarities amongst Ethnic groups .....	134
Table 12: Differences amongst Ethnic groups.....	136

## List of Figures

---

Figure 1: Ecological Systems Theory - Overview .....	16
Figure 2: Overview of Summary Process .....	19
Figure 3: Reducing problem gambling amongst Asians .....	105
Figure 4: Factors contributing to problem gambling amongst Asians .....	133

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## Executive Summary

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At present, little is known about the impacts of gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand. This growing Asian population has significant emerging health issues that need attention to ensure that they do not exacerbate and become a burden both to the Asian community and the New Zealand health system. One of the mental health issues identified for Asians in New Zealand is problem gambling. There is a clear need for accurate knowledge of the issues and impacts of problem gambling on Asian families and communities. This research aimed to meet the current gap in knowledge through an exploration of these issues. This type of information and knowledge would assist with the development of effective primary prevention measures and policy initiatives.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Systematically review the literature on gambling in relation to Asian people, including the impacts of gambling on health and wellbeing, the role of risk and resiliency factors, and antecedents and etiology of problem gambling behaviour.
- Explore and improve understanding of the roles of risk and resiliency factors in relation to Asian gambling and their interactions with the health and wellbeing of Asian families and communities.
- Explore and improve understanding of the antecedents and etiology of problem gambling in Asian people.
- Identify and explore similarities and disparities between the major Asian ethnic subgroups in New Zealand (Chinese, Indian, Korean, South-east Asian, Asian with a refugee background) for the above points and in relation to issues such as: gambling participation; gambling related harm; cultural orientation; demographic factors (gender, age, length of time of residence in New Zealand); and settlement and social inclusion/support.

The study adopted an ecological approach to exploring the impacts of gambling and problem gambling on the health and wellbeing of Asian families and communities within New Zealand and utilised an acculturation framework to assist with the analysis and interpretation of gambling-related experiences. Through a mixed methods qualitative design, data were gathered in four phases: Review of literature; Focus group discussions; Individual interviews; and Stakeholder group discussions. Sixteen focus group discussions were conducted with stakeholders from each of the four major Asian ethnic groups in New Zealand and with Asians from a refugee background; 50 face-to-face interviews were completed with individuals across the five groups, and four focus group discussions were conducted with stakeholders in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch.

The data gathered illustrates that gambling amongst Asians is a complex issue that has to be understood within the wider social and institutional context in which Asians are located. Three main variables emerged as impacting Asian gambling in New Zealand: Asian culture, their settlement experience in their new environment, and the way they cope with their settlement experience in New Zealand. Problem gamblers were found to employ dysfunctional coping strategies to deal with settlement adversities with adverse effects on the mental health and social and financial wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. Based on the data provided by participants, potential strategies have been developed for enhancing resilience and other variables that protect against problem gambling and moderating those variables that may increase risk for problem gambling. These include: utilising cultural strengths, building trust, normalising help-seeking, educating Asian communities about the dangers of gambling, and creating a supportive social and institutional environment for Asian immigrants.

Ethnic similarities and differences that impact on gambling behaviour were identified. Significant similarities amongst the five groups include the following which may increase risk for gambling:

- Settlement, integration and social isolation issues.
- Acculturation issues such as power structure changes and intergenerational issues.
- Cultural beliefs and values such as superstition and 'luck'.
- Limited gambling knowledge and awareness.
- Cultural beliefs and values such as stigma and face saving and spirituality and religion which may protect against gambling.
- Preference for gambling in a casino rather than pubs and playing table games rather than pokie machines
- All ethnic groups reported a wide age range in gamblers in their communities – from the twenties to the sixties.

Significant ethnic group differences were found in the following areas:

- Variations in reasons for migration and settlement expectations in New Zealand which impacted gambling behaviours.
- Gambling participation, gambling related harm and problem gambling prevalence - least amongst refugees, less amongst Southeast Asians and South Asians, and apparently more amongst Chinese, Koreans and international students who have more resources. English language proficiency was also related to gambling behaviour; those with limited English, experienced greater integration difficulties and were more at risk of gambling related problems.
- Willingness to talk about problem gambling – South Asians apparently more willing and Chinese less willing.



- Varied preference for ethnically matched service providers or generic services within and between groups.
- Gender differences - more involvement of Southeast Asian and Refugee women in problem gambling.
- Duration of residence in New Zealand - new immigrants at greater risk for gambling and older immigrants who are more integrated have less risk.

Significant learnings and implications drawn from this study include: problem gambling is an ecological issue which may need multiple agencies to work together in finding solutions to problem gambling; structural issues related to gambling, such as availability, access, inducements and marketing, regulation, and conflict of interest are fundamental drivers of problem gambling amongst Asians in New Zealand as with all other ethnic groups in New Zealand; Asian culture impacts conceptions of gambling, hence cultural strengths could be utilised to intervene in problem gambling behaviours; the settlement experience impacts gambling behaviour and improvement of the settlement environment for Asian immigrants has potential to protect against problem gambling; interventions need to consider cultural diversity and appropriateness, and ethnically matched personnel may in some cases improve gambling intervention outcomes. The study identified a gap in information on online gambling and the potential for information and interventions to be disseminated via technology (e.g. mobile phones, internet, social networking etc), which could be explored in further research.

## Chapter 1. The Study

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This report describes a project that investigated gambling and problem gambling amongst Asian communities in New Zealand. It begins with a discussion of Asians in New Zealand and then presents the aims and objectives of the study and its strengths and limitations. This is followed by a description of the research design and the methods used to conduct the study. A review of the gambling literature follows in the second chapter which lends context to the study. The results and a discussion of these are presented in the following five chapters and the report concludes with a discussion of main themes, learnings and implications.

We have attempted to separate themes and issues as much as possible and avoid repetition; however, due to the nature of the data and the complexity of the issues which are all interrelated and overlapping, there are places where some issues have recurred. We hope that, in these instances, this will serve to reinforce the data and the messages they hold.

We have also attempted, where possible, to separate the voices of the various participants such as gamblers, family members and stakeholders, but again, due to the interrelated nature of the data, this was not always feasible. Forcing an artificial separation of the data interrupted the flow of the thesis; hence several voices are often represented in one paragraph.

### 1.1 Introduction and Background

At present, little is known about the impacts of gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand. This research aims to address current knowledge gaps through a qualitative research project which investigates problem gambling amongst Asians.

#### 1.1.1 *Asians in New Zealand*

Asians make up the fastest-growing ethnic community in New Zealand today. According to the 2006 census statistics, Asians made up the fourth largest major ethnic group after European, Maori and Other Ethnicity, totalling 354,552 people (9.2%) in 2006. New Zealand's Asian population is projected to reach 790,000 by 2026 (15.8% of the population), an increase of 390,000 (3.4 percent a year) over the 2006 estimate of 400,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). Chinese, Indians and Koreans are the three major contributors in the increasing trend of the Asian population, many of whom are born overseas (30-40%) and some (15%) who do not speak English.

This growing Asian population has significant emerging health issues that need attention to ensure that they do not exacerbate and become a burden both to the Asian community and the New Zealand health system. Three large scale reports about the health of Asian New Zealanders have been published in recent years:

- Asian Health in Aotearoa in 2006-2007: Trends since 2002–2003 (Scragg, 2010);
- Youth '07: The health and wellbeing of Secondary School Students in New Zealand. Results for Chinese, Indian and other Asian Students (Parackal, Ameratunga, Tin Tin, Wong, & Denny, 2011); and,
- The Asian Health Chart Book 2006 (Ministry of Health, 2006).

These reports indicate that whilst Asian peoples in New Zealand are relatively healthy overall, due to the so-called 'healthy immigrant effect', that is, most immigrants need to be in good health to be allowed to migrate to a new host country, this effect is not long-lasting. Many immigrants have high socioeconomic status in their countries of origin and high levels of education, which is associated with better health status. However, health outcomes decline as length of residence in New Zealand increases and acculturation takes place. Rasanathan, Ameratunga and Tse (2006) provided a useful summary of the key health issues concerning the Asian New Zealand population. The key issues included: access to health services (particularly for Chinese peoples); cardiovascular disease and diabetes (particularly for Indian peoples); levels of physical activity; and mental health (particularly in young people). Other mental health issues identified for Asians in New Zealand include alcohol abuse and problem gambling. The stigmatisation and 'taboo' of psychiatric illness compound the problem further, resulting in reluctance by Asian patients and their families to seek early intervention or treatment. (Rasanathan, et al., 2006). This corresponds with findings from an earlier local (New Zealand) survey conducted by the Asian Public Health Project Team, where Asian patients (primarily Chinese and Korean people in this case) self-identified mental health as one of their main health concerns. This includes depression and psychosomatic illnesses, which are often related to social isolation (resulting from migration), language barriers, and employment issues (Asian Public Health Project Team, 2003 ). These findings are supported by other recent New Zealand studies that show that these issues persist for a prolonged period (Dixon, Tse, Rossen, & Sobrun-Maharaj, 2010; Sobrun-Maharaj, 2011; Sobrun-Maharaj & Wong, 2011)

In this study, 'Asian' is discussed in terms of ethnicity. Asian people in foreign countries include immigrants, refugees and international students. In New Zealand, the term 'Asian' usually refers to people coming from South and East Asian countries like China, Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam, and people from the Indian subcontinent. Although the term is used to identify a collection of Asian ethnic groups, it is important to recognise the cultural diversity within that collection, notwithstanding the fact that they do share many

commonalities in terms of values and beliefs. In the context of discussing public health approaches for Asian people in foreign countries affected by problem gambling, the term 'Asian' does have utility in that it refers to individuals who have strong, self-perceived cultural affiliations in terms of similar value systems, beliefs, cultural heritages and experiences of immigrating to a new host country. Some of these migrants are confronted by similar kinds of difficulties related to post-immigration adjustment such as unemployment (or underemployment in some cases), language barriers, cultural differences, social isolation, and the lack of access to service information regarding settlement and employment (Ngai & Chu, 2001). Sometimes, they also refer to their immigration and post-immigration adjustment process as an 'uprooting experience'. Ho and associates (2000) identified four major forms of settlement assistance needed for Asian people in Aotearoa-New Zealand. They need assistance in learning to speak English, they need employment advice, job finding skills, and they need supportive connections that assist in their acculturation. International evidence is emerging suggesting that as a group, Asian people are disproportionately affected by problem gambling (e.g., Blaszczynski et al., 1998; Chinese Family Life Services of Metro Toronto, 1995; Cultural Partners Australia Consortium, 2000; Petry, Armentano, Kuoch, Norinth & Smith, 2003).

### ***Diversity of Asian sub-cultures***

Asian cultures share a number of commonalities in their worldview, such as a collectivistic nature (Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1989, 1995). In essence, this means that the needs of family, community and society take precedence over those of the individual. However, it is also important to recognise the existence of significant diversity that exists throughout the large expanse of Asia and its many sub-groups. For example, substantial variations have been noted across different Asian population sub-groups in terms of gambling related experiences (e.g., Gambling Research Australia, 2011; Li, 2008; Li, 2006; Marshall, Elliott, & Schell, 2009; Petry, Armentano, Kuoch, Norinth, & Smith, 2003a). These variations include differences in the availability of legalised gambling pre- and post-immigration, preferred mode of gambling, where they choose to gamble (private/social places such as at home as opposed to public legalised gambling venues like casinos), who they gamble with, and the size of the wager, and beliefs and views of gambling and problem gambling behaviour.

A recent study on problem gambling among South East Asian refugees in the United States, illustrated some of these differences, for example, in terms of types of gambling in which individuals participate, substantial differences were observed across sub-groups within the South East Asian ethnic population - 67 percent of Cambodians played slot machines compared with 17 percent of Laotians and 6 percent of the Vietnamese (Petry et al., 2003)

More recently, a secondary analysis of the Asian data subset from the Health Sponsorship Council's 2006/07 Gaming and Betting Attitudes Survey (GBAS) (Rossen, Tse, & Vaidya, 2009a) revealed a number of notable differences between the gambling beliefs and behaviours of Chinese and Indian participants (the two Asian ethnic groups with sufficient representation for comparative analyses), including:

- Mode of gambling that participant had spent more time or money than intended on – a greater proportion of Indian than Chinese participants reported pub/cub EGMs.
- Harm minimisation strategies as suggested by participants - a greater proportion of Indian than Chinese participants would encourage friends or family members affected by gambling to seek help from professionals. Moreover, significantly more Chinese than Indian participants were uncomfortable referring a family member or friend to the problem gambling services suggested during the survey interviews.
- Harm minimisation strategies to help friends or family members - a greater proportion of Indian than Chinese participants would set a dollar figure before leaving home as a way to control one's gambling.

The findings in this report highlight the differences between participants from two 'Asian' populations that are commonly grouped together: Chinese and Indian. Findings such as these emphasise the need for effective Asian problem gambling approaches to strike a balance between using the label of "Asian" to create population-based policies to reduce gambling-related harm and yet at the same time acknowledge the diversity of culture and gambling practices among Asian people. It is evident then that effective research into Asian problem gambling needs to investigate both the similarities across Asian population sub-groups and the disparities.

### **1.1.2 Aims and Objectives of the study**

There is a clear need for accurate knowledge of the issues and impacts of problem gambling on Asian families and communities, including an understanding of similarities and disparities of the issues in relation to sub-groups in this population group. This research aimed to meet the current gap in knowledge through an exploration of the impact of gambling on the health and wellbeing of Asian families and communities in New Zealand, including the role of risk and resiliency factors, and the antecedents and etiology of problem gambling. This type of information and knowledge would assist with the development of effective primary prevention measures and policy initiatives. However, it should be noted that it was not within the contractual scope of this study to make recommendations for policy and/or practice in primary prevention of problem gambling in Asian populations in New Zealand. Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Systematically review the literature on gambling in relation to Asian people, including the impacts of gambling on health and wellbeing, the role of risk and resiliency factors, and antecedents and etiology of problem gambling behaviour.
- Explore and improve understanding of the roles of risk and resiliency factors in relation to Asian gambling and their interactions with the health and wellbeing of Asian families and communities.
- Explore and improve understanding of the antecedents and etiology of problem gambling in Asian people.
- Identify and explore similarities and disparities between the major Asian ethnic subgroups in New Zealand (Chinese, Indian, Korean, South-east Asian, Asian with a refugee background) for the above points and in relation to issues such as: gambling participation; gambling related harm; cultural orientation; demographic factors (gender, age, length of time of residence in New Zealand); and settlement and social inclusion/support.

### ***1.1.3 Strengths and limitations of the study***

This study involved a substantial number of focus group discussions and individual interviews with participants from Asian communities and key stakeholders (see Section 1.2.2 for details). Significant effort was devoted to ensure that a diverse range of experiences and views regarding gambling were sought and included in the research. Moreover, the research sought input from five Asian ethnic groups: Chinese; Korean; South-East Asian; South Asian; and, Asian with a refugee background. While these sub-groups represent the five largest Asian populations in New Zealand, the authors acknowledge that the sample is not representative of the wider Asian community and that the views of those who have experienced gambling-related difficulties may be over-represented.

A notable strength of this research is the considerable attention that has been given to ensuring the adoption of culturally appropriate methods and approaches. This study adopted a model previously established by the lead researchers for undertaking culturally-safe research with potentially vulnerable ethnic minority groups. This included the guidance of a Cultural Advisory Group (see Section 1.4 for details) and the utilisation of matched-ethnicity field researchers for each of the Asian populations that were included in the research (see Section 1.2.2).

All written information, including consent forms, was available in both English and the participants' first/native language. Interviews and focus group discussions were also carried out in the participants' language of choice, which for many, was their first/native language. As such, many of the interview recordings were then transcribed and translated into English. These transcriptions were carried out by the same researchers who conducted the fieldwork (i.e. the ethnically matched researchers who facilitated interviews and focus group discussions). The quality and

accuracy of these transcriptions has been ensured by the selection of researchers with strong bi-lingual skills.

In accordance with the principles of informed consent and ethical research that the research team adhered to, the safety and wellbeing of participants was paramount at all times. While gambling / problem gambling is a sensitive and difficult topic, many participants appeared to find the process helpful/cathartic. Participation in the study seemed to raise awareness of gambling related problems and a number of participants asked the researchers for assistance, for instance:

*It would be good if you let me know if someone can help me out to do something for my children. I wonder if there is any way I can protect them from the negative impacts the mother's gambling can cause (REF-M-3-FM)*

*This research is good as this can later help to prevent Asian people, especially Laotian, from gambling, or at least, this research can remind the gambler about the negative impacts gambling could bring. It is hard to stop the gamblers from gambling, but at least, it can help them to think about its harm before going gambling (SEA-F-3-PG)*

*Even now, talking with you, I found that it kind of helps me understand myself even better and... I also think that the research is going to help other gamblers so I feel good about it. I'd like to have this kind of discussions more. It would be good if there is a kind of self-help group among people like me (KOR-M-3-XG)*

In accordance with ethics approval for the study (see Section 1.3), all participants were provided with information on appropriate services, e.g., problem gambling services, they could access if necessary.

## **1.2 Methods**

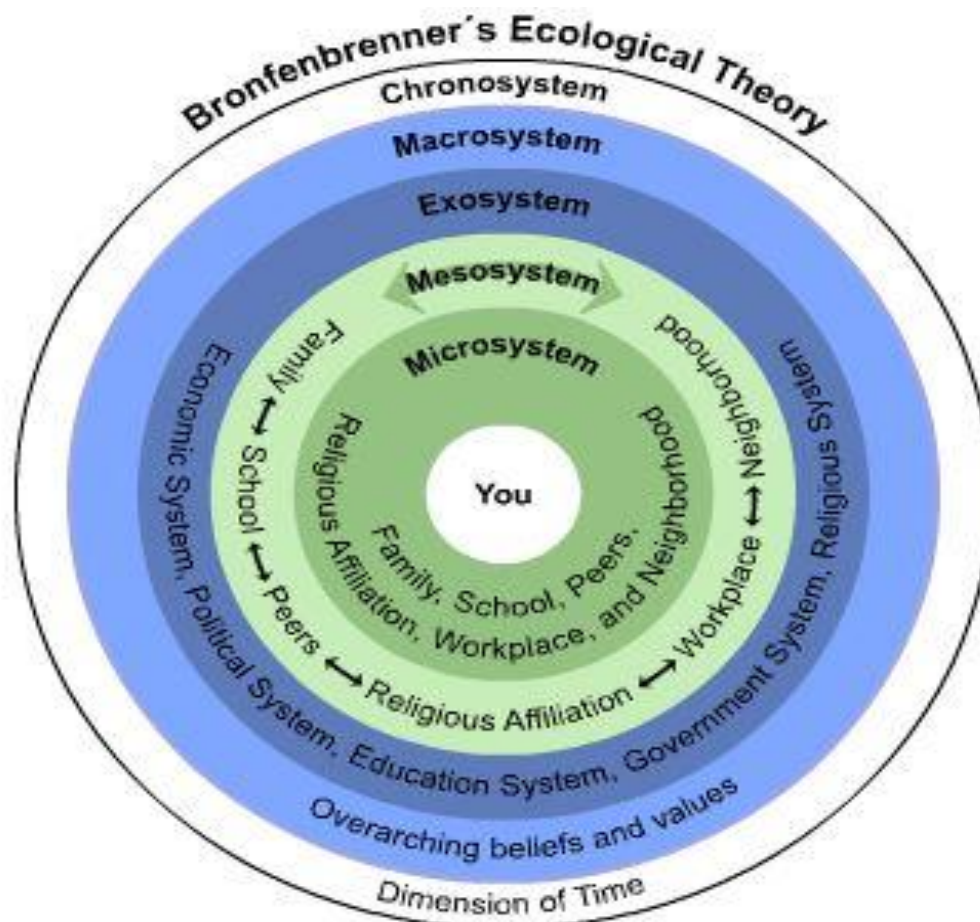
### **1.2.1 An ecological approach**

This research adopted an ecological approach to exploring the impacts of gambling and problem gambling on the health and wellbeing of Asian families and communities within New Zealand. In essence, an ecological approach values and acknowledges the contextual framework in which individuals live and operate. This approach allows consideration of the multiple environments in which individuals operate and the complex roles/relationships that they fulfil within these environments. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Swick & Williams, 2006; Berk, 2000; Addison, 1992) outlines a set of environmental layers that impact the development of an individual. The theory emphasises five key systems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem (see Figure 1):

- The *microsystem* encompasses the relationships and interactions that an individual has with their immediate surroundings. It includes (but is not limited to) five key environmental systems: family, school, peers, religious affiliations, workplace, and neighbourhood.

- The *mesosystem* represents the interplay between the structures of an individuals' microsystem - the connections between contexts (e.g. the connection between school and family).
- The *exosystem* can be defined as the larger social system in which an individual functions. The structures of the exosystem indirectly impact the individual by interacting with some structures of their microsystem (e.g. the impact of an economic system on an individual's family).
- The outermost layer is the *macrosystem*. This layer can be defined as the cultural context in which an individual lives and is comprised of cultural beliefs and values, customs and laws. This layer exerts influence throughout the interactions of the other layers.
- The final environmental system is the *chronosystem*, which encompasses the dimension of time and transitions over the life course of an individual as well as socio-historical circumstances. The chronosystem encompasses both internal elements (e.g. physiological changes that occur with aging) and external elements (e.g. death of a significant other).

Figure 1: Ecological Systems Theory - Overview



The utilisation of an ecological framework within the context of this research means that individuals have been viewed as members of families, who are situated within



communities, and that these in turn are part of wider society – all of which impact on the individual and on the individual's, as well as the family's and community's, response to life situations.

### **1.2.2 Addressing Asian problem gambling in an acculturation framework**

We have also utilised an acculturation framework to assist with the analysis and interpretation of gambling-related experiences. Acculturation is broadly defined as “those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Slant & Lauderdale, 2003, p. 72). An acculturation framework posits that highly variable cultural and psychological outcomes follow from intergroup contact. Berry (2005) argues that two key issues intersect to determine acculturation outcomes: *the desire to maintain cultural heritage and identity* and *the level of relationship sought among groups*. The resulting intersection of these issues can be categorised into four acculturation strategies that are employed by ethno-cultural groups: integration, separation, assimilation and marginalization (Berry, 2005). Integration results in the maintenance of existing cultures and behaviours; separation results in cultural and psychological maintenance while avoiding interaction; assimilation sees individuals shedding their heritage culture and becoming absorbed into the dominant society; and marginalisation results in cultural and psychological loss, particularly among non-dominant populations, along with their exclusion from full and equitable participation in the larger society (Berry, 2005). Studies with Asian immigrants in New Zealand (e.g., Sobrun-Maharaj, Tse S., Hoque, & Rossen, 2009; Tse, Sobrun-Maharaj, & Hoque, 2006) suggest that these communities may be employing different acculturation strategies with some continuing to experience high degrees of marginalisation, which may have mental health consequences.

### **1.2.3 Resiliency and a strengths-based approach**

As identified previously, there are innumerable potential sources of stress associated with the immigration process. However, it is clear that not all families experience the immigration process in the same way, despite in many cases, seemingly facing the same challenges. Resilience theory can be applied to settlement experiences to improve understanding of the different ways in which families experience and negotiate settlement stressors.

Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000) defined resilience as “a dynamic process of encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (p.543). More recently, resilience has come to be seen as a construct that may usefully be applied at a family level, the emphasis being on how the family deals with challenges or disruption. Walsh (2002) points out that the extent to which the family is able to

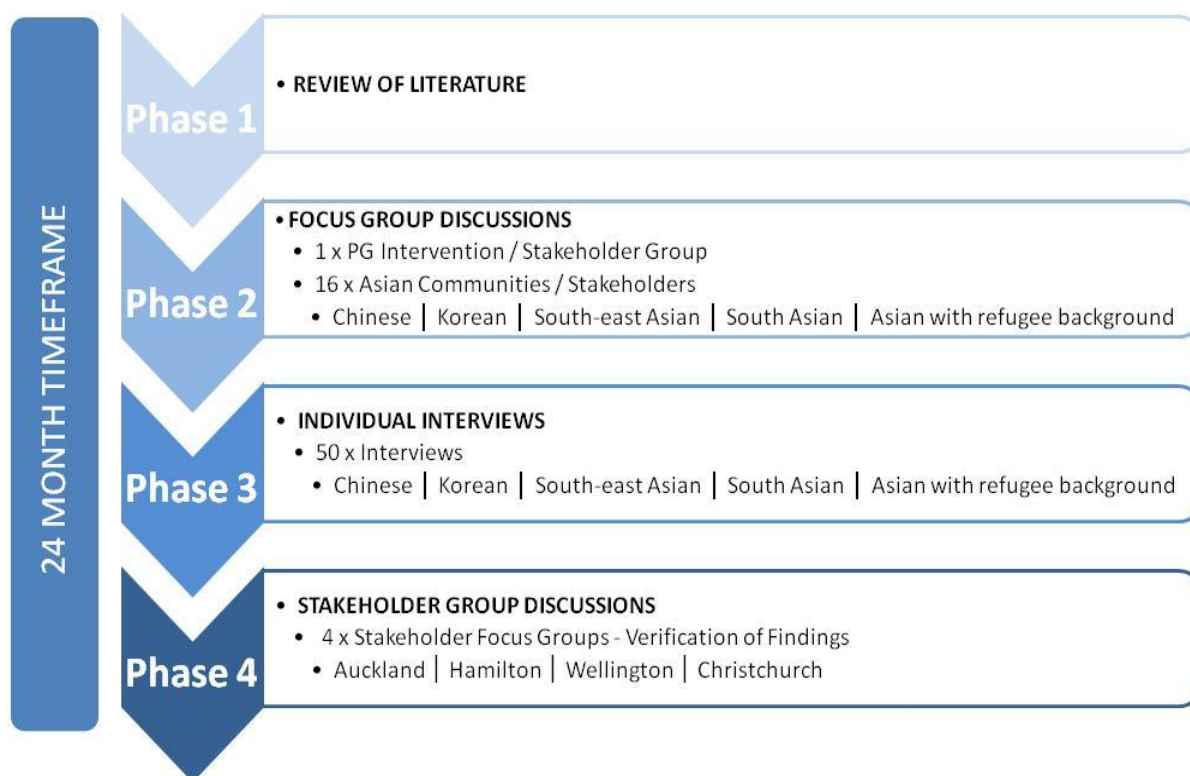
deal with stress and disorganisation will have consequences for the adaptation of family members and for their relationships. Hawley (2000) has described family resilience as the features of families that help them: i) resist disruption in the face of change; and, ii) adapt in the face of crisis situations. To date, a number of factors have been associated with resilience in immigrant families. Those internal to the family include a sense of cultural heritage and the presence of religious and/or spiritual beliefs (Walsh, 2002), and shared values and maintenance of family rituals (Silderberg, 2001). Externally, the existence of social support systems, both formal and informal, have been seen to be critical to the process (Silderberg, 2001).

In addition to consideration of ecological and acculturation processes, this project has also utilised a resiliency and strengths-based approach; there has been a focus on identifying and exploring protective factors in relation to gambling and problem gambling for Asian people.

#### **1.2.4 Research Design**

This mixed-methods research project employed qualitative research techniques, namely focus group discussions and in-depth individual interviews. Qualitative techniques were adopted as they would enable an in-depth exploration and examination of the issues being researched. A mixed-methods design also enabled triangulation of the data. The study consisted of the following four phases: Review of literature; Focus group discussions; Individual interviews; and Stakeholder group discussions. Figure 2 provides an overview of the research process and is followed by an outline for each of the research phases.

Figure 2: Overview of Summary Process



**Phase 1 – Review of Literature:** A literature review was carried out in order to access, review and summarise national and international literature on gambling and problem gambling with regard to Asian peoples. The University of Auckland’s library system was used to conduct literature searches via the following databases: PsychInfo, Scopus, Embase, Web of Science, Medline, and CINAHL. Peer-reviewed and grey literature was also sourced through on-line searches via GoogleScholar and targeting of key relevant websites (such as those for the Ministry of Health and Department of Internal Affairs). The international gambling list server (Gambling Issues International) and other gambling related websites were also utilised to identify and source relevant literature and information.

**Phase 2 (Stage A) – Focus Group Discussion with Problem Gambling Intervention Staff and other Key Stakeholders:** The first stage (A) of Phase Two consisted of a focus group discussion with problem gambling intervention staff and other key stakeholders from Asian and mainstream health service providers, law enforcement and community services. This group discussion aimed to explore and identify the key issues relating to gambling for Asian families and communities in New Zealand.

The discussion was facilitated by the lead researchers, both of whom are experienced group facilitators. The discussion was audio recorded, transcribed, and supplemented with written notes made throughout the discussion. Under the

guidance of the Cultural Advisory Group, the findings from this discussion were used to inform and establish a question guide for use with stakeholders in Stage B.

**Phase 2 (Stage B) – Focus Group Discussions with Asian Communities:** Stage B consisted of a series of 16 focus group discussions with stakeholders from each of the four major Asian ethnic groups in New Zealand, which are Chinese, Korean, South Asian (e.g. people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka), South-East Asian (e.g. people from Myanmar/Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam), and with Asians from a refugee background.

Participation was sought across the continuum of gambling behaviour, from non-gamblers through to those with first-hand experience of gambling related problems. A diverse range of participants with an interest in and/or experience of Asian gambling related issues were sought for this phase of the research, including: community leaders not specifically related to gambling related issues, general community members, representatives from community based agencies with an Asian focus / client base (e.g. Auckland Regional Migrant Services) and anyone personally affected by or interested in gambling-related issues (e.g. family members).

The number of focus groups differed according to ethnic group; as current evidence indicates that Chinese and Korean communities are disproportionately harmed by gambling, a greater number of groups were scheduled with these communities. Table 1 provides a breakdown of focus group discussions by ethnicity.

**Table 1: Breakdown of Focus Group Discussions by Ethnicity (Phase 2 Stage B)**

	Ethnicity				
	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Korean</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>South-east Asian</i>	<i>Asian with refugee background</i>
Number of focus group discussions <b>TOTAL (16)</b>	4	4	3	3	2

Each focus group discussion was guided by an interview schedule (see Appendix D) and led by experienced focus group facilitators who were ethnically matched to the participant’s ethnic group. Focus groups were conducted in the participants’ language of choice and sessions were audio recorded and transcribed, and supplemented with notes made throughout the discussions. Each participant was provided with a supermarket voucher at the end of the discussion as an expression of the research team’s gratitude.

**Phase 3 – Individual Interviews:** Phase Three entailed a series of face-to-face interviews with individuals. In total, 50 qualitative face-to-face interviews were completed with individuals across the five groups (see Table 2). As with Phase Two

(Stage B), participants with a diverse range of gambling-related experiences were sought, including those who gamble socially, and those who have experienced problem gambling or been impacted by someone else’s problematic gambling (e.g. parents, spouses/partners, children, employers/employees, community leaders).

**Table 2: Breakdown of Individual Interviews by Ethnicity (Phase 3)**

	Asian Ethnic Group				
	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Korean</i>	<i>Indian</i>	<i>South-east Asian</i>	<i>Asian with refugee background</i>
Number of face-to-face interviews <b>TOTAL (50)</b>	10	10	10	10	10

Interviews were guided by an interview schedule (see Appendix D), held at a time and place convenient to the participant, conducted in the participant’s language of choice, and led by experienced interviewers who were ethnically matched to the participant’s ethnic group. Sessions were audio recorded and transcribed, and supplemented with notes made throughout the discussions. Each participant was provided with a supermarket voucher at the end of the discussion as an expression of the research team’s gratitude.

**Phase 4 – Stakeholder Group Discussions:** The final phase of the research involved a series of four focus group discussions with stakeholders in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch. These four centres were selected for inclusion in this phase as they represent those with increasing populations of Asian peoples. This phase entailed the research team presenting the preliminary findings and their interpretations to key stakeholders. These key stakeholders were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure representation of Asian and mainstream health service providers, law enforcement and community services. Verification of the findings and identification of any additional salient issues (e.g. topics not previously raised / addressed throughout the course of the research) was sought. Sessions were audio recorded and transcribed, and supplemented with notes made throughout the discussions.

### **1.2.5 Recruitment and Sample**

The research team recruited participants for each phase of the research through their professional, community and personal networks. The use of flyers and snowballing techniques were also employed to assist with recruitment. When recruiting for Phase 2B (community / stakeholder focus groups) and Phase 3 (individual interviews), the research team were particularly focused on seeking participants from diverse backgrounds and with varying gambling-related

experiences. Consideration was given to factors such as: age, gender, country of birth (e.g. immigrant or NZ born), English language proficiency, length of residency in New Zealand, occupation (e.g. student, employed, home-maker), family composition (e.g. single, married, family with dependents etc), and level of engagement / relationship with gambling (e.g. social gambler, problem gambler, significant other).

Nine participants (five females and four males) attended the problem gambling service providers / key stakeholders focus group discussion (Phase 2A). Participants included individuals from each of the Asian ethnic sub-groups involved in the research (Chinese, Korean, South Asian, South-east Asian, and Asian with refugee background), and those of Pākeha / European descent. A range of organisations were represented, including NGOs with varying foci (e.g. gambling specific, broader addictions, Asian health needs), District Health Boards, and Government agencies.

Table 3 and Table 4 provide an overview of participants in Phase 2B (Focus Group Discussions with Asian Communities / Key Stakeholders) and Phase 3 (Individual Interviews) respectively. Each of these tables includes sample details according to participant ethnicity, demographic information, and years of residency in New Zealand. Table 5 provides a break-down of the gambling status of participants according to ethnicity.

**Table 3: Break-down of focus group participants (Phase 2 Stage B) by ethnicity, age, gender and years in New Zealand**

	ETHNICITY					TOTAL*
	Korean (n = 24)	Chinese (n = 23)	South Asian (n = 17)	S-East Asian (n = 23)	Refugee (n = 7)	
<b>Age</b>						
20-29	1	1	6	2	2	<b>12</b>
30-39	3	6	4	4	2	<b>19</b>
40-49	2	9	1	7	2	<b>21</b>
50-59	2	5	1	6	1	<b>15</b>
60+	1	2	5	3	0	<b>11</b>
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	5	9	8	10	4	<b>36</b>
Female	4	14	9	13	3	<b>43</b>
<b>Years in NZ</b>						
< 1 year	0	0	3	1	0	<b>4</b>
1 to 4	3	2	8	2	1	<b>16</b>
5 to 9	2	5	1	2	3	<b>13</b>
10 to 19	4	11	5	5	3	<b>28</b>
20 +	0	2	0	9	0	<b>11</b>
30 +	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>

\* NB: As completion of the participant demographic form (administered at the beginning of each focus group) was not compulsory, the sum of row totals may not equate to the total number of participants in each ethnic stream.

**Table 4: Break-down of face-to-face interview participants (Phase 3) by ethnicity, age, gender and years in New Zealand**

	ETHNICITY					TOTAL* (n = 50)
	Korean (n = 10)	Chinese (n = 10)	South Asian (n = 10)	S-East Asian (n = 10)	Refugee (n = 10)	
<b>Age</b>						
20-29	2	2	6	1	0	11
30-39	1	2	3	4	2	12
40-49	5	2	0	3	5	15
50-59	2	4	1	2	2	11
60+	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	5	5	7	3	6	26
Female	5	5	3	7	4	24
<b>Years in NZ</b>						
< 1 year	0	0	1	0	0	1
1 to 4	0	0	4	0	0	4
5 to 9	4	0	2	2	2	10
10 to 19	6	3	3	6	4	22
20 +	0	4	0	2	3	9
30 +	0	3	0	0	1	4

\* NB: As completion of the participant demographic form (administered at the beginning of each individual interview) was not compulsory, the sum of row totals may not equate to the total number of participants in each ethnic stream.

**Table 5: Break-down of participant gambling status according to ethnicity (Phase 3)**

	ETHNICITY					TOTAL* (n = 50)
	Korean (n = 10)	Chinese (n = 10)	South Asian (n = 10)	S-East Asian (n = 10)	Refugee (n = 10)	
<b>Problem gambler</b>	3	2	2	7	1	15
<b>Social Gambler</b>	1	0	3	0	5	9
<b>Family/significant other</b>	3	5	1	1	1	11
<b>Ex-gambler</b>	2	3	2	2	1	10
<b>Other (e.g. community worker)</b>	1	0	2	0	1	4

\* NB: In terms of the categorisation of Social Gambler and Problem Gambler, participants of the study have been categorised as Problem Gamblers if they have gambling behaviours that fit into the New Zealand Problem Gambling Foundation's definition of problem gambling: "Problem gambling refers to gambling that *significantly interferes* with a person's basic occupational, interpersonal, and financial functioning".

Participants who gamble, but do not fit into this definition are categorised by the researchers as Social Gamblers.

### **1.2.6 Data analysis**

Following each focus group and individual interview, the field researchers transcribed (and translated into English where necessary) each discussion. A general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006), was then used to analyse the resulting qualitative data. This frequently used method of thematic data analysis enables the identification of themes, clusters and categories. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour. In this project, the transcriptions enabled patterns of experiences to be formed through the use of direct quotes. Following this, all data that related to the already classified patterns were identified and overall themes emerged, which were then pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of participants' collective experience. Where possible, the themes have been validated by reading the related literature (Aronson, 1994).

The research team have ensured methodological rigour by allowing for a 'consistency check' on the analysis: a parallel process of independent analysis of the data has been carried out by at least two members of the research team. Key themes have been determined by consensus between researchers (Patton, 1990).

## **1.3 Ethics**

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) approved the study outlined in this report on the 18th June 2010 for a period of 3 years (reference number 2010 / 273).

This project was guided by the principles of informed consent. Written consent was arranged with an explanation on the importance of confidentiality and protection of each participant's identity. Written consent forms with participant's signature and name have been stored separately from the data in a locked file cabinet. Data and research findings have been protected via number coding (i.e. no identifying details are recorded in the findings or data set).

## **1.4 Cultural Advisory Group**

A cultural advisory group was convened by the research team at the commencement of the project. The group consisted of six members, who between them brought considerable knowledge and expertise in the areas of mental health, public health, Asian and refugee health issues, research techniques, problem gambling, and addictions. Members of the group also broadly represent the Asian ethnic groups included within the scope of this project. They include Associate Professor Elsie Ho,



Ms. Audrey Chung, Mr. Ivan Yeo, Dr. Arif Saeid, Ms. Nimi Bedi, and Dr. G. Raj Singh.

The advisory group met with the research team on a regular basis throughout the course of the research project. The group provided expert cultural advice and guidance on issues such as the data collection measures and procedures, commented on the preliminary findings and aided with the interpretation and contextualisation of the resulting data.

## **1.5 Research team**

As outlined in Section 1.1.3 (Strengths and limitations of the study), the research team recognised the need for this project to be grounded with Asian culture and to adopt culturally appropriate methods. In addition to guidance by the project's Cultural Advisory Group, cultural safety was ensured through the ethnic-matching of field researchers with participants in each of the streams. As such, the research team is comprised of field researchers from different ethnic backgrounds who are aware of cultural sensitivities within their own Asian ethnic communities. However, it is worth noting that the research team was cognizant of the counter sensitivities in relation to this issue, that is, that some issues are less likely to be disclosed to someone of the same culture.

Each of the field researchers had some experience with social science research techniques and were actively engaged with their respective communities. Ongoing training and mentoring was provided to each of the researchers with regard to the scope of the project, recruitment and sampling, data collection procedures and interviewing techniques, ethical requirements and safety procedures.

The research has been led by Dr. Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj, who is an overseas born Indian psychologist with expertise in the field of Asian health, and Dr. Fiona Rossen, who is a New Zealand born senior research fellow with expertise in the field of problem gambling. The project manager, Ms. Anita Wong, is a New Zealand born Chinese research associate with expertise in mental health. The study's local advisor, Dr. G. Raj Singh was employed as a health promoter at the Problem Gambling Foundation during the first part of the project, and the international advisor, Associate Professor Samson Tse, is a Chinese mental health expert.

## **1.6 Summary**

This chapter introduced the study and provided background information on Asians in New Zealand. It presented the aims and objectives of the study and its strengths and limitations. This was followed by a description of the ecological approach that guided the study and the acculturation framework within which the study was undertaken. Details were provided of the qualitative, mixed methods employed to

achieve the aims of the study including the four phase research design, recruitment and sample, data analysis and ethical considerations. The chapter was concluded with a description of the cultural advisory group and the research team.

The following chapter will present a review of the extant international and national literature on gambling.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

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This chapter provides an overview of the literature relevant to this project. It begins with a discussion of gambling as a global issue and in relation to New Zealand. It then focuses on literature related to Asian people's gambling, including the antecedents and etiology of problem gambling behaviour, Asian sub-groups that are disproportionately impacted by gambling and help-seeking behaviour.

### 2.1 Gambling as a global issue

Gambling can be loosely defined as placing something of value, usually money, on a chance event with the possibility of a larger and more beneficial outcome (Petry, 2005). While gambling appears to be an early human activity that has been observed in almost all cultures and countries around the world (Custer & Milt, 1985 as cited in Raylu & Oei, 2004), the past few decades have seen a rapid increase in the legalisation of gambling in many parts of the world. This expansion of gambling coupled with new developments in technology, has led to the proliferation of new technologically advanced gambling products (Productivity Commission, 1999). Contemporary gambling practices are driven by a number of interrelated factors such as availability, legislation, mode of gambling, and the social acceptability of gambling within a given country/culture (Productivity Commission, 1999, 2010; Tse, Abbott, Clarke, et al., 2005). High rates of gambling participation are thought to demonstrate the public's acceptance of gambling as a legitimate form of entertainment (Productivity Commission, 2010).

Currently, in most countries, gambling occurs openly, with the majority of people regularly participating in some form of gambling (Productivity Commission, 1999, 2010; Shaffer & Hall, 1999, 2001). A substantial body of research posits that exposure and accessibility to gambling is connected with increases in rates of participation and problems (see Jacques, Ladouceur, & Ferland, 2000; Storer, Abbott, & Stubbs, 2009; Thomas, Allen, & Phillips, 2009; Welte, Wieczorek, Barnes, Tidwell, & Hoffman, 2004). With problem gambling being noted throughout the 90 odd countries that have legalised gambling (Lesieur & Rosenthal, 1991), it appears that problem gambling can be found in almost all cultures (Raylu & Oei, 2002) and is increasingly becoming a recognised public health issue around the globe (Lamberton & Oei, 1997).

The past few decades have seen an increase in problem gambling related research, a large proportion of which has been primarily concerned with the identification of rates of problem gambling prevalence and associated risk factors. However, population estimates of problem gambling vary widely, due in-part, to a lack in precision of a definition for problem gambling (Productivity Commission, 1999) and

factors such as different screening tools, methodologies, and study populations (Shaffer & Hall, 1999, 2001; Tse, Yu, Rossen, & Wang, 2010). Two research projects that have sought to address some of these issues are Shaffer and Hall's (1999, 2001) meta-analyses of the American and Canadian literature. Their most recent meta-analysis (2001) included a total of 146 studies, resulting in a total of 180 distinct prevalence estimates and introduced a three-level classification system, Table 6 provides a summary of lifetime and past year estimates for rates of clinical, sub-clinical, and non- problem gambling.

**Table 6: Mean gambling prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals for adult populations**  
(Source: Shaffer & Hall, 2001, p. 169)

		<b>Lifetime Estimate</b>	<b>Past Year Estimate</b>
<b>Level 3</b>	<i>Clinical Problem Gambling:</i> Clinical gambling problem / most severe levels of disordered gambling (e.g. pathological)	1.92 (1.52 – 2.33)	1.46 (0.92 – 2.01)
<b>Level 2</b>	<i>Sub-Clinical Problem Gambling:</i> Sub-clinical gambling problems (e.g. problem, at-risk, in-transition, and potential pathological)	4.15 (3.11 – 5.18)	2.54 (1.72 – 3.37)
<b>Level 1</b>	<i>Non-Problem Gambling:</i> Gambling at non-problematic levels (also includes non-gamblers)	93.92 (92.79 – 95.06)	96.04 (94.82 – 97.25)

As with a number of longitudinal studies (e.g. Stinchfield, 2000; Stinchfield, Cassuto, Winters, & Latimer, 1997; Winters & Stinchfield, 1993; Winters, Stinchfield, & Kim, 1995), Shaffer and Hall's (1999, 2001) meta-analyses both found that estimates of *Level 3* disordered gambling have increased amongst adults over time.

### **2.1.1 Gambling and Problem Gambling in New Zealand**

Two National surveys have been conducted in New Zealand. These were conducted in 1991 and 1999 (Abbott & Volberg, 1991, 2000a). The findings of the latter survey suggest that gambling is a part of life for most adults in New Zealand: a lifetime participation rate of 94% was observed. Moreover, 86% of those surveyed had gambled within the past six months (which is high in comparison to international standards), and 40% had done so on a weekly basis (mostly on Lotto and other NZ Lotteries products). It was also estimated that although approximately one third of New Zealand adults gambled regularly (weekly or more frequently) on non-continuous modes, around ten percent, gambled regularly on continuous modes. Moreover, socio-demographic profiles varied according to gambling mode and whether or not modes were continuous. The authors found that males, those aged 55-64, Maori, those without formal educational qualifications, Roman Catholics, and

people with lower status occupations were more likely to engage in regular gambling on continuous modes.

Although Abbott and Volberg's (1991, 2000a) research is twelve years old, it does provide an indication of the incidence of problem and probable pathological gambling. Two measures of problem gambling were employed: lifetime and current. Lifetime problem and probable pathological gamblers were those who indicated that at some time in their lives they had met the SOGS-R criteria for problem or probable pathological gambling. Current problem and probable pathological gamblers were those who satisfied the criteria in the six months prior to the survey being conducted. The study estimated that the lifetime problem gambling rate for the New Zealand population (aged 18 years and older) was between 1.4% and 2.5%, with an additional lifetime probable pathological gambling rate of 0.7% to 1.4%. Moreover, it was estimated that the current problem gambling rate was between 0.6% and 1.1% with an additional current probable pathological gambling rate of 0.3% to 0.7%. A number of socio-demographic factors were associated with an increased risk of lifetime gambling problems, these included: gender, ethnicity, age, and household size. Specifically, Maori and Pacific Peoples, males, younger adults (25-34), and those living in a household with five or more people were all more likely to gamble at problem or pathological levels. The risk factors for current gambling problems were somewhat similar: Maori and Pacific Peoples, those who are employed, and those without formal educational qualifications were at greater risk than their counterparts. In addition to the above socio-demographic factors, it was also found that those who gamble alone, gamble as a hobby or habit, have someone in their life with a gambling problem, or regularly gamble on continuous forms, were at greater risk for both lifetime and current problem gambling.

More recent research, the 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey (NZHS) (Ministry of Health, 2009), estimated that two in every three adults (65.3%) had gambled in the past 12 months. The gambling activities most widely participated in included Lotto (55.3%), Instant Kiwi (26.5%), non-casino EGMs (10.2%), track betting (8.7%), and casino EGMs (7.7%). The NZHS estimated the prevalence of problem gambling in New Zealand adults (aged 15 years and over) to be 0.4% and that 1.3% satisfied the criteria for moderate-risk gambling. The following socio-demographic factors were found to be significantly associated with problem gambling: being aged 35-44 years; identifying as being of Māori or Pacific ethnicity; having fewer educational qualifications; and, living in areas of higher neighbourhood deprivation. A number of health related factors were also significantly associated with problem gambling: being a current smoker; hazardous alcohol consumption; anxiety and depression; poor self-rated health; seeing a general practitioner in the last 12 months; and, visiting a psychologist / counsellor / social worker in the last 12 months.

There is a limited body of research dedicated to Asian gambling issues in New Zealand. However, a secondary analysis of the Asian data subset from the Health Sponsorship Council's 2006/07 Gaming and Betting Attitudes Survey (GBAS) was recently completed (Rossen, et al., 2009a). This research provides some interesting insights into gambling related views and behaviours of two Asian subgroups – Chinese and South Asian/Indian. While pertinent findings from this report are highlighted throughout the literature review, it is interesting to note here the following differences between the two Asian groups:

- Mode of gambling that participant had spent more time or money than intended on – a greater proportion of Indian than Chinese participants reported pub/cub EGMs.
- Harm minimisation strategies as suggested by participants - a greater proportion of Indian than Chinese participants would encourage friends or family members affected by gambling to seek help from professionals. Moreover, significantly more Chinese than Indian participants were uncomfortable referring a family member or friend to the problem gambling services suggested during the survey interviews.
- Harm minimisation strategies to help friends or family members - a greater proportion of Indian than Chinese participants would set a dollar figure before leaving home as a way to control one's gambling.

The findings in this report highlight the differences between participants from two 'Asian' populations that are seemingly similar and often grouped together for analysis of data: Chinese and Indian.

### ***A Public Health Approach to Gambling in New Zealand***

Problem gambling is recognised as having widespread negative socioeconomic, social and health effects. It has been associated with financial hardship, bankruptcy, crime and incarceration, anxiety and depression, suicidality, substance use/abuse, disruption to employment/study, breakdown of family units, child neglect, and disruption to the family and community of which the problem gambler is a member (Brown & Raeburn, 2001; Productivity Commission, 1999, 2010; Rankine & Haigh, 2003; Welte, Barnes, Wieczorek, Tidwell, & Parker, 2004). In 2003, a public health approach to gambling was adopted within New Zealand.

In 2003, New Zealand introduced a new Gambling Act that was consistent with a public health framework. Of the Acts eight primary purposes, four are strongly embedded in a public health approach:

“The purpose of this Act is to –

- (a) control the growth of gambling; and
- (b) prevent and minimise the harm caused by gambling, including problem gambling; and...

- (g) ensure that money from gambling benefits the community; and
- (h) facilitate community involvement in decisions about the provision of gambling (New Zealand Parliament, 2003, pp. 9-10).

Moreover, the Act defines problem gambling as a public health issue and aims to control, regulate and monitor gambling and to prevent and/or minimise gambling related harm. The following definition of gambling harm is adopted in the Act:

“harm –

- (a) means harm or distress of any kind arising from, or caused, or exacerbated by, a person’s gambling; and
- (b) includes personal, social, or economic harm suffered –
  - (i) by the person; or
  - (ii) the person’s spouse, partner, family, whānau, or wider community; or
  - (iii) in the workplace; or
  - (iv) by society at large.” (New Zealand Parliament, 2003, pp. 15-16)

The Ministry of Health is the government department responsible for developing an integrated gambling strategy that is focused on public health (Ministry of Health, 2010a). The Ministry’s 2010/11-2015/16 strategic plan indicates that “The integrated problem gambling strategy must include:

- measures to promote public health by preventing and minimising the harm from gambling
- services to treat and assist problem gamblers and their families/whānau
- independent scientific research associated with gambling, including (for example) longitudinal
- research on the social and economic impacts of gambling, particularly the impacts on different cultural groups
- evaluation.” (p. 2)

As such, the Ministry is responsible for purchasing public-health services, face-to-face counselling services, a national telephone helpline and web-based services (Ministry of Health, 2010b). With regard to Asian problem gambling in New Zealand, the main provider of services is the Problem Gambling Foundation’s Asian Family Services. These services aim to work with Asian people affected by gambling problems (including problem gamblers, family and significant others) to identify and manage problems, thus reducing gambling related harm.

## **2.2 Antecedents and etiology of gambling and problem gambling for Asian people**

As outlined in an earlier chapter, the past two decades have seen a rapid expansion of legalised gambling throughout the Pan-Pacific region. With regard to Asian countries in this region, there has been a marked increase in the number and distribution of casinos in the area, with new casinos being built in Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, the Philippines and South Korea (Tse, et al., 2010). There is also evidence that the level of participation in gambling by people from Asian countries is increasing and that Asian people are affected by problem gambling to a greater extent than many other ethnic groups (Abbott & Volberg, 2000b; Brown, 2002; Dickerson, Baron, Hong, & Cottrell, 1996; Loo, Raylu, & Oei, 2008; Oei, Lin, & Raylu, 2008; Petry, et al., 2003a; Scalia, 2003). While there is some evidence that increased exposure (via proximity) to casino gambling plays an important role in participation and problem gambling rates (Korn & Shaffer, 1999; Productivity Commission, 1999). However, as with other populations, multiple factors contribute to the gambling and problem gambling behaviours of Asians.

The dominant focus of the gambling literature is the identification of factors that influence the shift from recreational/social gambling to problem gambling (Tse, Abbott, Clark, et al., 2005). We propose meaningful conclusions regarding this shift cannot be reached for Asian populations without the consideration of cultural and ecological issues. As such, the following section outlines the literature relating to antecedents and the etiology of problem gambling behaviour for Asian people with a focus on: cultural and historical influences, along with Asian values and beliefs, and Asian conceptualisations of gambling. Commonalities and disparities between Asian and Western viewpoints and experiences, with regard to the above, will be discussed where applicable.

### **2.2.1 Cultural and historical influences**

It appears that gambling is a culturally embedded and widespread activity for many Asians. While it may be the case that culture plays a significant role in the gambling behaviour of Asian people, it is inaccurate to conclude that culture has directly encouraged Asian people to gamble more than any other cultures.

While there is a paucity of literature addressing the historical significance of gambling within Asian communities, there is some documentation of gambling within Chinese and Indian civilizations. Historically, traditional Chinese values, as advocated by Confucius, discouraged gambling as it was deemed to be an activity that was wasteful and could potentially lead to social disorder. Throughout history, the maintenance of social order has been important and something that ancient rulers always strived to achieve; social order provided an effective means to manage China's large population. As such, gambling has been subjected to various levels of



control throughout the history of China; throughout some periods it was banned completely, while in others it was adopted by rulers and governments in order to manufacture revenue (see Lam, 2009; Tse, et al., 2010). Gambling has followed the development of Chinese society; Chinese culture is uniquely immersed in gambling, with historical influences dating to 3000 years ago (Lam, 2009). For instance, by 1000 B.C. gambling dens could be found on every major street in Chinese towns. Animal fights (cricket and cock) and races (dog and horse) were very popular forms of gambling that always attracted huge numbers of gamblers and heavy betting (Tse, et al., 2010).

Indian civilization is documented as having started approximately 4000 years ago and there is evidence that Indian culture adopted gambling around the time of its conception. The Mahabharata<sup>1</sup> (dating to 1500 B.C.) provides a narrative of gambling, in which members of a royal family gamble for the throne. The nuts of the 'vibhitaka' tree (have 5 more or less flat sides) were employed as early dice, and as with the Chinese, Indians were fond of gambling that involved animals – particularly cock and ram fights. The existence of early gambling houses have also been documented and it appears that these houses were supervised by officials who ensured social order and collected revenue for the King (Schwartz, 2006).

### ***The role of socialisation in gambling***

The various social aspects of gambling are well documented in the literature, with a wide range of individuals citing that gambling provides an opportunity to socialise with other people (Productivity Commission, 2010; Rossen, 2008a; Tse, Abbott, Clark, et al., 2005). As pointed out by Thompson (1997), gambling often takes place in a social setting, offers an opportunity to spend time with friends and contributes to community dialogue. This is particularly evident with certain gambling activities such as card games, whereby aspects of socialisation appear to be more important than those related to financial matters (i.e. making money), with regard to the uptake and maintenance of the activity (Aasved, 2003; Rogers, 1998). Research with Aboriginal people in Australia observed that traditional forms of gambling occurred in social contexts where community members shared the costs and risks, thus requiring other community members to support those players who lose (Altman, 1985). It has since been argued, that similar protective factors are unlikely to be present when Indigenous people venture into the unfamiliar surroundings of modern gambling venues (Busuttil, 2002). These findings are consistent with evidence that people who have not previously been exposed to large-scale legalised gambling, may be at increased risk when they do encounter such activities, for example, upon immigration to new country (e.g. Gambling Research Australia, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> Mahabharata is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India.

As group bonding overrides individualistic behaviour in collectivistic societies (Lasserre & Schütte, 1999), it is particularly important to note the role of socialisation in Asian gambling behaviour. The majority of Asians consider gambling with friends or family in the setting of a home to be a socially acceptable behaviour. Gambling has also become synonymous with many cultural festivals/celebrations and also provides an opportunity for furthering business connections and networking – behaviour that has been observed in Asian countries themselves and in countries of migration (Lam, 2009).

It appears that many Chinese view gambling predominantly as a social activity and that those who engage in gambling activities may be more likely to perceive gambling in this sense (Loo, et al., 2008). Some studies have found that those forms of gambling that are more entertaining and/or include a social aspect, such as mah-jong, and aspects of skill, to be much more popular among Chinese respondents (Loo, et al., 2008; VCGA, 2000). Social gambling is common in contemporary China and is a well accepted form of entertainment, especially during celebrations like Chinese New Year (Loo, et al., 2008). This appears to also be the case for many Chinese immigrants to Western countries, with gambling providing a means of celebrating the customs of their home country (e.g. Chinese New Year) and those of the host country. For instance, it has been reported that a Thanksgiving tradition for many American Chinese involves spending long hours at a casino (Buckley, 2009). However, further research is needed to understand these intersections of cultural and host country gambling customs and behaviour.

The social aspects of gambling have also been recognised with regard to Vietnamese communities in Australia. Duong & Ohtsuka's (1999) study on gambling behaviour in Vietnamese communities in Australia focused on the role and significance of gambling, in these communities. Their findings suggest that the conceptualisations of gambling and gambling-related problems held by Vietnamese people differ to other European ethnic groups in Australia. For example, gambling is widespread and was observed to create a hub for many Vietnamese social activities. As such, the identification of gambling with community activities makes avoidance of gambling (e.g. by those with gambling-related problems) particularly difficult. It also makes help-seeking from the community difficult as community members share common concepts about gambling, hence may not recognise problem gambling. This difference highlights significant implications for culturally appropriate prevention and treatment of problem gambling (Duong & Ohtsuka, 1999).

### ***2.2.2 Values, beliefs and the conceptualisation of gambling***

The spiritual philosophies and beliefs espoused by Asians influence their theories of illness, health, social beliefs and behaviours, including addictive behaviours such as gambling and the ways in which they cope with these and their rehabilitation processes. One of the major Asian philosophies that guides beliefs and behaviours

is the concept of karma (Tse, Sobrun-Maharaj, & Nayar, 2007). This is the concept of 'action' or 'deed' which denotes the entire cycle of cause and effect described in Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Buddhist philosophies. Karma is most easily described as intentional, good or bad action (Burnard, Naiyapatana, & Lloyd, 2006). Such action can in turn affect future aspects of a person's life or future lives. Avoidance of bad karma is an essential part of life. The larger concept behind karma is the idea that all actions have consequences, for example, 'do bad and receive bad; do good and receive good'. Karma, then, is also linked to unpleasant, disturbing or dangerous events in a person's life (Burnard, et al., 2006).

Furthermore, Pandalangat's (2011) qualitative research in cultural and gender influences on mental health, health beliefs, health behaviour, help-seeking and treatment expectations for mental health problems in Sri Lankan newcomers to Canada revealed that acceptance of the situation, ascribing it to fate or Karma appeared to act as a barrier to help-seeking for many Sri Lankan's (Pandalangat, 2011). Despite a paucity of research on this topic, it seems likely that karma plays an important role in Asian peoples' understanding and addressing of gambling and problem gambling issues (see Burnard, et al., 2006). Wong (2001) has also highlighted a link between karma and problem gambling; she argues that some Asian clients seeking assistance with problem gambling issues in New Zealand are able to minimise current experiences of pain or powerlessness and that this can be linked to the concept of karma: "the hardship experienced now has connections to previous actions – ours, our ancestors or actions of past lives." (p. 412).

### ***Fate, luck and superstitious beliefs***

Luck is an important concept among Asian people that permeates many aspects of their lives; Asians also take luck into account when it comes to gambling (Oei, et al., 2008; Tanasornnarong, Jackson, & Thomas, 2004; VCGA, 2000). In a study of young Thai people's gambling, researchers found that most young Thai participants claimed that the presence, or absence of money, was somewhat dependent on their 'fortune and luck' rather than with their employment. They associated having money as a sign of destiny or fate; you were either born to have money or not much money (Tanasornnarong, et al., 2004). Similarly, the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority (2000) found that the main reasons cited by the Chinese population for their gambling were 'to test their luck' (45%) and 'to win money quickly' (18%). It is also common for Asians to employ gambling at the start of a New Year as a way to usher out the bad luck of the previous year (Lee, 2005).

In their qualitative study with 14 Australian-Vietnamese Electronic Gaming Machines (EGM) problem gamblers, Ohtsuka & Ohtsuka's (2010) participants defined luck by the gambling outcome. That is, when an EGM pays out, you are in luck, and when an EGM does not pay, you are out of luck. Hence many Asians would go to the

casino to seek luck. This view was shared among gamblers with different gambling experiences and histories, including occasional / social gamblers, regular EGM gamblers, and EGM problem gamblers. The researchers also found that the Vietnamese Australian EGM gamblers did not believe it was possible to determine their 'luck' prior to using an EGM.

Oei & Raylu's (2007) study revealed that intrinsic motivation toward stimulation was higher among Caucasians than Chinese individuals, whereas extrinsic motivation toward identification (i.e., social standing and importance in the community) was higher among Chinese than Caucasian participants. Problem gamblers may also be motivated extrinsically due to a lack of other involvements, and may thus use gambling as a coping strategy and an opportunity to 'try their luck' during financial hardship (Loo, et al., 2008).

In addition to luck, a variety of superstitious beliefs have been investigated in relation to Asian people and gambling, with a number of authors concluding that Asian gamblers are more superstitious than their Western counterparts (Freedman, 2009; Loo, et al., 2008; Oei, et al., 2008; Papineau, 2001). It has also been suggested that the tendency for Chinese people to have distorted beliefs and cognitions that stem from superstitions, may present an "insidious and profound" risk factor (Oei, et al., 2008, p. 150) and explain some of the gambling-related differences between Chinese and Western populations (Loo, et al., 2008; Tanasornnarong, et al., 2004; Tao, Wu, Cheung, & Tong, 2011). Anecdotal data suggests that this would apply to various other Asian sub-groups as well.

Research with young Thai people in Australia has also emphasised the role of superstition. Tanasornnarong and colleagues (2004) found that research participants considered the Crown Casino to be a place connected with spirituality and superstition. The Casino was viewed as a place where fortune and luck could be tested and proven. Participants also held various beliefs with regard to increasing their chances of winning (e.g. lucky charms etc), which appeared to be linked to their systematic world view.

Efforts by the gambling industry to promote their business through increasing the social accessibility of venues by providing a warm and welcoming atmosphere and a variety of fun, social activities have been noted (Moore, Thomas, Kyrios, Bates, & Meredyth, online first), as have the use of indigenous and cultural icons and values (Dyall, S., & Kingi, 2009). Different types of venues and games will be attractive to different sections of the community, with the atmosphere of a casino, for example, designed to be particularly attractive to the Asian market (Raylu & Oei, 2004).

### ***Stigma and the importance of 'keeping face'***

Problem gambling is commonly reported amongst the Chinese (Godot, 2010): although prevalence rates vary widely between studies, there is growing evidence that Chinese people are disproportionately impacted by problem gambling when compared to Western populations (Blaszczynski, Huynh, Dumlao, & Farrell, 1998; Loo, et al., 2008; Tse, et al., 2010). For example, Tse and colleagues (2010) compared prevalence estimates from studies based in the US, New Zealand and Hong Kong and concluded that Western participants had lower rates of problem gambling than those from a population based survey in Hong Kong. However, it has also been argued that problem gambling rates for Chinese people are often under-reported due to factors such as stigma and the need to keep face (Godot, 2010; Loo, et al., 2008; Tse, et al., 2010). According to Godot (2010), this illustrates a 'characteristic reluctance' by Chinese people to admit self-regulatory failures.

The maintenance of the good name or reputation in the community ('keeping face') is particularly important for Asian people. This is not only important to the individual but in accordance with a collectivistic society, entire families are often affected by the individual's behaviour (Yip, 2005). Hence, shame is associated with the widespread influence of the stigma and discrimination that are experienced by many Asian people affected by gambling at problematic levels (Dhillon, Horch, & Hodgins, 2011; VCGA, 2000; Wong, 2001). This relationship has also been highlighted by research in New Zealand with Asian immigrants: losing more money than one can afford and thereby risking the future prospects of one's family in a new country, was found to result in feelings of intense shame, devastating remorse, and to experiences of being a total failure (Tse et al., 2008). It was also argued that stigma can act as a motivator for self-regulation of gambling behaviour; people may be motivated to stop/reduce gambling in order to save face.

While stigma has important implications with regard to the measurement of problematic gambling (as highlighted above), it is also important to consider the potential impacts on help-seeking behaviour amongst Asian populations. The desire to avoid shame to the family often discourages a problem gambler and his/her family/friends from seeking help (Tabora & Flaskerud, 1997); a reluctance that may adversely affect the outcome of an intervention. Whether it is problem gambling or a mental health issue, it is common for Asians to seek help from professional services as a last resort (Petry, et al., 2003a); a help-seeking pattern that may be attributable to a desire to delay the humiliating effects on their family by seeking to hide their problems (Papineau, 2001). Furthermore, avoiding shame may entail an unwillingness to self-disclose their own needs, feelings, and thoughts, which may lead to problems in forming rapport and having a trusting relationship with others (Tse, 2007b; Yip, 2005)

Interestingly, a number of studies have observed similar issues amongst other non-Western communities (e.g., Greek, Italian, Yugoslav, or Arabic); who are also typically reluctant to formally seek help for gambling problems because of the perceived shame and stigma that this would bring to their families and communities (Brown & Coventry, 1997; Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd, 2005; Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, 1999; McMillen, Marshall, Murphy, Lorenzen, & Waugh, 2004; VCGA, 2000).

### **2.2.3 The role of gambling cognitions & psychological states**

A large body of research has emerged around the role of gambling related cognitions and beliefs with regard to both Asian and other populations (e.g. Coulombe, Ladouceur, Desharnais, & Jobin, 1992; Griffiths, 1994; Hong & Chiu, 1988; Ladouceur, Gaboury, Dumont, & Rochette, 1988; Oei, et al., 2008; Raylu & Oei, 2004; Tang & Wu, 2010). One cognitive phenomenon that is particularly relevant to gambling is locus of control, which refers to the extent to which individuals think they can control events that affect them. Individuals with a high *internal* locus of control believe that events are primarily a result of their own actions and behaviour. Those with a high *external* locus of control believe that events are largely out of their control and that their lives are largely controlled by the environment, a higher power(s), other people etc. Research has shown that Asians, particularly Chinese, have a higher external locus of control than their Western counterparts (Lam, 2009; Oei, et al., 2008; Shek & Chan, 2009). A higher external locus of control has been associated with a higher illusion of control (see below), an increased participation in gambling (Tse, et al., 2010) and propensity for risk-taking in gambling situations (Lam, 2009). Asian gamblers have also been shown to have a significantly lower self-perceived ability with regard to stopping their own gambling (Oei, et al., 2008).

Much research has been carried out on the illusion of control, which in essence, is the tendency for people to overestimate their ability to control events; i.e. to have an unrealistic estimate of their ability to influence/control the outcome of a gambling activity (Ladouceur, et al., 1988). Several authors have noted that some modes of gambling, for example pokie machines, optimally facilitate an illusion of control (Carroll & Huxley, 1994; Griffiths, 1995). Griffiths argues that the introduction of specialist features such as nudge, hold, and gamble buttons are particularly instrumental in stimulating an illusion of control. These features facilitate a sense of personal involvement and familiarity with particular machines: to optimise their use appears to necessitate extensive knowledge of the reels. As such, they're perceived as skilful functions, particularly by those who are gambling on these modes at problem levels (Griffiths, 1990a, 1990b, 1995).

The tendency for Asian people to have strong superstitious beliefs (e.g. in fate, luck, feng shui<sup>2</sup>) is thought to contribute to their propensity to have a strong illusion of control (Oei, et al., 2008; Tse, et al., 2010). For instance, an Australian study (Zysk, 2002), found that Vietnamese gamblers in Australia appear to be more serious than their European/Australian counterparts about their gambling, and they tend to have unrealistic and overly optimistic expectations about the opportunities to make profits out of their gambling. Other participants in this study implied that Vietnamese gamblers are more inclined to be 'businesslike' about their gambling, and to view the activity as a potential source of income. However, there is a lack of research comparing differences between Asian and non-Asian populations with regard to the impact of these factors on gambling behaviour (Tse, et al., 2010).

A number of further cognitions have been explored in relation to gambling, including: *illusions of predictability* (an unrealistic sense that gambling outcomes can be predicted), *inconsistent framing* (a tendency to attribute wins to internal factors and losses to external factors), *gambling expectancies* (e.g. believing that gambling offers relaxation and reduces boredom etc), and *uncontrollable gambling habit* (i.e. believing that you are unable to stop or control your gambling) (Delfabbro, 2004; Oei, et al., 2008; Raylu & Oei, 2004).

However, as noted by Oei and colleagues (2008), the knowledge around these gambling cognitions is largely derived from research/studies with Western populations. As such, caution may be required when attempting to apply or generalise the findings to Asian people. As the social and ecological influences, values and belief systems of Asian people differ greatly to those of Westerners, it is likely that the cognitions and psychological states will also differ.

#### **2.2.4 Immigration and settlement issues**

Research has documented the various difficulties and resulting impacts associated with immigration. A number of key health issues concerning Asian people in New Zealand can be attributed to settlement difficulties (Rasanathan, et al., 2006). Commonly encountered difficulties relating to post-immigration adjustment for Asians settling in New Zealand include unemployment (or underemployment in some cases), language barriers, mental health issues (depression and suicide), cultural differences, social isolation, and a lack of access to service information regarding settlement and employment (Sobrun-Maharaj, 2011; Sobrun-Maharaj, Tse, Hoque, & Rossen, 2008; Sobrun-Maharaj, et al., 2009). Tse (2007) argues that for many Asian immigrants, the immigration and post-immigration adjustment process can be likened to an 'uprooting experience'. The literature on acculturation illustrates the high levels of stress that immigrants experience when settling into a new country. This

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<sup>2</sup> Feng shui is a century old belief in which one alters the physical environment (e.g. the layout of a room) in order to influence events (Lam, 2009).

experience of cross-cultural stress is known as culture shock (Furnham & Bochner, 1986) and can be particularly intense throughout the early stages of immigration (McIntyre, 2008). Early research shows that immigrants first need to go through a process of 'deculturation' in order to acculturate to their new country (Bar-Yosef, 1968; Eisenstadt, 1954). De-culturation involves unlearning some of the immigrants' childhood cultural patterns and other beliefs and behaviours, which may evoke stress and anxiety and this, together with the acculturation experience often results in other forms of temporary mental health issues which may also include a 'breakdown' (McIntyre, 2008).

The large differences between the New Zealand and Asian cultures (highlighted earlier in this report), as well as migration expectations contribute to acculturation stress amongst Asian immigrants and refugees settling into New Zealand. Studies into the settlement experiences of Asian immigrants and refugees in New Zealand (e.g., Dixon, et al., 2010; Sobrun-Maharaj, 2011) show that the various Asian sub-groups migrate to New Zealand for different reasons and have different expectations for their lives here. Skilled immigrants with high qualifications and English proficiency (such as many South Asians), expect to find employment commensurate with those qualifications. If they do not achieve this, they appear to experience higher levels of settlement stress. However, those with limited English, have migrated for lifestyle reasons, and do not expect to find high level employment may experience lower levels of settlement stress. Their response to the new environment and circumstances encountered in the new country is determined by these different expectations and the concomitant levels of stress they experience.

Some researchers have mentioned the acculturation and remigration trend of the younger 1.5 generation<sup>3</sup> of Asian immigrants (Park, 2003), that is, those who have come to New Zealand at a young age (and who have usually completed secondary and/or tertiary education in New Zealand). Many migrants of this description continue to stay in New Zealand for early career development, however, due to difficulties finding suitable employment they often leave New Zealand to seek better opportunities (Ho, 1995; Ip, 2003; Lidgard, Ho, Chen, Goodwin, & Bedford, 1998).

### ***Gambling as a means of coping with settlement and other difficulties***

Gambling often provides individuals with a certain amount of relief or escape from problems occurring in their life (Abbott & Volberg, 2000b; Blaszczynski & McConaghy, 1989). Some describe gambling as offering a temporary but effective

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<sup>3</sup> A commonly used definition is that those who immigrated "before age 5 are considered second generation. Immigration between ages of 6 and 10 places one as 1.7 generation; between 11 or 12, 1.5 generation; between 13 and 14, 1.2 generation. After graduating high school, one is classified as first generation" (p124)



relieve from painful personal realities (Tavares et al., 2003; Welte, Barnes, et al., 2004; Wong & Tse, 2003). Research has found that gambling whilst experiencing negative mood states, for example, depressed mood, increases the likelihood of continued gambling regardless of repeated losses – even for non-problematic gamblers (Raghunathan & Pham, 1999).

Research with representatives of Vietnamese communities in Australia found that Vietnamese participants indicated that they gambled because of stress and boredom - as did their Western counterparts (VCGA, 2000). However, the Vietnamese participants were more likely to attribute their stress to migration and settlement issues. Clinically-based research to address problem gambling amongst Chinese in New Zealand reported that it was not uncommon to hear Chinese gamblers describing that when they are gambling, they are either not thinking of anything or they are only thinking of the excitement and glamour of winning and being in a casino (Wong & Tse, 2003). More recently, researchers found that after dealing with the acute crises related to problem gambling, it was common to hear Asian clients in New Zealand describing a crisis as an 'awakening' experience (Tse, et al., 2008; Tse, Wong, & Chan, 2007). Participants reported suddenly realising they have a need to integrate with their communities, improve their language skills, re-focus on their personal goals or aspirations, and find a new purpose and meaning to their life in the new country.

Asian immigrants may encounter multiple challenges and difficulties when integrating into a new society; adjustment to living in a new country is not an easy process and may not work out for everyone (Sobrun-Maharaj, et al., 2008). One area of difficulty appears to be the high levels of social acceptability and wide-spread accessibility of legalised gambling in New Zealand. This represents a significant risk for many Asian immigrants to New Zealand as many will not have encountered such readily available access to gambling venues: casino games remain illegal in mainland China and Hong Kong (although they are now legalised in Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Philippines, and South Korea) (Tse, et al., 2010). Similarly, those living in India, and predominantly Muslim countries such as Indonesia and Pakistan, have no ready access to forms of legalised gambling.

It is also interesting to note that Raylu & Oei (2004) propose that acculturation and increased gambling amongst Asian people in host countries can be viewed in two ways. Increased gambling could be indicative of a successful acculturation process (i.e., successfully adapting to a culture that has high acceptance of gambling), or related to difficulties in adapting to the mainstream culture.

### **2.3 Asian sub-groups disproportionately affected by gambling**

Internationally, anecdotal accounts, media reports, and recent research studies have made reference to the increasing level of participation in gambling by people from

Asian countries and that Asian people are disproportionately affected by problem gambling (e.g. Blaszczynski, et al., 1998; Chinese Family Life Services of Metro Toronto, 1995; Cultural Partners Australia Consortium, 2000; Petry, Armentano, Kuoch, Norinth, & Smith, 2003b). For instance in Australia, using the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) and a cut-off score of 10, it was found that members of the Chinese community were almost 50 percent more at risk of developing problem gambling compared with their Caucasian counterparts (Raylu & Oei, 2004). In Sydney Australia, Blaszczynski and colleagues (1998) reported a prevalence estimate of 2.9 percent for problem gambling among Chinese participants in their study, compared with the 1.2 percent observed by Dickerson and colleagues in relation to the Australian population (Dickerson, Baron, Hong, & Cottrell, 1996). Moreover, researchers have identified that amongst Asians, a number of Asian sub-groups are at an increased risk of problem gambling. In particular, Asian people from a refugee background (e.g. Marshall, et al., 2009; Petry, et al., 2003b) and international students (e.g. Gambling Research Australia, 2011; Li, 2008; Li, 2006) appear to be more vulnerable with regard to problem gambling.

While the trauma associated with a refugee background and a number of resulting/associated impacts (e.g. depression, violence etc) have been reasonably well documented (Adams, Gardiner, & Assefi, 2004; Allden, 1998; Bhui et al., 2003), the potential impacts of gambling are not well understood for this population. However, the limited research that has focused on gambling amongst Asian refugees indicates that they are more prone to gambling related disorders (Marshall, et al., 2009; Petry, et al., 2003b). For example, Petry and colleagues (2003b) explored gambling participation and problem gambling amongst a sample of South-East Asian (Laotians, Vietnamese and Cambodian) refugees attending community service organisations in Connecticut (US). The majority of participants in this study reported having gambled in the past year (95%) and within the past two months (93%). Moreover, the lifetime prevalence of pathological gambling was particularly high; 70 percent satisfied the SOGS criteria for lifetime problem or pathological gambling. The researchers also reported a number of differences between the types of gambling related issues that were reported by the refugee sample in comparison to typical Caucasian samples; the most frequently reported responses by the refugees included gambling more than intended, hiding gambling from others, having others criticise their gambling, and borrowing from house expenses or credit cards. A more recent study by Marshall and colleagues (2009) entailed face to face interviews with a subsample of 127 Cambodian refugees who had taken up residence in California. The authors found that approximately 14 percent of the sample satisfied the problem gambling criteria (a score of 3 or more on the SOGS) – a higher rate than that typically observed in the general population. The study also found that disordered gambling was significantly correlated with being male, being married/cohabitating, and being exposed to high levels of trauma.

A survey carried out by the Chinese Family Service for Greater Montreal in 1997, identified Chinese restaurant workers as a high-risk group for gambling issues: they found that up to 19 percent satisfied the criteria for pathological gambling (Scalia, 2003). A number of New Zealand based studies have found similar issues with regard to gambling and factors such as occupation. For instance, a survey conducted by the Problem Gambling Foundation's Asian Services in Christchurch, found high rates of problem gambling behaviour amongst restaurant workers (Tan & Tam, 2003). Further research has clarified that those disproportionately affected by problem gambling included Asian immigrants who are employed in shift work (e.g., restaurants, factories, takeaway food spots) (Goodyear-Smith, Arroll, & Tse, 2004) and newly arrived young Asian adults studying English (Tse, Wong, et al., 2007).

As highlighted by Tse and colleagues (Tse, Kim, & Wong, 2004), international students appear to be a particularly high-risk group with regard to gambling – an issue that is increasingly gaining recognition in both New Zealand (Li, 2008; Li, 2006) and Australia (Gambling Research Australia, 2011). One contributing factor is thought to be a lack of prior experience and/or exposure to legalised gambling (Gambling Research Australia, 2011; Li, 2008). Research in Australia argues that students who may not have gambled in their home country, may decide to experiment with gambling in Australia if their peers present it as an acceptable form of entertainment (Dowling, Clarke, Memery, & Corney, 2005; Shields, 2009). With regard to international students of Chinese origin in New Zealand, researchers argue that “the longer these Chinese students stayed in New Zealand, the more likely they were to become addicted to gambling” (Abbott and Cheung, 2005; cited in Li, 2008, p. 11).

As discussed earlier, it is known that immigration can lead to negative emotions and feelings of isolation (Leung, 2001; Sobrun-Maharaj, et al., 2008). Some research suggests that international students may use gambling as a way of coping with isolation and an escape from problems related to cultural adjustment (Ministry of Education, 2007). Similarly, gambling offers students a form of entertainment and socialisation (Li, 2008). Moreover, while international students share many of the risk factors attributed to other Asian immigrants (e.g. language barriers, boredom, loneliness), they often have the increased risk of access to large amounts of money (intended to support them throughout their studies) which can contribute to gambling related issues (Li, 2008).

Based on anecdotal and research evidence, such as those outlined above, Tse and associates (2007) have identified five at-risk Asian sub-groups that warrant particular attention. These are people working in the food industry, tourist operators, international Asian students, South East Asian refugees and members of astronaut families (i.e., those in which Asian mothers stay behind in a foreign country to look after their children while the husband returns to the home country to work). In New

Zealand there have been increases in the number of Asian women clients seen by problem gambling counsellors (Ministry of Health, 2007, 2008). Tse and associates (2007) argue that there is a general trend of increasing numbers of mothers with young children seeking help for their gambling problems. This observation is consistent with mothers feeling isolated and unsupported in their host country, having access to large amounts of disposable money, and facing the stresses associated with raising children in a new cultural environment. This makes solo mothers from astronaut families particularly vulnerable to develop gambling problems.

## 2.4 Help-seeking for Gambling

Various service-user statistics indicate that a number of Asians seek help for gambling-related issues in New Zealand each year (Gambling Helpline New Zealand, 2011; Ministry of Health, 2008; Ministry of Health, 2012; Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand, 2012).

For instance, intervention client data released by the Ministry of Health indicate that between June 2010 and July 2011, 8.3% (N=1009) of clients who accessed problem gambling treatment services (i.e. all interventions) were East Asian (Ministry of Health, 2012).

The Asian Gambling Hotline<sup>4</sup> provided 937 sessions of counselling to clients in 2011 and 1233 sessions in 2010 (Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand, 2012). The most recent detailed breakdown of service-user statistics indicate that in 2007 the Asian Gambling Hotline had 883 calls, and that 291 of these were new (first-time) callers: approximately two-thirds (201) were calling about their own gambling issues, and the remaining third (90) were significant others (Ministry of Health, 2008). User statistics for the Gambling Helpline<sup>5</sup> reveal that 7.4% of all clients utilising this service in 2011 self-identified as Asian (Gambling Helpline New Zealand, 2011).

The willingness of individuals to access professional help/assistance for gambling related issues is an important issue. While the service-user statistics outlined above indicate a willingness on behalf of some Asian people to access help, research has provided further insight into these issues. For example, in a survey of young Asian students in New Zealand, 9.1 percent admitted feeling unhappy or worried after a gambling session and 6.5 percent *wanted assistance to deal with their gambling problems* (Goodyear-Smith, et al., 2004). A study with South East Asian refugees in the United States revealed that 27 percent of problem gamblers and 42 percent of

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<sup>4</sup> The Asian Gambling Hotline is part of the Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand's Asian Family Services. It is an Auckland based national hotline run by Asian counsellors for Asian clients.

<sup>5</sup> Gambling Helpline is a nationwide 24 hour service, funded by the Ministry of Health, that is available to anyone concerned about gambling.

pathological gamblers were interested in learning about ways to reduce or stop their gambling (Petry, et al., 2003b).

However, while it is apparent that some Asians want to and/or do seek professional help, researchers in Australia and New Zealand have found that the majority of Chinese problem gamblers exhibit reluctance to seek professional help outside the Chinese community network (Rossen et al., 2009). Barriers to help-seeking behaviours include language difficulties, cultural differences, false beliefs in betting (e.g., that a stroke of bad luck was an indicator of the future occurrence of good luck in betting), and denial of the problem (Basu, 1991; Papineau, 2001; Scull & Woolcock, 2005).

With the global proliferation of gambling, policy makers and service providers around the world face challenges in understanding Asian problem gambling. It has been argued that, if preventive problem gambling programmes and intervention services are to be effective for Asian people, they will need to incorporate Asian values, traditions, and community connections which have the potential to encourage greater utilisation of Asian community resources and wisdom (Loo, et al., 2008). To render an effective intervention for Asian people, it is pivotal to address the issue of shame associated with problem gambling. Brown (2002) and Loo, et al. (2008) propose that this requires the systematic study of culturally responsive intervention programmes for Asian immigrants, this includes noting their cultural context and its associated values and attitudes (Brown, 2002; Loo, et al., 2008). Issues that require consideration include, for example, what are help-seeking preferences and effective strategies to communicate with Asian communities through the media? Who holds and influences the knowledge of problem gambling in Asian communities?

## **2.5 Summary of Literature Review**

The literature indicates that while gambling is an early human activity that has been observed in almost all cultures and countries around the world, the past few decades have seen a rapid increase in the global expansion and legalisation of gambling. This expansion of gambling coupled with new developments in technology, has led to the proliferation of new technologically advanced gambling products. This pattern has been observed throughout Australasia. Contemporary gambling practices are driven by a number of interrelated factors such as availability, legislation, mode of gambling, and the social acceptability of gambling within a given country/culture.

There is also evidence that the level of participation in gambling by people from Asian countries is increasing and that Asian people are affected by problem gambling to a greater extent than many other ethnic groups. While there is some evidence that increased exposure (via proximity) to casino gambling plays an important role in participation and problem gambling rates, it must be acknowledged

that gambling is a culturally embedded and widespread activity for many Asians. As Asian cultures are collectivistic in nature, and tend to view gambling predominantly as a social activity, it is particularly important to note the role of socialisation in Asian gambling behaviour.

A number of culturally embedded values and beliefs influence the ways in which Asian people conceptualise gambling. In particular, fate, luck and superstitious beliefs have been shown to significantly impact Asian peoples' beliefs around gambling. The role of stigma and the importance of 'keeping face' have implications for public health initiatives with Asian people affected by gambling.

Research highlights the role of immigration and settlement experiences in gambling behaviour and also highlights the at-risk status of sub-Asian groups such as international students and those with a refugee background.

The following chapters will present and discuss the findings from the present research.

## Chapter 3. Results: Asian Culture and its Role in Gambling

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This chapter presents and discusses findings from the present research with regard to the role of Asian culture in gambling behaviours. Where pertinent differences between Asian and Western cultures and the Asian sub-groups have been highlighted, including how these may impact on the conceptualisation of gambling amongst Asians. The impact of Asian belief systems and values on gambling-related behaviours is also discussed. The themes presented below have emerged from the data provided by participants and the analysis of this data.

### 3.1 Asian collectivism

Asians are traditionally collective peoples. This simply means that the needs of the family and extended family (which often includes the community) are placed before individual needs. This worldview, together with other beliefs and values (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of these), differs markedly from Western individualistic cultures, and may impact on gambling behaviour.

In a collectivistic society, group bonding overrides individualistic behaviour (Lasserre & Schütte, 1999), hence it is considered the norm that gambling with friends and relatives is an acceptable form of social behaviour.

*I played mah-jong in New Zealand when my kids were still young, would spend a few hundred dollars maximum, same with cards. Just inviting friends over for a social gathering and hanging out time after work, I owned a restaurant then (CHI-M-5-PG)*

This acceptability is extended to business activities where many Asians, especially the Chinese, use gambling as a platform for business networking or relationship building (Lam, 2009).

*[My husband] takes his Korean and Chinese clients to the casino when they come to New Zealand and that is pretty much the only time he will go there. It's an attraction for tourists; it's also the thrill that guys want in gambling. In Korea there are nightclubs that older men go to, but in NZ there's really none of these or none that Asians are interested in. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

In the context of gambling and problem gambling, the collective nature of Asian communities can have a protective influence as it greatly increases the likelihood of support for problem gamblers from family, friends and community. This social support also helps alleviate the impacts of such problems in these communities.

Some participants, especially those of South Asian origin, suggested that the collective nature and culture of Asians can protect against problem gambling, as illustrated by the following quotation:

*Our ethnicity has been less affected by gambling. It is not as bad as other ethnicities. I think the culture plays the biggest role. Here [in NZ], you don't have to look after your child once they turn 16. Most parents send them out of the house. They expect the kid to live on the allowance [from government]. They send their kids to find their own way. ...We are not like that. We are more self-sacrificing and family-oriented.... We first look after others and then look after ourselves. We have that attitude. (IND-F-3-CW)*

## **3.2 Asian conceptualisations of gambling and problem gambling**

Asian culture is intertwined with conceptualisations of gambling and problem gambling and impacts views of gambling as well as gambling behaviours amongst Asians.

### **3.2.1 Gambling as a social activity**

The Problem Gambling Intervention/Stakeholder group suggested in Phase 2 of this study that Asians made a clear distinction between social gambling and problem gambling. This distinction was hence explored with other participants during focus group discussions and individual interviews. Participants across all Asian groups, especially North and East Asians such as Chinese, Koreans (and Taiwanese), for whom gambling is a social activity, made a distinction between social gambling and problem gambling. They explained that gambling as a social activity (e.g. playing Mah-jong) is not considered gambling:

*...people in China... they do not [have] problem gambling even if they play Mah-jong. You know, it seems like a gambling activity but there is more social activity involved. Social activity element in the whole activity. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

If gambling was controlled and did not have an adverse effect on the family, it was considered an acceptable social activity:

*Gambling is okay if you can control it well. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

*My gambling does not affect my family as I always let my husband know that I go to the casino, although he does not like the casino. As I don't drink or go anywhere, my husband said that it is alright to go to the casino just for fun. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

Sometimes, social gambling was referred to as gaming rather than gambling. Participants reported that social gambling or gaming occurs especially during significant occasions such as Chinese New Year and Diwali where such activities are embedded within celebrations for the events:

*When I was 14 or 15 years old, I was in India. There is a festival called 'Diwali'. [On that festival] People come to our house to play cards. It is [part of] our culture. During that time all my family members meet in one place and they enjoy together playing cards and other games and that's when I became aware of it. That time I played only cards and I played for money. (IND-M-2-SG)*



Many Asians are exposed to gambling from a young age. For example:

*When I was young about 10 or 11, the first form of gambling I knew about was playing cards and having money involvement at home. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

Activities such as these enable social cohesion and protect families from social isolation.

Some participants, however, highlighted the potential for these cultural practices to motivate gambling, as reflected in the following comment:

*I think Koreans are more exposed to risk of gambling. We have big annual events twice a year. New Year's Holiday and Thanks Giving Day when all our family members gather for big meals and holiday. We often tend to play some card games. We sometimes end up putting some money into the games as well. That increases the chance of having a motivation to start gambling. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

Interestingly, this quote also seems to reflect the view that card playing for money during social events does not constitute gambling.

Participants also felt that social gambling is not harmful and that it actually is a good form of entertainment and stress release:

*As long as you can control yourself, it is a cheap and easy way you can feel relaxed and [forget] everything. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*I don't believe gambling itself is that bad. It's relaxing and I have a good time with my friends with small money. It's good entertainment... As long as you don't gamble too much, I think there's nothing bad about gambling. (REF-F-4-SG)*

Social gambling or gaming was perceived to have become a problem when an individual's or family's personal health and/or wellbeing were affected by gambling-related behaviours. Problem gambling was characterised primarily by frequent visits to the gambling venue (usually the casino), a lack of control over gambling, and reduced / limited social interaction (i.e. going to the casino alone). The importance of reduced social connections with increasing levels of engagement with gambling has been recognised elsewhere and is consistent with other addictive behaviours (Adams, 2008).

The significance of this topic was endorsed by stakeholder focus group participants across all four regions:

*Low [social] gamblers usually say hello to each other but high [problem] gamblers normally just hide... they never say hello to each other even in the VIP room. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Some service provider stakeholders suggested that the term gambling was used only when referring to a problem. However, most ex-gamblers, social gamblers and

family members interviewed used the term gambling rather than gaming when talking about social gambling as well.

### **3.2.2 Gambling as a negative activity**

There is a great deal of diversity amongst Asian sub-groups with regard to gambling activity and availability / level of exposure. Gambling as a social activity appears to be less common in some communities such as some South Asian sub-groups who apparently perceive it negatively, despite evidence that Indian culture adopted gambling from the beginning of Indian civilization (Schwartz, 2006). Anecdotal data from South Asians suggests that attitudes towards gambling have changed in modern times with gambling now being considered taboo in most South Asian countries. A number of South Asian participants indicated that current cultural norms in their home countries had limited their opportunities to engage with gambling prior to moving to New Zealand, with one participant positioning gambling as part of a range of activities seen as negative, for example:

*There are very good things about New Zealand but when it comes to drinking culture, gambling, going out to strip clubs, [these are] the worst part of it. It is worst because it is accessible, which is not as accessible back home. It is taboo, but here it is a normal thing. (IND-M-2-SG)*

However, most Asian participants, including those who have not been exposed to other forms of gambling, such as some South Asians, appeared to find participating in Lotto a more acceptable form of gambling as it did not involve large sums of money and apparently did not have adverse effects on families; instead it could turn out to be good for them:

*People buy Lotto tickets you see. That itself is a form of gambling. I know a lot of people who make sure that they buy one every week. Almost 8 out of 10 people I know. Though it is gambling, nobody is ashamed of talking about it outside because it is only \$10-12/week. I don't think Lotto ticket is going to affect the family in any way. In fact wives remind their husbands to buy Lotto every week. (IND-F-3-CW)*

*To be honest, I have seen lot of Indians going for Lotto instead of going to casinos. .... I have seen families buying Lotto ticket quite a bit. (IND-M-2-SG)*

These sentiments correspond to those observed in many Western societies, including New Zealand. For example, the Health Sponsorship Council's gaming and betting attitudes survey revealed that lottery products were more likely than other forms of gambling to be viewed as 'doing a lot of good for the community' – a sentiment that was shared by NZ European, Chinese and Indian participants (Rossen, 2009). It is also interesting to note that relatively equal proportions of NZ European, Chinese and Indian participants viewed lottery products as a traditional part of New Zealand culture (Rossen, 2009).

### **3.2.3 Belief systems and values**

Despite some diversity in views and gambling related experiences amongst the Asian subgroups, many commonalities were observed with regard to Asian belief systems and values. These are presented and discussed below in relation to their impact on gambling related behaviours.

#### ***Superstition and “luck”***

The supernatural and “luck” appear to play a significant role in the lives of most Asians who have a strong belief in luck:

*They believe in luck. That's the starting point. (IND-M-2-XG)*

Hence, if Asians believe they have luck or are feeling “lucky”, they may be inclined to go out and gamble as reflected in the following comment:

*I play lotto because I want to have luck and hope that I can win a lot of money, (SEA-F-5-XG)*

Furthermore, for many Asians, winning appears to be a litmus test for overall luck, reflecting a significant difference between Asian and Western conceptions of winning and luck. As with research conducted with Asian people in other countries (Ohtsuka & Ohtsuka, 2010; VCGA, 2000), participants indicated that they gamble to test their levels of luck:

*Sometimes, I will gamble to see if I really have luck or not. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

*We have this saying in Chinese: if you don't gamble, you don't know how lucky you are. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*...he went to gamble on the night of Chinese New Year's Eve– very typical of Chinese people – testing luck and fortune for the New Year. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*[They think], 'I can try my luck. I can drink'... They have got some money from home and want to try their luck. That is one of the reasons why they want to go for it. (IND-M-2-SG)*

Differences between Asian people and other ethnic groups, with regard to the emphasis placed on luck, were also noted by stakeholders to whom the findings were presented, one of whom said:

*I don't hear 'luck' with Pacific Island groups, I hear investment... so they see the casinos like the bank! (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

In fact, non-Asian stakeholders from Phase Four who were less familiar with the Asian cultural beliefs and values expressed that this issue and its impact on gambling was very informative and useful.

## **Stigma, shame and “face”**

Local (e.g. Tse, et al., 2008) and international (Papineau, 2001; Tabora & Flaskerud, 1997) studies of gambling in Asian communities have demonstrated the importance of stigma and face-saving in all Asian communities in the context of gambling. Gambling, especially problem gambling, is associated with extremely high levels of stigma and shame.

*When I lose my money, I feel ashamed causing me not to want to be seen anymore, including by my friends, because I think that I would be looked down on and I feel that I am more inferior than other people (SEA-M-3-PG)*

As such, those who develop gambling related problems and their families avoid talking about it in order to save face. Participants in this study reported such behaviours in their communities:

*We don't talk about it as gambling is a bad thing to do it's “something un-colourful” [something not to be proud of]. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

*In Indian community, it is considered as a shame to tell others that they go to gamble. That's why many people don't tell others about it. All they say is 'I just went there as a place for tourist attraction', that too with much hesitation. But people go there. (IND-F-3-CW)*

Some of the family members interviewed in this study recognised that stigma and face-saving can both increase and decrease the risk of problem gambling. On the one hand, gamblers do not want to be stigmatised in their community because they are engaging in an unacceptable behaviour, so refrain from gambling. In this case, the concept of stigma and face supports resiliency in potential problem gamblers as well as social gamblers. This is reflected in the quotations below:

*When I lose money, this causes me to think a lot, and regret that I should not have gone to this place (casino), and especially my honour is also affected (SEA-M-3-FM)*

*I think it (stigma) can also help the gamblers not to gamble anymore because they don't like to be seen as a problem gambler. So they might try to quit on their own (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*I just went there to forget stress at work. When I was caught by the staff at the Casino, I was very upset and embarrassed. Because. I wasn't that bad a gambler and I wasn't even going to the Casino at all in Korea. There was no reason I should feel guilty in a foreign country. I didn't want to feel something like this again. So I sort of didn't want to go there again (KOR-F-5-XG)*

In accordance with research in other non-Western communities (Brown & Coventry, 1997; Cultural Perspectives Pty. Ltd, 2005; Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, 1999; McMillen, et al., 2004; VCGA, 2000), participants argued that stigma can also dissuade people from seeking help when required:

*Stigma acts like a barrier ... for gamblers when they seek help. They feel ashamed of their gambling behaviour and never like to talk about it with others, even if they want to quit and need help from others. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*Nobody will come to the awareness program. Nobody wants others to know about their gambling problems. They fear if they tell other people in our community the news might spread to back home, to their relatives which may jeopardise their chances of getting a bride or affect the status. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*People want to show off and don't say anything about their loss. If people know he is the serious gambler and lost lots of money, that's not good. People won't trust him and don't want to do business together. So although they won't say anything in front of him, people get to know he is a gambler and won't work with him. Also the gambler won't tell others how much he has lost and how badly he was addicted. So you never know how bad the gambling problem is really. So it's hard for others to do something for them (REF-M-5-SG)*

*It's also our culture that they don't want to talk about their own business to strangers and believe that they can fix it within the family. (REF-F-4-SG)*

*They don't like to talk to anyone outside their family about any sort of problem including gambling. (REF-M-5-FM)*

Moreover, the importance of saving face for many Asians can mean that it sometimes results in increased risk: gambling is employed as a means to demonstrate to others that an individual is doing well and can afford to gamble:

*It's also part of face. To be a VIP you need to regularly spend money there and when people go there regularly, it means they can afford to keep this spending up. If you don't keep it up, you lose face - it means you've been poor lately (CHI-F-3-FM)*

This also reflects that being able to gamble represents a status symbol / level of affluence for some Asian people. This type of demonstration was highlighted as being particularly important for recent immigrants as it enabled them to demonstrate to others that they are successful in their new environment.

Stakeholders spoke about the contrast in behaviour of Asian VIP members in casinos across regions in relation to gamblers perceptions of status and face:

*In ... (larger town) they will want to go to the VIP lounge but down (smaller town) here, it's only a small casino, they want to be a VIP in front of everyone (more people). So because of the size difference and the different perceptions attached to it, they'll act differently in different casinos. So it's less about gambling more about how they see themselves and where they fit. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

## **Spirituality and Fate**

Although some religions for example, Islam, Jehovah's Witness, Hinduism, Buddhism and Seventh Day Adventism, stipulate that gambling is morally wrong, the influence of religion on gambling behaviours is a complex one. Concepts such as luck and fortune are entwined with formal religious teaching (State Government

Victoria, 2012). This was evident amongst many of the participants in this study, especially those of South Asian descent who are generally spiritual and/or religious, and Koreans, many of whom have reportedly adopted Christianity (also see Section 5.1.2, sub-section on spirituality and religion). Spirituality and religion can be strong influences with regard to gambling related beliefs and can be protective against an involvement in gambling as well as excessive gambling:

*My religion (Islam) teaches us what's wrong and what's right very clearly. So I know what the right thing to do is. That helps me - like gambling is not a good thing to do. (REF-M-4-SG)*

This aligns with findings in studies of Western communities where spirituality and religion have been shown to have protective effects on gambling behaviours. For example, a national survey in the United States found that the influence of religion on problem gambling had an inverse relationship between frequency of attendance at religious services and gambling problems (Hoffmann, 2000).

It is clear from responses that, due to their spiritual philosophies such as Karma, a number of participants, in particular those who are Hindu and Buddhist, were inclined to accept problem gambling behaviours in their family as part of their fate.

*That is the Indian culture, to be able to bear everything that the man does and be the doormat. It's your fate, so you have to do it. (IND-F-3-FM)*

Consequently, they may not take action against behaviours such as gambling as they believe that it is their fate to endure such hardship, hence nothing can be changed.

### 3.3 Summary – Asian Culture and its Role in Gambling

Table 7: Summary of Asian Culture and its Role in Gambling

Asian culture and its role in gambling
<b>Asian collectivism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian culture is collective - Family, including extended family and friends, is important and plays a significant role in the lives of all Asian sub-groups.</li> <li>This collectivism may act as a protective factor against gambling or may help with coping as it ensures there is always some support from Asian families and communities</li> </ul>
<b>Differences between Asian and Western cultures</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differences between the Asian collectivistic culture and Western individualistic culture include marked differences in worldviews, beliefs and values.</li> <li>Many Asians may use gambling as a form of social bonding and relationship building.</li> </ul>
<b>Asian culture and its impact on conceptualisations of gambling and problem gambling</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Asian culture could influence how Asians conceptualise (problem) gambling, and this could be a protective factor or a risk factor.</li> </ul>

### **Social gambling vs. problem gambling**

- Social gambling was not perceived as gambling, and was widely accepted by most Asians.
- Problem gambling has stigma attached to the term and would only be used when family and communities have been impacted by the individual's gambling behaviour.

### **Beliefs systems and values**

#### *Superstition and "luck"*

- The supernatural and "luck" appear to play a significant role amongst Asians; "being lucky" also implies that one is doing well at this point in life, and this is reflected through gambling.

#### *Stigma, shame and "face"*

- Stigma, shame and "face" amongst Asians are important concepts which sometimes act as protective factors against gambling, but can also militate against help-seeking.

#### *Spirituality and Fate*

- Some Asians who have spiritual and religious affiliations may be at less risk for problem gambling.
- Some Asians were inclined to accept problem gambling behaviours in their family as part of their fate and nothing can be changed.
- Consequently, they may not take action against behaviours such as problem gambling

## **Chapter 4. The Role of Migration, Settlement and the Environment in Problem Gambling amongst Asians**

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The data suggest that the migration and settlement experience of Asian immigrants and refugees may be a significant antecedent of gambling and problem gambling for many Asians. Acculturation and settlement stress caused by cultural differences, financial difficulties and concomitant family stress; negative environmental factors such as social isolation, gambling culture, and personal/cultural factors such as lack of knowledge and misconceptions about gambling and peer influence were all found to contribute to this. Each of these factors is discussed in the following section.

### **4.1 Acculturation and settlement stress**

As discussed in an earlier chapter (see Chapter 2), a substantial body of literature (Bar-Yosef, 1968; Eisenstadt, 1954; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; McIntyre, 2008) illustrates the high levels of stress that immigrants experience when acculturating / settling into a new country.

The large differences between the New Zealand and Asian cultures (highlighted in Chapter 3) often creates acculturation stress amongst Asian immigrants and refugees settling into New Zealand. This stress can be further exacerbated by factors such as immigrant's expectations, motivations, English proficiency, and employment experiences (e.g. Sobrun-Maharaj et al., 2011; Dixon et al., 2010). Their response to the new environment and circumstances encountered in the new country is determined by these expectations and the concomitant levels of stress they experience. With regard to gambling, data from a New Zealand study that involved Asian people, found that many Asians became involved with gambling as a result of migration and associated difficulties (Tse et al., 2005). Findings from the present study also suggest that some Asian immigrants may respond to acculturation stress by resorting to gambling.

#### **4.1.1 Cultural and language differences**

All participants from focus groups and individual interviews appeared to be acutely aware of the cultural differences between Asians and New Zealanders and of the impact that this has on gambling activity amongst Asians. Participants felt that these differences, including language issues (especially for North and East Asians, e.g. Chinese, Koreans, Taiwanese, Japanese) and subsequent difficulties with social interaction, encouraged Asian immigrants and refugees to socialise with people from their own communities and to not integrate easily into the New Zealand society. Moreover, participants indicated that a convenient and safe venue for these social groups to meet was the casino, where language is not an impediment and various



other facilities are easily available. Socialising in the casino exposes an already vulnerable group to gambling and potential gambling related problems:

*I believe migrants are at least twice more vulnerable to gambling addiction than local people. They have stressful things to deal with that local people won't have, like language, new culture, unfamiliarity and so on. In a sense, they are like disabilities in this country, especially if they are recent migrants. They need special care. The casino should not be a substitute. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*There is a huge culture difference ... for migrants, like I don't watch sports etc, watching sports is such a kiwi culture. So when Chinese meet the Chinese there is familiarity and naturally they form their own cultural groups at the casino. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

This is especially so for recent immigrants with limited or no English who encounter significant barriers to interacting with and integrating into the host community. The casino becomes an attractive place to escape to:

*I don't speak English but there is no need to speak English. I don't have many places to go because my English is very short. (REF-F-3-SG)*

*At Sky city it's 24 hours. Lots of options....no talking is necessary, the gaming activities increase your happiness. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*For 'fresh off the boat' [new settlers in NZ] of course gambling or going to the casino is a big risk for them as they want to hide there [at the casino] and they don't know English much. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*They don't speak English and the education style here is very different from what they may have expected in their own country. So they don't attend school events or ignore invitations. They also don't know how to use many extra classes and activities due to lack of knowledge, language difficulties and so on. Children take care of themselves... So they don't have much to do at home and get bored. (REF-F-6-CW)*

The gravity of the Asian experience was illustrated by a stakeholder who compared this with that of British immigrants who are ethnically similar to New Zealanders and still experience settlement problems and disappointments, for example:

*If you talk to British people that come over here from the UK, they hear that NZ is a wonderful green, friendly, easy place and when they get here it's nothing like that... It's not the Promised Land...What can we do to allow people to have that education before they arrive to understand the whole culture of New Zealand? (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

### **Older and NZ born Asians versus recent immigrants**

Most participants who volunteered to participate in this study were recent immigrants. However, these participants expressed views about older and New Zealand born immigrants; it was generally thought that acculturation and settlement stress is not such a problem for these groups as they have established social groups and have integrated into the New Zealand society to a larger extent. Hence, they would be low risk for problem gambling. However, for those Asians who have been

in New Zealand longer, but encounter difficulties with integrating and/or interacting with the local community, the casino becomes an attractive and easy option. This issue was reported by a second generation Asian with regard to her father who has been in New Zealand for over thirty years:

*But for dad (been in NZ for 30+ years,) he just has too much time on his hands and he sees socialising (in the community) as a nuisance (CHI-F-3-FM)*

Contrarily, participants considered recent immigrants to be somewhat naïve about gambling and its dangers. This was attributed to gambling (as a legalised activity and involving the betting of large sums of money) being a less common activity in Asia; hence, it was considered that most Asians, especially South Asians in this study, are apparently unaware and naïve about the risks associated with the activity and the addictive nature of gambling. They believe that it must be safe if it is legal and this places them at risk of problem gambling.

Participants of refugee background also commented on this issue. They suggested that newer immigrants also have more resources and time, hence are easily drawn into gambling:

*When I came here first time (26 years ago), we had nothing and had to work hard. We didn't think of gambling at all. We sometimes got together with families or friends 1-2 times a year like on our New Years day. We played some sort of games on those big days. But it's totally different from going to the Casino every night. I think the new ones [recent refugees & immigrants] are a bit different. They've got more resources to start and can get things easier than what it was in the past. They may take things for granted. They may not work hard as we did. Another thing is we didn't have Casino and never thought of going there. (REF-M-5-SG)*

*When I came here first, I had nothing as a refugee. I always had 2-3 jobs in the first few years to survive. Then I saved money and opened my own bakery. There is no way to waste time gambling... Gambling is just an entertainment for me. (REF-M-4-SG)*

### **Generational differences**

There was general consensus across each of the ethnic streams that the younger generation may be at higher risk of becoming addicted to gambling as they are more partial than the older generation to risk-taking:

*I guess maybe younger generations might be riskier than us. But I don't think my generation of refugees are that much at risk. (REF-M-4-SG)*

Some participants were of the view that young people raised here may be at greater risk for gambling as they learn about it earlier and have become more 'Westernised' than others:

*I feel the kids that are born and brought up here are more likely to go for gambling because they get to know about it early in schools from their Kiwi friends. But the kids who come from India would have been taught since childhood that loitering*

*alone is not good, gambling is not a good habit etc. In fact, that could have been a reason for me not to go to casino very often (IND-F-2-SG)*

*My son is addicted to gambling. We came to New Zealand when he was 13 years old. He went to intermediate, high school, and university here. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

In accordance with other research (e.g., Derevensky, Gupta, & Della Cioppa, 1996; Gupta & Derevensky, 1998; Rossen, 2008b; Rossen, Tse, & Vaidya, 2009b; Splevins, Mireskandari, Clayton, & Blaszczyński, 2010) this study found evidence that attitudes towards gambling are important with regard to youth gambling behaviour. The concepts of luck and skill seem particularly applicable to youth and young adults and may impact their interactions and responses to gambling. Some young adults naively believe that they could beat the system by playing games that require skill and not luck, as seen in the remarks of this participant, for example

*All pokie machines are 'luck machines' but Blackjack promises you money if you use your mind...In TAB we have to bet on horses and dogs. I don't want to play on horses and dogs... I want to use my brain. (IND-M-2-SG)*

This view was endorsed by a stakeholder who said:

*They [young generation] have grown up with technology, so they do think they are smart...I think the young people think poker is a skill-based thing. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

#### **4.1.2 Financial stress**

The national (e.g., Chang, Morris, & Vokes, 2006; Henderson, Trlin A., & Watts, 2001; Sobrun-Maharaj, 2011) and international literature show (e.g., Aycan & Berry, 1996; Beiser & Hou, 2001; Bell, Jarman, & Lefebvre, 2004) that financial stress is a major issue for Asian and other ethnic minority immigrants and refugees and that this has significant mental health impacts. Participant reports clearly indicate that financial stress is a major cause of gambling amongst many immigrant and refugee families, and that despite the stigma attached to such behaviour, some will sanction it because it could relieve the financial stress that they experience. This is evidenced in the following statement:

*Financial stress is the major problem. Some wives react differently if their husband says 'today I put \$300 in gambling but won \$10,000 or \$100,000'. Even if they see it as a stigma on their status, she might encourage her husband to gamble. The problem arrives when there is financial crisis. (IND-M-3-CW)*

#### **Employment and resource difficulties**

The literature cited above concludes that the major source of financial stress for immigrants and refugees is inadequate employment, which often results in a lack of resources for many. For participants in this study, employment difficulties were a major factor contributing to gambling activity as reflected in the following comments:

*It's very hard to find a job for immigrants in New Zealand. Everyone knows it. It's not uncommon for immigrants to make constant attempts to settle down in New Zealand and end up failing and going back to Korea. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*Unemployed people are more prone to go there [the casino] because they need money. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*Employment is the biggest risk factor that promotes gambling amongst immigrants...it's very hard for immigrants and their kids to find a job. They get bored and learn gambling. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

This was endorsed by two participants with first-hand experience of gambling related problems:

*I needed money to support my children living in Lao, which caused me to gamble. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*I think unemployment rate is high in NZ. So that's the main factor. Minimum wage is very low. People may think if we work 10 hrs we get \$120. So they find short ways to earn money. That's why they go to casino and TAB. (IND-M-2-XG)*

Employment and financial difficulties were exacerbated for older recent immigrants who reported finding it especially difficult to find appropriate and well-paying employment in New Zealand:

*It's not easy for old immigrants to find a decent job here. I did have a full time job at different locations in Auckland. But I was getting paid at the lowest minimum rate. It wasn't enough to support my family. So I thought I could use some money at casino to win a big jackpot. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

On the other hand, having limited money was a protective factor for some, especially, refugees, against heavy involvement with gambling:

*We are refugees and don't have much money. So although we gamble it's very small money compared to other Asian immigrants do. They [other affluent Asian immigrants] got thousand, thousand dollars to gamble on, but we don't. So we can't be a serious gambler. (REF-F-4-SG)*

Employment can also be a double-edged sword: some participants suggested that while unemployment causes them to gamble, having a job also enables them to gamble as it provides the resources (money) to gamble:

*Even the employed people tend to go as well because they think they can invest a part of their income on gambling. But the fact is nobody has become rich by gambling. Even if they win a million dollars they will invest the whole money there because it is like an addiction. (IND-M-3-CW)*

### **Cost of leisure activities**

Limited resources often make the cost of engaging in leisure activities prohibitive for many immigrants and refugees (Sobrun-Maharaj, 2011). Hence, the casino becomes

an inexpensive and attractive alternative which is also perceived as having the potential to be lucrative:

*There are games, library and other stuff at the university. But they have to pay I think [for games, appropriate dress, shoes etc]. Indians are not used to spending money for sports though it is good for health. [Instead, if they play in the casino] they have some chances of getting money. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*...Want to get dad to play golf, but playing golf could be quite expensive actually. Actually all hobbies are expensive in New Zealand! (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*There are not enough good Chinese programmes on TV; and the WTV Chinese channel is too expensive to buy... (CHI-F-5-FM)*

### **Family responsibilities**

An underlying value of the collectivistic Asian culture means that people share responsibility for the wellbeing of others in their family and community.

*My dad is the eldest brother in the family of 8 siblings, so everyone goes to him for money when in trouble. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*Indians have a lot of responsibilities such as taking care of parents, family, sister's marriage, and loan payments. So money has always been a main part of it throughout life. (IND-M-3-CW)*

This extends to ensuring that adult children are catered for after the death of parents:

*It's the Chinese tradition that we save some assets and money for our kids later when we die. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

It was also widely recognised that having a family for whom you are responsible acts as a protective factor against gambling in general and problem gambling in particular; as it can reduce levels of disposable time, money, and the inclination to engage in gambling behaviour for both parents and children:

*I have no time and interest to gamble anymore, I need to work and look after children. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

*I need to look after my child. I don't want to spend all the money on gambling. Sometimes I found myself having no extra money at all. That is not good. That's what happens when you gamble. (REF-F-3-SG)*

*If I didn't act on it [his mother's gambling problems], I couldn't see my future and my family's future. They are not different things. If they can't be independent then my life will be tied with them forever. I had to do something rather than keep avoiding. I always felt that I am the one having to look after my parents. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*If I continued gambling, I would not be able to save money to sponsor my children, and finally, they would not be able to come to New Zealand because I spent a lot of money sponsoring them to live here. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*Another reason is that I am so busy now because I am looking after my grandchild, so I do not have time to think about the casino anymore. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*Since I am still single, it is difficult for me to control myself not to go to the casino as I have no one to discuss with when there are problems arising. But, I think that when I have a family, I will need to think about my wife and kids and future, which can distract me from going to the casino and particularly, from gambling. (SEA-M-3-PG)*

On the other hand, family responsibility could act as a risk factor if gambling is seen as a solution to financial problems:

*He will always be thinking how to take the money back from casino. They always have pressure from the family in order to stabilise the family expenses, to pay the money to others and so on. (IND-M-3-CW)*

Participants reported a greater risk of problem gambling behaviours amongst people who did not have family responsibilities:

*They are all single. If they had family I don't think they would have gone there. If they had a wife, she would control them. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*I didn't work at all when I came to NZ as my husband wanted me to look after the family. But my mother and father looked after the children and I had too much free time. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

*Since I am still single, it is difficult for me to control myself not to go to the casino as I have no one to discuss with when there are problems arising. But, I think that when I have a family, I will need to think about my wife and kids and future, which can distract me from going to the casino and particularly, gambling. (SEA-M-3-PG)*

Participants who need to send money back to family members in their homeland (a common practice for many immigrant peoples), found that this sometimes acts as a protective factor against problem gambling:

*He has to send lots of money to family members back in home town so that makes him not gamble. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

However, this responsibility sometimes becomes a risk factor, especially when there is a lack of resources:

*I am an employee, but a lack of money to send to my family in Lao is a factor causing me gambling. I need money a lot because I need to send the money to my family, such as my mother and my sister in Lao. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

*I got involved with gambling because I wanted to earn more money so that I could send it to support my children in Lao. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*I also hoped to make money to send to my family members overseas. (REF-F-4-XG)*

### **Opportunity to make money**

Many participants, including family members and those gambling at problematic and non-problematic levels, indicated that gambling is seen as an opportunity to make

money, especially when they are experiencing financial difficulties. The casino is seen as a place that provides that opportunity:

*One year back I just went with my friend one day over there, just after 6 months [after my arrival]. He actually just went with around \$400 with him and he made around \$90 in 3 minutes. I saw that. I got fascinated because earning money is so hard in New Zealand. In this manner I can earn lot of money and it is very easy. That greed tempted me. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*I was desperate to earn some money to live. After about 4 to 5 months, I followed other staff to the casino. I used \$20 to get hundreds of dollars in return. I was shocked because I never had this sort of opportunity in Korea. Hundreds of dollars in one night? That is impossible in Korea. That's how I started going to casino almost every day. (KOR-M-2-PG)*

*Most of the students who come here don't have any job in the initial months of landing in New Zealand. Because the idle mind does nothing and if they happen to go to casino and if they win \$10 or \$20, the basic reason to get addicted... the easy way to earn money from their point of view. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*I think only there I can make money. Only few games are available in the pubs. I have tried gambling in other places. In TAB also I have put betting on Football or cricket. But it doesn't work out much. The result takes a lot of time to come. But here in casino, the result comes immediately. If we want instant money, we have to go to casino. (IND-M-2-PG)*

### **4.1.3 Family stress**

#### **Changes in family dynamics**

The settlement and acculturation process often results in significant stress within families. This can be partly attributed to the changes in roles and dynamics that occur within families adapting to a new culture. The most significant of these, as reported by participants, is changes in the power structure within many Asian families. As discussed earlier, Asian society is usually extremely hierarchical and this hierarchical structure is evident in the broader society as well as in individual families. The employment challenges experienced by most Asians settling into New Zealand often results in female spouses entering the workforce sooner than males as they may be willing to take on less prestigious or appropriate jobs (e.g. that do not utilise their experiences or skills) to support the family while their husbands look for the “right” job (Sobrun-Maharaj et al., 2011). This displaces the male’s primary position and disrupts the hierarchy within the family, often resulting in anxiety, depression and other mental health issues for the male and consequent inter-spousal conflict. This role reversal and conflict sometimes places family members at risk for addictive behaviours such as gambling. For Asian men in particular, who are accustomed to being dominant within their families, a loss of power and self-esteem often leads to behaviours such as problem gambling.

Furthermore, the adoption of some of New Zealand’s cultural aspects, where women are empowered, can result in some Asian women beginning to assert themselves.

These changes can be perceived as uncharacteristic, and are not always welcomed or viewed positively by others (e.g. spouses). Some participants report that this phenomenon has impacted negatively on their family life. For example, one woman stated the following:

*I gambled to show my husband that I can make money too, because, he didn't allow me to have money. He took all the money including the income I got on my own. In our culture, women used to stay at home, manage the family money, and look after the children. Men work hard, give the money to the wife and let the wife be in charge of the domestic business. I did my duty as a wife as much as I could. But he didn't. He didn't give me money to run the house or to spend for myself. So I wanted to show I can make money too. (REF-F-4-XG)*

Other women, particularly refugee participants and some South Asians raised another issue related to increased levels of empowerment. They reported beginning to monitor their husbands' finances, an activity which was not well received. For example:

*In India, women depend on their husband for everything. Here, it is not necessary. One can get everything done over the phone. Manage the accounts, keep track. A husband will not go for that once he comes to know that someone is monitoring him. All money goes to the bank account. So nobody gives you cash. So it is easy for a woman to keep track of her partner. (IND-F-3-CW)*

Moreover, New Zealand's social and cultural systems mean that divorce, which is socially taboo and generally uncharacteristic of Asians (Krishnan & Cutler, 2005), is increasingly being viewed as a viable option for Asian immigrant women. It was also reported that some males consequently feel they have lost their power in their families with negative consequences for their self-esteem:

*Men seem no longer able to show mana here, you know they don't speak English, no jobs and so on. Also the previous condition where women had to be compliant towards their husbands and financially dependent has changed here too. They would get more benefits if they got divorced as they would become single mothers. (REF-F-6-CW)*

*The family culture is so changed here and I am not getting the same respect that I would get in my culture. Women here are too strong. But I am doing my duty as a husband, working hard and giving the money to my wife... What happens to our family is not right. (REF-M-3-FM)*

These issues were raised more frequently by the refugee community, which reported that marriages of convenience were apparently common within refugee camps: couples often marry and have children so as to ensure a passage out of refugee camps. As such, they were not necessarily suited to each other, thus resulting in compatibility problems later in the marriage which was reported as sometimes leading to addictive behaviours such as gambling:

*Many couples in the refugee community do not have strong bonding. In the camp where they were waiting to be accepted by New Zealand, Australia, America, Denmark or whatever, family with children would have the priority. So they tend to get married for their own survival reasons and have kids. So they are survivors*



*able to leave the harsh life conditions. However the marriage relationship can be quite fragile. (REF-F-6-CW)*

*I wasn't very close with my husband. We were fine when younger. But my health has deteriorated overseas... Since then...me and my ex-husband became more and more distanced. I didn't have much pleasure in my life either so to me, Casino was the only one entertaining at that time. (REF-F-4-SG)*

*I and my wife were not very close each other. She doesn't like what I like. We had a different opinion about child-rearing too. I think she thinks I am boring. Maybe she is a city girl but I am from a small town. And she said she gambles because it's very stressful at home. I tried to bring her somewhere else so that she could feel better but whenever I brought her out, she didn't like it. She rather wanted to go to Casino or her friend's house to play cards (REF-M-3-FM)*

However, despite this apparent change in power dynamics within families where women are attempting to assert themselves, a stakeholder observed that the values of our patriarchal society are deeply ingrained and do not allow women sufficient power to intervene in their partners' gambling:

*I don't think the woman have the power to stop [their husbands gambling] because we live in a patriarchal society. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

### ***Intergenerational cultural dissonance/ conflict***

As reported in other studies (e.g. Chung, 2001; Kibria, 1993; Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005), intergenerational cultural dissonance (ICD) or conflict appears to be a significant problem arising from acculturation. Most Asian immigrant and refugee families appear to be grappling with the freedom enjoyed by young people in New Zealand and the lack of power that parents have over them. This is vastly different from the Asian culture where families are closely knit and young people remain under the control of their parents till they marry and leave home. Participants felt that the systems in NZ reinforced these values and made it difficult to maintain their cultural values within the family.

*In this country the government encourages people to live independently. It doesn't encourage them to live closely with the family. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*The system over here suits the European community. Our community is different. We have been brought up under the limitations and control of our parents. (IND-M-3-CW)*

Asian parents often find this disconcerting and difficult to deal with; a recurring theme in most studies with Asian families (see Lee, et al., 2005; Ying, Coombs, & Lee, 1999). Children often assimilate into the New Zealand culture more rapidly and to a greater extent than that wished by their parents; an issue that clearly generates intergenerational conflict within many Asian families. ICD is described as a clash between parents and children over cultural values, this occurs so commonly amongst immigrant families that it is regarded as a normative experience (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008). Several American scholars have suggested that ICD has

connections with a variety of negative consequences for families and children; these include problematic parent-child relationships, psychological stresses for both parent and children, and struggling at school for children (e.g., Chung, 2001; Kibria, 1993; Lee, et al., 2005).

*When the children of the [new] immigrants see too much freedom [after coming here], that has been a cause of the separation of many families... Usually Indian fathers will be strict and rigid, especially with their daughters - they should dress properly, should not go out with boyfriend etc. Usually women easily adapt to the system or any situation... But the daughter wants to adopt this culture and look attractive [among friends]. Mom will say, let her live according to this culture. This creates friction between mom and dad... (IND-M-3-CW)*

*However hard you try, the children take only 30% of what we teach them. They automatically get the remaining 70% from the local culture. I have seen so many friends keep their kids so much under control... They have attachment with the family, but they wear a totally different face when they go out with friends just to maintain their prestige. They begin with acting in front of their friends but eventually adopt that culture. We can't scold our children because the culture encourages the children to live separately after 18 yrs. In India, if we scold our children we can be sure that they will come back by night because they do not have money. But here, kids will get more from the government than they usually get from their parents as pocket money. (IND-F-2-SG)*

As with role reversal issues, intergenerational conflict often leads to problem gambling behaviours amongst males in particular, who feel bereft of power within their families:

*When he goes out to gamble, it is often after having arguments or troubles with children at home. Then he shouts and goes out. It seems like it provokes it or he is making an excuse to leave the house and gamble. (KOR-F-4-FM)*

Lack of parental control and intergenerational conflict also has consequences for children who sometimes engage in addictive behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse and gambling. Some participants also implied that gambling was worse than drinking and drugs:

*We don't have control on [our children] as much as we used to have in India... Some kids listen [some don't]. [In that case], they go for all bad habits like drinking, partying, drug use. And then gambling is just a next step. Isn't it? (IND-F-3-CW)*

These issues were mainly reported by participants in the South Asian and Korean streams.

Stakeholders also acknowledged the stress felt by Asian parents when confronted with changes in their relationship with their children, as well as the stress and negative consequences that children also suffer:

*Once they come to New Zealand it all becomes western culture where the kids mess around with all those western kids and they have all these western ideas. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

*Based on my experience (working with the Chinese), because the family migrate to NZ and pretty much the young kids pick up the language much faster than their parents, so the family dynamic totally changes, the power and hierarchical [structure of the family] . And the parents struggle with the... they need to rely on their kids to communicate with the outside society, but they also struggle with the kids [gaining] more power than them and not really listening to them and also cultural conflict between the mainstream society and their traditional, original culture in their family. So the kids also have conflict of identity as well. That's why lots of kids are doing drugs, alcohol and gambling. Because of the conflict and they are confused too. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

## **4.2 Social environment factors**

Studies show that the social environment has a significant impact on the ability of immigrants and refugees to settle into their new home country (e.g., Dyal & Dyal, 1981; McIntyre, 2008; Yeh, 2003); factors such as employment and financial issues, a sense of isolation, disempowerment and hopelessness, play a big role. Participants in this study indicated that those who experience settlement difficulties often become susceptible to gambling and problem gambling, for example:

*I don't think there are culturally related risk factors that might make Koreans more susceptible to gambling. It's social factors ...and feeling hopeless. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*I feel very disempowered here. There is not much I can do... I began to go to casino as I felt like there is no purpose in my life. I could focus on playing pokie machines when I was at casino. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

### **4.2.1 Social isolation**

Social isolation was cited as a major issue for Asian immigrants and refugees who were engaged in gambling behaviours. Several participants from all the Asian subgroups talked about their experiences of isolation which led to gambling behaviour, for example:

*Settling in New Zealand can be a factor causing me going gambling because of my life instability and isolation (SEA-M-3-PG)*

### **Lack of social and family support**

The main reason for social isolation was cited as lack of social and family support. When there is a lack of family support, immigrants and refugees will attempt to fill this void by seeking social support where it is easily available. Not having family or friends to interact with encouraged such people to find companionship in the casino; a strategy that was widely reported by gamblers and family members across most of the ethnic groups:

*The reason [I gambled] was that I was so lonely and isolated because I had no family living with me in New Zealand. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*I found migration life is very lonely. I mean there is no existing relationship here. So I got often stressed out when there are some problems between people. It's very hard for me. I sort of decided not to gamble from time to time. But when I had problems with people and when my girlfriend left, I went to casino again. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

*I go to the Casino because there are not many friends here. I have lived in the same house for many years but only knew one neighbour quite well. Well I do have my refugee friends, but they don't live nearby and they work long hours, so it's hard to get together. (REF-M-4-SG)*

*I don't have many friends and family members here. So I don't have much to do and am usually on my own. If you go to Casino, there are people and many Asians everywhere and I feel better. (REF-M-4-SG)*

*When they stay home and feel bored, they can go to the casino. Lack of friends and activities to do can make them go to the casino and spend money. (REF-M-5-FM)*

*People I meet here are mostly chefs or restaurant owners in this suburb. We finish work at 9 or 10 at night. In NZ, there are only bars and Casino we can go at that time. Many of us don't have family members in NZ. They don't want to go home where no one waits for them (KOR-M-4-PG)*

Young people, international students in particular, who do not have family in New Zealand to guide them and lack supportive social networks, reportedly go to the casino to try to socialise and meet friends:

*Living alone in New Zealand has increased the risk. Because when we came here alone nobody was there to guide us, [to say] what is wrong and what is good for us. (IND-M-2-XG)*

*Loneliness, lack of connection to environment, and boredom are reasons that he gambles. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

*If you are alone, it is hard to survive in a new country. Loneliness is a very bad thing. You do not share your opinions and viewpoints with anyone because they all are your new friends. You are always comfortable in your country. Even if you are not feeling good about something you have someone to talk to and care for you. (IND-M-2-SG)*

However, as noted by stakeholders, whilst many Asians initially go to the casino to seek social support, there is very little social activity when they start gambling because the focus shifts to gambling and this can soon leads to problem gambling.

As reported in other research with immigrant families in New Zealand, some families who move here find themselves working multiple jobs and/or odd hours and not having free time together (Dixon et al., 2010). This robs them of important time with family and the support that family can offer:

*In China, we could go to many other places with people during the evening time. And we don't work that late. I was like working 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. So I could enjoy fishing and social life during the weekend with friends and families. But here some have holidays on Mondays and some on Tuesdays. It's hard to get together. (CHI-M-4-PG)*

*To be honest, recently I have been pretty lonely. My husband is away for his business. My daughter is in Korea and my son is always busy with his work and friends. I am on my own most of the time. Especially times like now (at the end of year, around Christmas, New Year season), I feel more lonely and am sometimes tempted to go to the Casino (KOR-F-5-XG)*

Similarly, in the absence of family, international Asian students who are unaccustomed to social freedom, use their newfound freedom to engage in activities that parents would not usually allow. In this study, this appeared to be an issue that South Asian participants were more concerned or willing to talk about:

*Students go to gamble more often because there is no parent or guardian. They have more freedom. New [immigrants] and international students are more attracted. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*Back in India we move mostly with people from our own community. So if you make even a small mistake it will spread very fast. But here there is none to watch you. Nobody is going to know what you are doing here. That gives them the courage to do these things. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*I think [new] Indian students go to gamble more often I guess, but that also depends on how much money they earn. They are allowed to work only 20 hrs/week. Some of the students might earn under the table. If they get good earning they might just want to give a try in gambling. It is mainly a passtime. Mainly, the students who live in apartments go often because it is close by. Those who live far away, go only once a week or once in two weeks. (IND-F-3-CW)*

### **Lack of acceptance by host population**

Discrimination against Asians in New Zealand is widely acknowledged and has been raised in other studies undertaken with Asians (e.g., 3 News, 2009; New Zealand Press Association (NZPA), 2008; Sobrun-Maharaj, et al., 2009; Ward & Masgoret, 2007). Whilst most participants avoided talking about discrimination, the South Asian participants in this study openly reported feeling unaccepted by the host population:

*Though it is not so bad in Auckland, in other parts of New Zealand people feel that the level of acceptance by local people is low for Indians. We are treated as outsiders, the way they speak to us and they do not help us. The way they treat their own people is so much different than they treat us. (IND-F-2-SG)*

They believed discrimination against Asians was reflected in their inability to find employment:

*There are so many people but very few jobs. Besides, the students and people on work permit are less preferred to the residents and citizens of this country. There are so many immigrants that are jobless. (IND-F-2-SG)*

Studies have found a correlation between perceptions of rejection, bad health and low self-esteem and that there is a reciprocity between low self-esteem and coping (Leary, 1990; Rigby, 1996; Sobrun-Maharaj, 2002). People with lowered self-esteem

are likely to employ dysfunctional methods of coping such as resorting to addictive behaviours.

### **Lack of entertainment**

A major issue, and one that contributes to social isolation for many Asians, is the lack of entertainment in New Zealand. Asian countries are known for their entertainment and shopping facilities that are open till late at night or through the night, hence immigrants to New Zealand who are accustomed to having a lot to do by way of entertainment, find the lack of such facilities here surprising and the country boring. The casino is the only place that offers such entertainment through the night:

*In NZ there are no night shopping malls and markets like Asia and people who speak your language. Even if you do nothing and walk down a busy street in Hong Kong for example, I find it romantic. Here in NZ it's more like dead and scary. NZ is too boring... okay if you exercise, go out with friends, have a drink etc, you will still get bored, so gambling is another activity to do and plus there is excitement. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*They get bored and end up going to the casino. It's all because that place is open 24/7. They don't know what to do, and they usually just get a couple of friends and go in a group to spend some time there. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*There is not much things to entertain yourself and I had nothing to do in spare time so, it was easy to go to the casino and spend time there. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

*There is not much stuff to do in New Zealand. The public life stops around 6.30-7.30 in the evening. And some people from other countries come from very busy lifestyles where their life ends late at night... [Here] none of the activities are available in the city. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*There is really nothing to do here except doing housework. But at Casino, we can do many things like looking around, chatting, gambling, eating. They have lots of events too. So I feel like wanting to be there and having fun when I get bored at home. (REF-F-3-SG)*

*I didn't have other places to go. I don't speak good English and didn't have time to learn. My illness and having to look after children and grandchildren don't allow me time to learn something. So it's good that I can go to the Casino at night or during the weekend so that I can entertain myself. (REF-F-4-SG)*

*My husband spends quite a lot of time going to these places: electronic stores, Flea markets etc, but they are just not enough in NZ and they close so early! There should be more entertainment events and stores, like Lantern festival, flea markets, and electronic malls [like the ones like in Asia]. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*I think dad gambles because he has nothing to do. He just wants some entertainment. ... he was doing it [gambling] casually when he had his own business, but now that he's sold it, he's got nothing to do, so he seems to be going a lot [to the casino] (CHI-F-2-FM)*

Some Asians, especially refugees, expressed difficulties with adopting the strong sporting culture that exists in New Zealand due to limited engagement with sporting

activities prior to immigrating; hence they find themselves bored with nothing to do. In these instances, the casino becomes an attractive option – for example:

*They don't know what to do here. They haven't enjoyed any sports or recreational activities that Kiwi people have been exposed to and enjoyed since they were born (REF-F-6-CW)*

Stakeholders also acknowledged that the lack of entertainment is a problem for many Asians and that this easily leads them to the casino which is seen as a place of entertainment:

*Many people think of the casino as the first stop because it is open all hours. What else do we all have where people can do that? (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Apart from being entertaining, participants reported that many Asians, women in particular, feel safe in the casino due to the visible security around the place. They do not feel safe in pubs and bars and these are not venues usually frequented by Asians who prefer being at a casino. This encourages them to spend their time there:

*There are not many places where Asian women can go at night. You don't want to sit surrounded by all western people in a foreign bar at night. But at Casino, there are lots of Asians so it makes me feel comfortable. No one would bother you. Also there are cameras everywhere. It makes me feel safe to be in there as an Asian woman. That's one of the reasons I went there, taking a break, have beer and play machines when getting bored. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*Women want to have chances where they can dress up and hang out with girlfriends. Casino is the only place they can think of and enjoy without any reservation. They don't need to speak English and would feel welcomed. Casino will throw lots of exciting events for them and send invitations. (REF-F-6-CW)*

*In South Auckland it is not safe even to walk after 6.30. So, one place that people think is secure, is the casino. (IND-M-2-PG)*

Furthermore, there are many Asians there that they can socialise with and language is not a problem:

*There are always lots of Asians at the Casino... It's a quite comfortable place to spend time indeed. I don't speak English but there is no need to speak English. (REF-F-3-SG).*

The majority of stakeholders agreed that Asian problem gamblers tended to frequent casinos over any other gambling venues:

*Most of the Asian people go to casino because there are so many Asian people, they speak same language. It's socialisation but also. It seems like a very attractive safe environment. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

However, although Asians apparently prefer gambling at the casino to pubs and bars, there is some indication that problem gamblers who are banned from the casino may be looking to these less preferred venues:

*After banning myself from Casino, then local bars became available so I started going there. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

Stakeholders also expressed concerns about the extent to which a gambling addiction, once established in the casino, might encourage attendance at other gambling venues. They also wondered to what extent online gambling was occurring in locations where there is no casino, for example in Wellington.

## **4.2.2 Gambling culture**

### **Exposure to and availability of gambling**

As discussed previously, the legal status and ease of accessibility of gambling in New Zealand contrasts with most Asian countries where opportunities for gambling are more limited. Furthermore, Asian immigrants are confronted with - comprehensive marketing campaigns which glamorise and normalise gambling in New Zealand:

*The casino now advertises to attract more people. They make it look good and attract people. (REF-M-5-FM)*

A stakeholder reported that this is quite different from what happens in China, for example, where negative consequences of gambling are illustrated in films:

*In China, when you talk about gambling rather than the game, you talk about problem gambling so in the movies they will see people getting beat up, all negative. So people get educated that way. Whereas here every Wednesday: Big Lotto, you know everything is positive, "and anything is possible!" (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

The availability of gambling, particularly those associated with high-risk (e.g. continuous forms of gambling), when coupled with the perception that the legality of gambling means that it is harmless, provides Asian immigrants with a confusing picture. Participants expressed significant confusion and were concerned about the government allowing activities that can be harmful to people. They naively assume that the government would have the wellbeing of their people at heart and would not expose them to danger:

*I can't understand how come gambling is legal and so easy to access here. It's like gambling machines are everywhere. They use the most vulnerable part of human brain and destroy everything of the person's and the family's lives. How come the government lets the business prosper? I think it's very wrong. You go Casino and look at who they are. They are all Asians. They are especially easy to get tricked and very much exposed to the danger of gambling. They are the people who need special care for their settlement because they have lots of stress. They go to Casino to get rid of the stress. So it's like Casino is very good at exploiting it. And the government allows it. (KOR-M-2-FM)*



Stakeholders agreed with this view saying:

*Because in a lot of Asian countries gambling is illegal, so they know it's not good. But once they come here, all my clients say 'if not good, then why does the government allow it?' (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

However, whilst participants in this study were less familiar with casino gambling prior to settling in New Zealand (hence finding it socially unacceptable), the general view was that buying a lottery ticket was socially acceptable as it was not perceived as gambling (see earlier discussion) or harmful:

*Lotto is not very addictive because we have already seen it regularly. But we haven't seen casino back home. We see many people buying lottery tickets. We have heard about many people winning big money... Besides, if you win in Lotto you get big amounts whereas in pokie machines it will increase only by \$2 every time. But in Lotto it is 5 Million or up to 30 Million. The people that do not usually buy when there is a draw of 1 million will buy the ticket if there is 30 million. (IND-F-2-SG)*

### **Casino marketing and retention strategies**

For most Asians, especially recent immigrants, the casino is a very attractive and appealing place as it offers a complete entertainment experience and there is the promise of large winnings. All of this encourages attendance and gambling participation:

*Firstly, Sky City is a very attractive place. There is Sky Tower, there is TV, meals, there are many tables where they see money flowing. So they tend to invest the money they bring from home [for living expenses]. (IND-M-3-CW)*

Once people are exposed to gambling, participants suggested that the casino employs various material and psychological strategies to entice and retain patrons. Participants thought that this makes it difficult for them to avoid or break from an addiction to gambling. Problem gamblers, social gamblers and community workers were vocal regarding these retention strategies and the amount of money that the casino must spend on this:

*The marketing team at casino is operating on a big fund to make money. They serve drinks and provide other facilities to make the gamblers not feel depressed but honoured. They will call you. They will give you free vouchers, free parking. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*There are always lots of Asians at Casino. Parking is very cheap. They often have special prices on meals. So we can easily go and spend time there. It's quite comfortable place to spend time indeed. (REF-F-3-SG)*

Some of the strategies discussed by participants include the provision of free food and beverages, parking, VIP facilities for high rollers, regular prize draws at various times during the night to encourage people to stay late, and Action cards, amongst others. Several participants reported on these, for example:

*Every Friday and Saturday, there is a \$20,000 prize draw at the Casino. They will send you an invitation with many special prices for meals and parking and so on. On those days they will give you a bracelet with numbers on it. They announce winners like at 12 at night, then 2 in the morning, something like that. So we are waiting until the winners are announced. While waiting, what would we do? We spend time gambling, eating... anyway we stay there. It's exciting if you win and just waiting hoping to win. But sometimes, we call the bracelet handcuffs that don't let us leave the place. (REF-F-3-SG)*

*Main thing is the Action card I think, and the draws. It really tempts sometime. If we have draws and if we insert our action card, we get more points to enter into that draw. The draws are also the basic factor to attract people in the casino. If I am sitting idle at home I will think I should go to the casino, because the draw is going on and I will try my luck this time by having a band around my wrist free of cost. After going there if I have \$20, I will play. That makes you go over there and that makes you play. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*I usually go to the Casino on weekends to get the bracelet. I once almost won the prize but just missed. That was really disappointing. I know a couple of Burmese who won the \$20,000 prize with the bracelet. Wow, that was awesome! (REF-F-4-SG)*

*They have converted the money into chips. That removes the emotions for money. You will feel this is only a plastic chip. If you are playing with the real money and if you lose, that is a different thing, and if you lose a chip that is a different thing. (IND-M-2-PG)*

Participants also thought that the casino employs various strategies to ensure that VIPs continue to make large investments, for example:

*VIPs need to spend at least \$500 each time in half a year to keep their membership. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*They (VIPs) will lose their membership if they are not active for 3 years. I don't know if it is the same now since I have left. (CHI-M-5-CW)*

In addition to the previously highlighted reasons for going to the casino, participants thought that the marketing strategies coupled with the exciting atmosphere in the casino make gambling in the casino preferable to other forms of gambling. Some compared going to the casino with purchasing lottery tickets and agreed that there is much more excitement associated with the casino, for example:

*The [pokie] machines pull you back. If you put \$2 and you have won \$4 you wanna put again \$2 and expect to win \$4 more. But if you buy a Lotto ticket you might win or might not win. May be something to do with the environment. People around you in casino are always shouting and drinking and they have other things going on. But Lotto is just buy in a shop, go home and check it out. That isn't really that happening you know. Casino is more involving. They teach you how to do it and you do it. So I think it is more addictive going to a casino. (IND-M-2-SG)*

### **Easy access to the casino and funds for gambling**

Participants report that access to the casino is easy and as such, facilitates gambling.

*Easy access to casino is the biggest problem. Because of that, I started gambling as well. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*I used pokie machines at casino mostly. I had such easy access to it, so yeah... (KOR-F-4-XG)*

Furthermore, getting additional funds for gambling is relatively easy, for instance via loan sharks and other sources of credit:

*My friends also introduced me to loan sharks and I did borrow some money off them but I paid it off very quickly. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

*He has learnt to get money in advance on his credit card! So that is like back up money for him. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

### **4.3 Personal/Cultural factors**

#### **4.3.1 Lack of knowledge about gambling**

For many Asians who arrive in New Zealand, this marks their first exposure to casinos and other gambling venues as gambling tends to be limited across most Asian countries. Hence, apart from some social gaming with family on special occasions, most have not experienced formal gambling in a gambling establishment, so they have no knowledge of the dangers of becoming addicted to gambling. In fact, there appears to be a naiveté amongst many Asians concerning gambling:

*The people who come over here [were] never exposed [to gambling]. In India one cannot gamble, not allowed to. So they don't know exactly what is gambling and what harm it can do to a person. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*In the local area I lived in China, there was no Casino at all and it is illegal there anyway. I went to Casino first time in New Zealand with my friends to have fun. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

*I went there with other people wanting to have a look. You know it's banned in Korea but it's so open here. Then one day, I found myself not being able to stop myself and thought I am addicted. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

*Twenty years ago in Lao there was no gambling venue and in the casino I sometimes won \$1000 in a short period of time, which caused me to want to continue gambling. When I win, I think that if I go more, I will win more, but actually, it is not true. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

*In Cambodia, people can't go to casino. But here, when they learn something new, they like to try. They like to keep trying and keep trying. It's like a new experience. They want to test it. It's like obesity. They keep eating bad food. They don't know the food can kill them. And when they are addicted to gambling, they don't ask for help. They find it hard to approach. (REF-M-5-FM)*

The casino is perceived as a prominent tourist attraction and novelty that must be seen and experienced; most participants reported that many Asians visit the casino shortly after their arrival in New Zealand:

*First time they go to the casino to see what it is because in India they never [go to casino], so when they come here they have a craze to see what is casino, what types of games are there. And when they go there they invest some money. If they lose then they continue to go to casino. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*The fresh people who come from India to study want to explore the country, and a part of that is the casino. Obviously, you wouldn't name it gambling when you go to the casino. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*When I got older (legal age to enter casino) I went to the casino to see what it was like – to experience it. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

Some stakeholders reported that the novelty factor associated with the casino encourages Asians to take their overseas guests there as it is one of Auckland's tourist attractions. The stakeholders felt that this can result in their clients returning to gambling:

*A lot of my re-entry clients, they say, one of the reasons they want to go back to the casino is because their family members are coming from their country. They want to bring them to the casino. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

#### **4.3.2 Misconceptions about legality and fairness**

Due to the fact that gambling is a legal activity in New Zealand, it is apparent that many gamblers are under the misconception that there are some games in the casino that are fair and that other games may be open to dishonesty and manipulation. Some participants, younger Indians in particular, reported only playing those games that they thought were fair:

*Caribbean and Baccarat are cards games. But Caribbean is 5 cards game and Baccarat is only 2 cards game. They are safe games. They can't cheat in those games. They are fair games. If you take Money wheel for example, they [the casino] can cheat in that. In Roulette also cheating is possible to some extent. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*I play Baccarat, Roulette and Blackjack. I play these games because these are fair games. I play only fair games. Like, in Baccarat there is a box in which cards are filled. It is a pure wooden box and the cards come out of it. No machine is there. It is a manual box. So it is a fair game. Casino cannot control it. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*I always play fair games. In the casino everything happens in front of my eyes. (IND-M-2-SG)*

#### **4.3.3 Peer influence**

Many people, including both problem and social gamblers, reported being introduced to gambling by family and friends. They first join them for fun and excitement, but this can soon become a habit and escalate into problem gambling:

*My friend started to take me to the casino for entertainment, at first it was just fun and I went there on a casual basis, then I got addicted and kept gambling and gambling large amounts playing baccarat and on other table games. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

*A lot of people in my community also gamble and we lent money to each other when each of us lost money (SEA-F-4-PG)*

*Usually friends take them there by convincing them that it is a nice place to hang out, have drinks while there is also chance to win money. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*Sometimes I see my brother spending/gambling money off, so I feel like it too! We do have a bit of a family history of gambling, many of my siblings gamble. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

Participants also reported being encouraged to try gambling after witnessing or hearing of other people's good fortune in the casino:

*I have seen someone who...won \$1,500 in one day. He told his friend about it, and it spread really quickly to other Koreans, and some of them started gambling soon after. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*About until a few years ago, Casino is a kind of unknown place for them and they didn't dare to drive out to the town and visit that place... But since one or two ladies tried and started bringing their friends and neighbours to the Casino, it spread out so quickly. This is a small community living very close by. If one person won one night, everyone would know next day and they would want try as well. (REF-F-6-CW)*

*In New Zealand, I have been aware of gambling since 6 years ago and I have been introduced to gambling by my friends... I see my friends winning, which also causes me to gamble. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

#### 4.4 Summary – The Role of Migration, Settlement and the Environment

The following table summarises the migration, settlement and environmental factors that impact on problem gambling amongst Asians in New Zealand. These factors distinguish Asian communities from other host cultures that are impacted by problem gambling.

Table 8: Summary of the Role of Migration, Settlement and the Environment

The role of migration, settlement and the environment in problem gambling amongst Asians
<b>Acculturation and settlement stress</b>
<b>Cultural and language differences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural difference between Asians and New Zealanders makes it difficult for some immigrants to adjust, placing them at risk for gambling.</li><li>• Lack of English language proficiency exacerbates integration difficulties.</li><li>• According to recent immigrants, those immigrants who have lived in NZ longer and NZ born Asians, are not so much at risk for problem gambling compared to recent immigrants due to well established social networks.</li><li>• Younger immigrants were thought to be more prone to problem gambling due to early exposure to Western culture and misconceptions about gambling e.g., gambling is skill-based.</li></ul>

## **Financial stress**

### *Employment and resource difficulties*

- A major source of financial stress for immigrants and refugees stems from difficulties in securing adequate/suitable employment, which results in a lack of resources for many.

### *Cost of leisure activities*

- Participants perceived the cost of engaging in other activities as prohibitive for many immigrants and refugees; hence the casino becomes an inexpensive and attractive alternative.

### *Family responsibilities*

- Having family responsibilities e.g., remittances, young children etc, could be a protective factor as this limits gambling behaviour.
- Conversely, this was sometimes a motivator to gamble, as gambling was seen as a means of providing extra income for an individual's family.

## **Family stress**

### *Power structure changes*

- The issue of role reversal where females take on dominant roles in the family causes stress for males who come from a male dominated culture, which can lead to gambling.
- This was evident across all Asian ethnic groups in the study, but more with participants with refugee background.

### *Intergenerational conflict*

- Children acculturate quicker than parents and adopt Western values in favour of cultural family values.
- This causes intergenerational conflict as parents are no longer able to control their children, which causes mental health issues for parents who sometimes cope dysfunctionally and 'escape' to the casino.

## **Environmental factors**

### **Social isolation**

#### *Lack of social and family support –*

- Not having family or friends to interact with encouraged people to find companionship in the casino

#### *Lack of acceptance by host population –*

- Some participants reported feeling unaccepted by the host population

#### *Lack of entertainment*

- There is a lack of leisure activities for Asians in New Zealand - Asians are accustomed to long hours of entertainment in their countries. The casino is a convenient substitute.

### **Gambling culture**

#### *Exposure to and availability of gambling*

- Gambling is legal in New Zealand and easily available, unlike in most Asian countries where gambling opportunities are limited.

#### *Casino marketing and retention strategies*

- Marketing strategies employed by the casino (e.g., VIP membership, free food and beverages etc.) to entice and retain patrons make it difficult to avoid or break from gambling.

#### *Easy access to the casino and funds for gambling*

- Participants reported easy access to the casino.
- Participants reported that it was relatively easy to obtain additional funds for

gambling.

### **Personal/Cultural factors**

#### **Lack of knowledge about gambling**

- There appears to be a naiveté amongst many Asians concerning gambling and the risks of addiction to gambling.

#### **Misconceptions about legality and fairness**

- Due to the fact that gambling is a legal activity in New Zealand, many gamblers are under the misconception that the casino is “fair” or that there are some games that are fair, and that it is safe to play these games.

#### **Peer influence**

- Many people reported being introduced to gambling by family and friends but this can soon become a habit and escalate into problem gambling.

## Chapter 5. Coping Behaviours, Impacts and Consequences of Gambling for Asian People and their Families

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The previous chapter demonstrated the significance of the settlement experience, and associated stress, with regard to gambling and problem gambling for Asian people. The literature discussed in Chapter 2 shows that the strategies utilised by people to cope with stress predict levels of subsequent stress and crisis in their lives (Ivie & Garland, 2011), and that some employ functional or problem-solving strategies and others employ dysfunctional or avoidant strategies. Local studies (e.g. Dixon et al., 2010) show that some Asians are able to cope with settlement adversities functionally, while others employ dysfunctional coping strategies, with adverse effects on mental health and wellbeing. Functional coping strategies, such as self-control, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, planful problem solving and positive reappraisal (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988) enable the avoidance of behaviours such as problematic gambling. Conversely, other dysfunctional coping such as escape–avoidance, distancing, and confrontational coping (ibid.) increases the risk of problem gambling and the subsequent negative impacts and consequences for families and communities. The role of functional and dysfunctional coping strategies and impacts and consequences reported by participants are discussed in the following section.

### 5.1 Functional coping strategies employed by Asian gamblers and their families

Functional coping has been referred to as *active, task oriented and problem-focused* coping by many scholars. Functional coping strategies have been shown to lower the risk for mental health problems and substance use (Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988; Ebata & Moos, 1991; Sandler, Tein, & West, 1994). Within the context of this research, social gamblers (i.e. those who have avoided gambling related problems) and problem gamblers who have addressed their gambling issues, cited the use of functional coping strategies to support these behaviours. Family members also recognised the value of and need for the utilisation of functional coping behaviours. Some of these behaviours are discussed in this section.

#### 5.1.1 *Recognising and acknowledging that there is a problem*

Participants highlighted the importance of recognising and acknowledging that *there is a problem* when coping with a gambling problem functionally:

*For me the most important thing is being honest with myself and seeking help. It's like you accept this as a problem, an illness to be cured. Then you actively look for the way it can be treated. If you kept it secret and not seek help, that's worst. It seems that many gamblers don't tell their problems so it makes further problems.*  
(KOR-M-3-XG)



*I think things will only change, if dad wants to change...we need to make him aware of the problems he is encountering. The main problem is that he doesn't think he has a problem. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

*Most of the gamblers never acknowledge that they are the loser and they are always having hope that one day, they will win. (SEA-M-3-FM)*

A number of social gamblers, mostly from the South Asian sub-group, provided some insight into factors that assist with their avoidance of problem gambling.

*I am not going to waste my money on something which is not guaranteeing me that I am gonna earn money from there. Something which is guaranteeing me money, I will do that. Like, I am doing a job; that guarantees me money. But gambling doesn't guarantee me money. It is wasting money. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*I mean, it is okay to put on a Lotto ticket once in 6 months, obviously you want to try your luck and see whether you get it. But if you keep doing it every week, every day, that is an addiction. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*Gambling is so addictive. I was lucky; that's a different thing. But not many people are lucky. In cards game or [other type of] gambling only 2% of the people will win. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*If we win for the first time then we get addicted to the casino and then we go on losing and losing. But we can't beat the casino. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*Casino is a big business. They do this to make money not to give us money. It's a simple principle. So if you go, then they [the Casino] want you to lose money. Some people never realise this or even know it, they are so addicted and keep going there dreaming of the fortune. I think especially Asians don't see that's how the Casino works. Kiwis know it and don't gamble that hard. (REF-M-5-SG)*

Some who identified themselves as social gamblers, but who were actually problem gamblers, gained some insights into the extent of their gambling during the interview.

*I know I am half addicted to gambling already but I'm still one of the lucky ones who won't get fully addicted. I won't risk so much of my hard earned money just for the sake of gambling (CHI-M-5-SG)*

One participant even realised that they needed help.

*I have heard about Problem Gambling Foundation, but I have never approached it because I thought that I was not a problem gambler and I could control my gambling. But now, I know I need help (SEA-F-4-SG)*

After recognising the existence of a problem, it is helpful to recognise the source of the problem. However, the problem gamblers in this study were generally less able to recognise exactly what the problem is and from where it arose. This contrasted with the perceptions of social gamblers and family members, who seemed to have much clearer insight into their families' problem gambling including why it occurs.

*Stress is one of the reasons. Stress can come from different things like not getting the job, not getting proper grounding in this country, not making friends, not getting proper results in the university, missing home. That can cause stress. That can*

*cause you to go to casino and relieve it or go out to night clubs and drink or anything you think is a stress reliever, you will accept that. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*I do understand why he started. His business wasn't doing so well and his goals weren't met although he tried. He must have been very disappointed at himself. He told me himself that he went to casino. I was very surprised. Usually gamblers tend to hide from others, even family members. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

### **5.1.2 Taking action**

It is only when people recognise what the problem is and what is causing their problem gambling that they are able to take action against it (Responsible Gambling Council, 2012). Participants who had addressed their gambling (i.e. recovered problem gamblers) displayed clear recognition and acknowledgement of the problems they had faced and the steps needed to address them:

*Once I signed out with the casino to stop me from going in, there was a gambling support service ... that gave me advice every three months and asked if I came back to the casino. I replied that I did not have any feeling of going back gambling. Now, the service has never rung me as I have never gone back for one year. I was told that by going to the casino, I will be addicted just like those who are addicted with drugs and I will forget everything and sometime, I may take all the money from any family member to feed the casino. (SEA-M-4-XG)*

*I really appreciate the Korean Counsellor's advice. It really helped me quit gambling. I didn't know I had one of the biggest problems in the society until I met her. She helped me even with how to get help to pay my rent. People have to realise that it is very hard to quit gambling on their own. They need help. (KOR-M-2-XG)*

*I've learnt my lesson now, I lost so much money. I am not a person that has much control. It's not worth it to lose my family. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

A number of problem gamblers who were interviewed had recognised and acknowledged the problems and were actively taking action. The role of peers and family were highlighted with regard to both enabling/encouraging the continuation of excessive gambling, and assisting individuals to address their gambling. For example:

*You need to escape from your friends who ask you to gamble. For instance, my friends asked me many times to go to the casino with them. I refused. Then, they never asked me anymore. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*I am thinking that I will not be driving anymore and ask my husband to drop me at work instead in order to escape from the gambling venues because I know that I have become a problem gambler now and I do need help. My second plan is that I am planning to establish auto-payment so that I do not need to go to the bank to pay my bills, in order to prevent myself from accessing the gambling venues. My third plan is that I am planning to go to the gym or to get another job to keep me busy. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

A number of participants also indicated that they had signed up to the casino's self-banning/exclusion facility.

*I signed myself out with the casino as I want to escape from my friends who always come to pick me up to the casino. I have accessed the Problem Gambling Foundation. I have found that the Foundation has provided me with good advice. For example, if I keep gambling, I may lose not only money, but also my family. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

However, the effectiveness of this system was limited for some participants:

*I was banned from the casino but I went in everyday for about a year. Only for maximum half an hour each time. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

### **Spirituality and Religion**

In addition to taking practical steps to stop gambling, some ex-gamblers also reported turning to spirituality and religion. This was cited by several Koreans for many of whom religion was newly adopted in New Zealand and provided a source of strength and guidance to cope with the gambling problem:

*I don't think gamblers can quit gambling on their own. They need something. Maybe religion or sport. It really helped me when I began to go to church. I could rely on God. Whenever I felt like going back to casino, I prayed (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*At times I feel I need some support; I need some help; I need some guidance. We have temple, Guru and elders; we ask everyone for advice. (IND-M-5-XG)*

*I am trying to keep myself busy. I have different things to do at church every day. It helps me to forget about gambling (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*My wife helped me to meet with the Korean counsellor here. She wanted to help me quit gambling. My relationship with my wife has improved a lot. She also helped me grow faith in God as well. I also carry the Bible around, and I read it every time I feel like gambling. (KOR-M-4-XG)*

Families of problem gamblers reported being helped by religion to cope with the impact of problem gambling on family members:

*My sons were also suffering. They looked me and thought they couldn't help. I was hopeless. But they had good faith in God. I think that's how they were able to live through every day. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*I needed something that I can hold onto and put my head on. I started going to church. When I feel depressed I go to church... (KOR-F-4-FM)*

These findings correspond with those of Tse et al. (2005), who note the potential significance of spirituality in relation to gambling.

## **5.2 The use of dysfunctional coping strategies by Asian gamblers and their families in response to problem gambling**

Dysfunctional coping has been referred to as *avoidance coping* or *emotion oriented and distraction focused coping* by many scholars. Dysfunctional coping strategies

have been linked with negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety, somatic problems, and depression (Endler & Parker, 1990).

The evidence suggests that many Asian gamblers and families are employing dysfunctional coping strategies to cope with problem gambling issues: in particular, avoidant and emotion-focussed strategies appear to be used when problems are perceived as threatening or harmful (Ptacek et al., 1992 in Frydenberg, 1997). These strategies include denial, ignoring and pretending, and aggression and escape, amongst others. Dysfunctional strategies may be creating greater psychological and physical problems (Sprinthall & Collins, 1995). These behaviours reflect an inability to cope functionally. A person who has not yet recognised or acknowledged the need to address their problem gambling behaviour is known to be at the pre-contemplative stage (Neighbors, Lostutter, Larimer, & Takushi, 2002) and may be employing dysfunctional ways of coping with their situation.

Some of the more significant dysfunctional coping strategies utilised by participants in this study are discussed in the following section:

### **5.2.1 Denial, pretending and ignoring problem gambling behaviour**

Pretending apparently gives people an illusion of coping with difficult situations. This is concerning, as evidence suggests that this form of suppression often creates more serious psychological problems, due to the eventual emergence of consequences from emotional repression or isolation of feelings (Sprinthall & Collins, 1995). Gamblers were reported by many family members to be in denial about their gambling problem:

*My son says he is not a gambler. He says he only goes to casino when he has money and asks how his behaviour is defined as gamblers. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

Social gamblers were also able to recognise denial in those experiencing gambling-related problems.

*I think things might be different for really serious problem gamblers. They deny their problems and don't want to listen to others. So they may need professionals. (REF-F-3-SG)*

It is clear that many family members also deny the problem or try to avoid it by ignoring it or pretending it does not exist:

*Our family is good at lying; we pretend to each other that things are going well for us all, so we don't have to worry about each other. It's hard because I feel like I have to pretend too! (CHI-F-2-FM)*

*I have seen her playing in the bar but didn't think she was addicted. But I couldn't see where all the money had gone. How come we didn't have any money for even basic thing? Then I got to know that she was spending all the money on gambling.*

*That was about 10 years ago and since then I tried to ignore the problem. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*Well... maybe the fact that I have ignored the problem existed in the family itself means I was deeply affected somewhere in my mind. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

Family and significant others of problem gamblers frequently attributed their avoidance of the problem to being afraid to intervene, and/or fearing that the intervention will jeopardise their relationship:

*I was afraid of telling my friend that he is addicted to gambling. That might ruin the friendship. When he doesn't gamble, he is a nice guy. But I seriously thought he was addicted to gambling. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*I'm too scared to talk to dad about his problem. Scared that he won't admit to the problem and it'll seem like I'm accusing him and we might start arguing...I don't want to upset our relationship. It's more of a closed topic for us, we just focus on the good or different stuff to talk about and not touch the topic. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*I'm kind of on the fence, like I'm concerned and not concerned at the same time. I'm concerned that he'll go bankrupt one day. If there're any signs that alert me or I see something happen then I will approach him. At the moment it's like nothing has happened so I don't want to wreck our relationship, because if something happens I know I can help him financially. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

Problem gamblers were also cognisant of the potential for gambling to cause conflict and inter-personal disruptions within the family, and that family members may be reluctant to raise the topic with them for fear of these consequences.

*I do know that problems will surely happen if my husband knows that I am gambling because he does not like gambling and I have hidden my bank statements from him... I really want to tell my husband the truth what I have been through for his help, but I am really scared of the conflict happening. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

*They know that he has a [gambling] problem but they want to avoid it. They want to stop creating more conflict. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

It is possible that the reluctance expressed above, to address/raise problematic issues within the family, may be exacerbated by the lack of extended family for many immigrant families. Traditionally, when a significant problem is encountered by an Asian family, assistance / guidance would be sought from older family members within the extended family. For example, an older adult would take responsibility for confronting a family member and determining a plan of action, thus ensuring that relationships within the nuclear family remain intact.

According to Asian service providers, another significant reason for Asians avoiding talking about these problems is because they prefer to keep issues within the family due to the shame associated with such behaviour:

The problem gambling stays in the family, even the lying and the secrecy stays in the family. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)

### **5.2.2 Escapism**

It was frequently reported by both family members and gamblers that gambling provides a means to escape from stress. While settlement was often highlighted as a source of stress, work, family commitments and other inter-personal issues were also raised as contributors to stress.

*When my husband was having an affair with another woman, I got very stressed out and gambled. It was only way I could escape from the stress. We didn't have that kind of problem before coming to New Zealand. I think because this is a free country, people want to try something as they want. So he left the family and I gambled. (REF-F-4-SG)*

*I go to the Casino to escape from home. I won't have much time during the day. Then like in the evening, I cook for children, have dinner with them, clean up and let one of the children do babysitting. Then I go to the Casino. Otherwise I will be stuck at home doing housework and looking after grandchildren all day long (REF-F-4-SG)*

*I do not expect to earn from the casino, but the reason I go there is because I want to escape or forget the problems happening to me. (SEA-M-3-PG)*

*My husband probably doesn't know how to release stress that why he is gambling all the time and he wants excitement – going to the casino is an easy way to release stress and get some excitement. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*He believes that he is only gambling for fun. He claims that he gets stressed at work and likes to go to casino to relieve the stress. He thinks there is no harm in it. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*I and my husband were running a business in the city and after we closed the shop, we needed to do something different before coming home. We often went to the Casino and I sometimes went there on my own. It was easy way to forget what happened during the day and to feel relaxed. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*After 10 or 12 hours of hard work, we are quite stressed out and want to do something else together. So we go to a bar together, have beer and play machines. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

*I lived in Hamilton first. When a Casino opened there, I went there with family. We lived close by the city. After moving to Auckland we used to go to the Skycity and Casino whenever having overseas visitors. Later on I went there to have beer and take off stress from work. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

### **5.2.3 Aggression**

Research has demonstrated a link between problem gambling and violence (Korman et al., 2008; Tse, 2007a). For instance, the Productivity Commission found that one in ten gamblers in counselling reported domestic or other violent incidents related to their gambling (Prod Com, 1999). Evidence also indicates that some problem gamblers may resort to some form of aggression in order to exert some control over their lives. This often takes the form of some kind of violence at home, in particular against spouses and partners.

In this study, South Asian and Korean participants appeared to be more willing to talk about this:

*When he wants money he can do anything. He can kill, he can hit, he can do anything... he becomes absolutely wild and his eyes become completely of a different person. His personality is completely different at that time. (IND-F-3-FM)*

*My wife doesn't like my gambling. She once asked me why I was doing this - the machines are all designed to take my money. I told her off because I was angry at losing money and wanted to get it back. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

#### **5.2.4 Resigned acceptance of one's lot**

A coping strategy utilised by Asians, and not common amongst Westerners, is resigning themselves to fate and accepting the problem as part of their destiny. This arises from the Asian concept of Karma (as discussed in the literature review and Chapter Three). Accordingly, some Asian participants stoically accepted the problem and resigned themselves to living with it as it is their fate to do so. This is reflected in the following comment:

*Although it was a hard relationship, I thought I had to keep the family and stay in the relationship. But while all the things happen, like social workers involved, being sent to the women's refuge, I sort of accepted that this is my fate. There may be something to be resolved or should happen now in relation to my previous life. (REF-F-4-XG)*

Stakeholders agreed with the perception that problem gambling is perceived by many Asians as something to be accepted as a person's fate.

### **5.3 Consequences of problem gambling for Asian gamblers and families**

The data show that consequences of problem gambling for Asians are very similar to those for non-Asian groups. However, some mental health consequences such as stigma and shame appear to be stronger for Asians. Consequences commonly experienced by Asians are discussed below.

#### **5.3.1 Loss of social connections**

As acknowledged within the literature (Adams, 2008), social connections and relationships tend to suffer as an individual's addiction intensifies. Families of problem gamblers in this study, reported that as individuals become more drawn into problem gambling, their relationships with others change and they appear to move towards isolating themselves from their friends and family:

*Gamblers lose interest in their families and friends... Gamblers usually don't have friends.... They become loners. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*Family and friends do not mean anything to a gambler. The only thing that matters to him is money. He will do anything for money and he can even kill his own family for getting money. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*I had to watch my friend gambling his money away. There was nothing much I could do to improve the situation. He cannot be reached now. He was one of my oldest friends. I wish I knew where he was. This is pretty sad. (KOR-M-4-FM)*

*I used to ask for money around. I needed it to go back to casino and hoped to win some back, but I never won. Of-course. The machines are not designed to let you win. So I couldn't pay back to my friends. We started to have arguments, and our friendship was torn apart. (KOR-M-2-PG)*

*I sometimes borrow my friends' money to gamble and this causes conflict with my friends once I cannot pay them back. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

Stigma and shame were attributed to this social isolation, the impacts of which were often far-reaching:

*I was labelled by other members of church. I heard they called me problem gambler behind my back. It really impacted on the relationship building. I couldn't get to know many people. They seemed to avoid me. At first, I did admit that my addiction to gambling was not a good code of conduct, but I didn't want to be labelled. So I had to move to another church. I couldn't tell them about my life. If I told them, they would have avoided me as well. It acted like a constraint to relationship building in my social life. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

Problems engendered by borrowing money have also caused friends and family to exclude gamblers socially:

*He used to continue to borrow money from other friends. He asked me for some money as well. They all refused to lend any money to him and started to alienate him from the group. (KOR-M-4-FM)*

*Friends choose to avoid them when they realise that they are gamblers and friendships break when they owe them money... Friends start to disappear when they find out about their gambling addiction. They don't want to be part of it. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*We lost contact with them when they moved to a new place after they lost everything. They never let us know where they were. We knew where they were, but we didn't want to contact them. (REF-M-5-FM)*

Asian stakeholders suggested that problem gamblers also become antisocial and secretive:

*At a point the persons suddenly isolate themselves from family...which means they've isolated themselves from society, so they [start to] get into the antisocial personality stuff. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER).*

*They become more secretive, as they become more secretive they hide more things away. They have friends...and are working on secret things all over the place. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

### **5.3.2 Loss of financial security**

Problem gambling impacts the financial security of problem gamblers and their families, irrespective of their ethnicity. More significantly for recent Asian



immigrants, financial insecurity caused by problem gambling impacts on their ability to settle successfully in New Zealand by preventing them from purchasing or retaining a home, which is a significant marker of settlement:

*If we go for their loan approval the bank will refuse it. Because [if they see] them go to the casino and withdraw money very often, they [the bank] just refuse the loan approval. (IND-F-3-CW)*

*Right now, my biggest concern is his unexpected behaviour like getting a new loan using the house as collateral. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*I used rent money and savings, I gambled to the stage where I lost my house. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

Because problem gamblers often took to borrowing money from money-lenders, they and their families were sometimes subjected to dangerous encounters when money-lenders attempted to reclaim the money. This caused a great deal of stress for them:

*One day I received a phone call from Australia. The person on the other end was looking for my friend. He asked me where he was, how close I was to him, and how to get hold of him. I soon realised that my friend borrowed money from some underground private firm. They were looking for him to get the money back. I heard they would do anything to get it back. (KOR-M-4-FM)*

*The people have been calling me. He has taken money from various places. He has given my mobile number to them. And I have been telling them that I am no longer with him and that he made me sign it. He forced me to sign and I did it under sheer pressure and stress. (IND-F-3-FM)*

This stress was exacerbated by the burden of debt imposed on families who had to repay debt on behalf of their family members involved in problem gambling:

*Although we tried not to touch the issue, often we had to deal with it in some way because of the financial problem. Not only family money, but she also lost someone else's money too. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

Loss of financial security and its concomitant stress sometimes left some families with a sense of disillusionment about migrating to New Zealand:

*It's the most difficult time for me since I came to New Zealand. It's all because of gambling. I have nothing to look forward to. I don't like living here. I wish I could just go back to Korea. He is my only son, and we came here to do better... Everything has gone worse. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

### **5.3.3 Prostitution and crime**

Participants indicated that many Asian problem gamblers have engaged in prostitution or criminal activities in order to procure money to feed their gambling. Although media reports and anecdotal data suggest that this is spread across the various Asian subgroups, this was reported on predominantly by Indian participants who appeared to be more willing to talk openly about gambling issues than the other

groups. One of the activities reported on by both social and problem gamblers was prostitution:

*I have seen one Kerala girl. She is a student. She started gambling and now she has moved to prostitution. She was a nice girl, but now she is involved with the company of bad guys like, they give her drinks and money. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*He [his friend] is getting the dole. For that money also, he waits 2-3 hours before that money comes [to his account] in the casino. He puts that dole in the casino and doesn't have food at all. That person is also seen begging and involved in sexual activities with a gay for money. I have a friend who has gone to the extent of becoming a gay. He used to sleep with an islander guy for getting money. He has robbed many people. (IND-M-2-PG)*

Several participants reported on the presence of Asian crime syndicates operating in the casino. For example:

*More than Indians, other Asians are more into gambling. They have crime-related gangs as well. One person hires 10-15 people, gives \$100 each and gets them to play. They have to give him the money they win while they get a small part of it. Say if someone gets a jackpot, [the main person] will give \$10 to each one who played for him and keep the rest for himself. They hire only unemployed people who play for him as his employees. (IND-M-3-CW)*

### **5.3.4 Addiction and vicious cycle**

A vicious cycle occurs when problem gamblers chase their losses. Chasing losses can be an early sign of emerging problem gambling, as it is seen as a strong marker of problem with gambling and loss of control. At this stage, gambling motivations are irrational and could lead to serious consequences such as family break-ups, court convictions (see Lesieur & Custer, 1984). Ex-gamblers and family members from all Asian subgroups, especially Indians, Koreans and Refugees, showed a clear understanding of the addictive nature of gambling and its effects on problem gamblers and their families. They understood that both winning and losing gets the gambler caught up in a vicious cycle of gambling either to win more or to try to win back what they have lost:

*Gambling is such a bad thing that you will be addicted even if you win or lose. (IND-M-5-XG)*

*One other risk factor is that they always try to make up for the loss. They end up spending the last portion of money that was originally set aside for other purposes, like paying rent and buying groceries. Until the last penny, they always continue to try to win some money back. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*I first went to SkyCity casino with a few hundred dollars, thinking I could win something like \$10,000 that night. I lost it all at the end, and I couldn't go back home. I didn't have anything to return to my family. So I spent the whole night there, and I kept going back there thinking that I could win some back. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*Once they are addicted and lost lots of money, they lose more control. Although they win, the money is not enough to make up their losses so they want to go*

*again. If they lose, they also go because they would think that is the only way to make money or they have no future anymore, so just gamble. (REF-M-5-SG)*

*My friend used to go to the casino thinking he was going to make up the loss. He never did, but he couldn't stop going back in there. (KOR-M-4-FM)*

*It's like when I start gambling I keep going. I go there until there is no money left. Then I even borrow money from others. Then you go again to earn money to pay it back. Then you lose everything and it's very, very stressful. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

However, participating problem gamblers did not appear to understand the addictive nature of gambling, and even if they understood that the casino is always the winner, they were unable to control their urge to gamble. Problem gamblers offered irrational justifications for their gambling such as:

*The casino has taken money from me so I just want some back, I know the casino is the big winner at the end of the day. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

*I found myself start borrowing money from others. The problem gets bigger and I need to pay back, but it's hard to pay back because I don't win all the time but lose many times. (REF-F-3-PG)*

An Auckland stakeholder highlighted the lack of understanding of the addictive nature of gambling amongst problem gamblers which leads them to addiction:

*People think that [becoming a problem gambler] is a personal behaviour issue. Actually...gambling is similar to drugs...People say gambling is a game, [they think] it's a behaviour so I can control it. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

For families, this was a huge concern as once their family member was addicted; they found it difficult to help them out of this addiction:

*My own daughter was addicted to gambling. Firstly, she didn't even know how to play. But her friends brought her to the casino, and they became more addicted. When they became addicted, it was very hard to stop them. We tried to sit down and talk with them, but we couldn't. (REF-M-5-FM)*

*They asked me why we were trying to stop them. They didn't see the money getting lost. They only thought about winning. (REF-M-5-FM)*

*Her husband was addicted to gambling. My daughter tried to stop him, but soon they both became addicted. It was very hard to stop them. (REF-M-5-FM)*

*I think she also wanted to stop but just couldn't. It's like having an illness and she is a patient who needs care. She can't help herself. I believe addicted gamblers are never able to do that. Someone else should work together, like family members. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

### **5.3.5 Mental health issues**

All groups of participants reported several mental health issues which they believed were a consequence of problem gambling. These include stress and anxiety, anger

and unhappiness, depression, alcohol and drug issues and suicide ideation and suicide. The following section discusses each of these.

### **Stress and anxiety**

Problem gamblers reported high levels of personal stress and anxiety caused by their problem gambling, for example:

*I could not sleep and was so stressed when I lost my money, so I need to promise myself not to gamble in the casino anymore, which consequently, causes me happiness now. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*I became very anxious as I was getting more into the gambling. Maybe it's because I was worried about the money I lost, the money I borrowed... I was also scared that I might not be able to control myself forever. Then because I was so anxious I needed to do something. Then I went to the casino or bar to gamble. When I was there, I only thought that I can make money here. It's just something that kept going and that I can't control. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

*I was stressed and lonely so I went to the casino to relax, but I walked out with more stress. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

*My gambling has affected me a lot, such as stress and I do not want to stay home (SEA-F-3-PG)*

A community worker talked about the grave physical health consequences of stress and anxiety caused by gambling that he observed in the casino:

*I've seen Pacific and Maori people drop down on the floor having heart attacks in the casino and days I saw one that could not be saved after resuscitation, I was shocked as it was the first time I saw someone die just like that! I haven't seen any Asians have heart attacks, but you can tell they are very stressed out when they lose. (CHI-M-5-CW)*

It was evident that problem gambling also caused much stress for the family as family members struggled to cope with the behaviour and its consequences for them:

*Because of his gambling, I was also very stressed... I was extremely stressed and I was under heavy sedatives. (IND-F-3-FM)*

*I need to hide money from my son because if he finds out he will take it away no matter how and use it to gamble. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*To begin with, I was quite stunned. I didn't know that he was into all this and one day he just said that he is going to Sky City and going to play...he said he wanted to go and try his luck in the casino... I didn't know anything and he didn't give me any indication that he was into this and he had a past which had a gambling stint or whatever. ... I had no idea that he was a serious and very, very notorious gambler. (IND-F-3-FM)*

*I've had sleepless nights thinking and worrying about dad. I feel like I need to help him. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

*He will just disappear for a few hours and I get even more worried and he doesn't pick up his phone when I call him. So where is he? Gambling! There are so many*

*pokie bars around these days; he doesn't have to always go to the casino to play. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

### **Anger and unhappiness**

Problem gambling gave rise to much anger and unhappiness amongst both problem gamblers and their families. Many participants, demonstrated awareness of the anger and unhappiness that their gambling had caused in their families:

*When I lose too much, my husband is not happy as we don't have money to buy foods and other things. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

*I kept on going. My wife was very angry every time she found out I used my credit card to withdraw cash to go to casino. She took it away sometimes. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

However, they continued to gamble and reported getting angry and unhappy because of the "greed" they developed for money through their gambling:

*I continue gambling because I'm pissed off, annoyed at losing and greedy. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

*My main problem is I don't have patience. I become greedy all the time. So I learn from casino that because of [greed for] money I become mentally sick. I lost my happiness and I lost my job. I become emotional when I think about that. (IND-M-2-XG)*

### **Depression**

Stress, anxiety, anger and unhappiness caused by problem gambling apparently gave rise to much depression in Asian families. Family members reported experiencing high levels of depression due to their spouses' gambling addiction with negative health consequences such as insomnia and illness:

*At night I was not getting sleep, so my doctor prescribed me medications. I was on medication due to depression as well as for sleeplessness. But today I am much better because I have pulled myself out. I have told myself that there is no point in loving a man who doesn't love himself and who doesn't care about his own good and bad. (IND-F-3-FM)*

*I became quite sick last year. I was depressed too. Those were pretty noticeable last year particularly. I felt sad and my children said I didn't smile as often as before and my responses to them were always late and delayed. I felt very resentful when my health got worse. I gave everything to my family and to keep my marriage but what is left now is my health got worse. (KOR-F-4-FM)*

Some also reported severe depression amongst some problem gamblers which manifested as a lack of appetite and weight loss:

*My son is very depressed since he has no money to spend on gambling. He doesn't eat much at all... I heard depression follows the gambling cessation... He is so slim now. I tried to feed him, but he resisted. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

Some problem gamblers were also able to recognise that they were depressed:

*I was very depressed. I often had panic attacks. I thought I am losing myself. I got scared finally that I might become mad. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

### **Alcohol and drug abuse**

Alcohol and drug abuse was reported to a large extent as a consequence of problem gambling, partly because drugs and alcohol were perceived as being freely available in the casino and in bars where people go to gamble:

*Another issue is there is the possibility of getting into drugs, because in the casino there are drugs available. It is one of the places where money and drugs flow. We have not handled any case directly, but as a part of our investigations of family violence, it is one of the reasons. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*Every gambler has an arrangement for alcohol on a daily basis as they drink daily [because] most of the gamblers go to gamble daily. When they win they have a nice night and when they lose they just drink, smoke and some people are into dope even. They get some stuff. In the casino everything is available. So people get into everystuff there. (IND-M-2-PG)*

In accordance with the literature linking smoking and gambling (Griffiths, Wardle, Orford, Sproston K, & Erens, 2010; McGrath & Barrett, 2009; Petry & Oncken, 2002) participants reported that smoking was related to and sometimes a consequence of gambling:

*I was not smoking. I learned smoking from the bloody casino and now I smoke, because of the company. Now I am habitual, I need to smoke now. See, the casino is a bad place. We gamble there and spoil our life. We start drinking. There are gangsters, criminals and not many good people in the casino. We mix with them. (IND-M-2-XG)*

*He is a very heavy smoker as well. He was already a smoker, a very big smoker, a chain smoker and at the same time he was gambling. I think the smoking increased because he couldn't pay his debts. Heavily stressed and there is no happiness in his life and I keep telling him 'You are just wasting your life and there are people who are working and enjoying life by being normal. But you are an abnormal man'. (IND-F-3-FM)*

For recent Asian immigrants and refugees, alcohol and drugs are sometimes used to cope with settlement adversities and can cause or exacerbate problem gambling.

This was reported by some participants:

*It all links to alcohol for some reason if you think about it. Drinking makes you hyper and you are talking to you friends. While talking to your friends you will see some machines, other people playing and hooting when they win some money. And you want to try it as well. It gives you the vibe and then you want to do it as well. That's when you end up losing more money. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*Young people waste money on drugs first and when they are sick of it they go to gambling.... drugs start it all off for young people. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*When I drink, I sort of lose control. When 3-4 of us go to the bar, we often say to each other it's only for drinking and no playing on machines. Then as we drink over time, it's like one by one we are already sitting at the machine. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

A refugee community worker suggested that in their community, alcohol consumption often gave rise to gambling:

*Men also gamble but they are likely to have drinking problems rather than gambling. When they gamble, they don't bother to go to the Casino. They just go to the local bars and play pokie machines. (REF-F-6-CW)*

### **Suicide ideation and suicide**

Major depression, substance abuse, relationship issues, unemployment, financial stress, and legal issues are known to be risk factors for suicide ideation and suicide (Maccallum & Blaszczynski, 2003). Several other studies report such consequences for problem gamblers (Horodecki, 1992; Statham et al., 1998; Weissman et al., 1999). Reports from participants in this study also highlight these issues amongst Asian problem gamblers. Two participants talked about problem gamblers who had committed suicide in Auckland because of their problem gambling:

*When I was working at a restaurant, I used to see a Korean man coming for lunch almost every day. He seemed quite reserved and quiet. A funny thing is that I used to see him at the casino as well. Whenever I was there, he was there too. And one day, I realised that I hadn't seen him for quite some time, so I asked some people around about him. They told me that he hung himself. He was unemployed and was never going to be able to pay back his debt. I think he had five kids too. I now realise that if I only knew the Problem Gambling Foundation earlier and introduced my counsellor to him, he wouldn't have hung himself. I felt deeply sorry for him. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*[There are] some horrible stories about other Cambodians who killed themselves because of gambling. One of them killed himself on railway track, and the other one hanged himself. (REF-M-5-FM)*

A stakeholder also suggested that some suicides amongst Asians are due to problem gambling, but that there is difficulty in evaluating the extent of this issue as information on the role of gambling in suicide is not gathered:

*Suicides, unfortunately we don't keep those stats, because the coroners don't factor in... problem gambling... so we don't have any good stats here on what percentages of suicides would be impacted by someone's gambling. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

### **5.3.6 Family conflict**

The mental health issues experienced by gamblers and their families were reported to cause conflict in the family in various ways. This is well illustrated in the following quotation from a community worker:

*When women in the family gamble, that causes family conflicts. Men drink a lot. So combined with the wife's gambling and the husband's drinking, the family actually*

*has lots of problems, lots of fighting with each other, children neglected, violence, financial problems. (REF-F-6-CW)*

There was general agreement amongst all stakeholders, from both Phase Two and Four, that problem gambling can impact on every aspect of family life from the gambler's relationship with their partner/spouse and their children to their extended family.

A number of family consequences were raised by participants, including neglect of children and family, violence in the family and family breakups. Each of these is discussed below.

### **Family neglect**

Family neglect was a common theme discussed by family members and problem gamblers. Sometimes gamblers were just not available to their families when needed and at other times they were not able to provide for them:

*We leased a farm and I had to work most of it. He wasn't available at all. (KOR-F-4-FM)*

*I am working 10 hours a day. Because I took 2 hours of break during the day, it's total 12 hours I spend at work. But although I worked that hard for several years, there is nothing I have saved. My daughter wants to get married soon and if I keep doing this I won't be able to support her at all. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

*I lost to gambling my money saved for food and for my needs and for my family. I thought nothing and I just wanted to gamble (SEA-F-4-PG)*

Of greatest concern to families were the impacts on children of problem gamblers. These impacts range from neglect to more serious and even subtle forms of abuse. Community workers and family members expressed concerns for children of gamblers who are often neglected:

*My biggest concern is the second generation really. There is very limited parental guidance here. Many parents gamble or have drinking problems, couple problems. The parents don't know how to look after their children in NZ. The children are pretty much on their own here. (REF-F-6-CW)*

*I give money to my wife. But there is always no money available to buy necessities. It's because she gambles and keeps losing money there. Now I am separated but still most money I earn goes to her. I believe she will feed children at least but still worry as the children grow older, the problems will get bigger. My concern is not just about the money but more about my children. I don't want them to see their mother playing cards at home, going to Casino or something like that. She sometimes goes to Casino leaving the children at home. (REF-M-3-FM)*

*I've seen gamblers leave their babies in the car in the car park and forget about their babies because they get carried away gambling! It's only when the security guards hear a baby crying in the car park that they inform the casino people! (CHI-M-5-CW)*

*But I have seen many people who lost their houses, businesses. Some fled to Australia. They often have lots of family problems too. In many cases, both of the*



*couple gamble together so may not have much problems themselves, but the children have to look after themselves. (REF-M-5-SG)*

Furthermore, many children experience mental health issues on account of the conflict caused at home by problem gambling. A community worker reported that:

*Kids get affected when the parents are always fighting at home. (IND-F-3-CW)*

Parents reported on the effect of their gambling and the conflict this created on their young children:

*One day he didn't come home for almost a week. I noticed that my children were losing smiles and fighting with each other more often. They said that I should have been nicer to him and one was counting how many days he was away. So, I left a message on his mobile to come back home. When he came back we sat at the table having breakfast, and the kids looked happy. (KOR-F-4-FM)*

*I remember each time I lost money I went home and told my 8 year old daughter that I am a bad mother and she would say to me that "it is okay, just don't do it next time". (CHI-F-4-XG)*

Worrying about their parents gambling and related financial problems and health issues causes stress for adult children as well:

*I worry about dad's health as his heart is not healthy and gambling increases excitement which will affect his heart rate (CHI-F-2-FM)*

*I've become more aware of the situation financially e.g., I pay for dinner now instead of dad [the problem gambler]. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*Dad has been borrowing money off my sister (3 times) and we wonder why because he just sold 2 houses and he gets income from rent and shares, it's not much but enough for living. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

Some participants raised concern about parents who are problem gamblers being poor role models to their children who are exposed to gambling early in their lives. Moreover, a consistently identified risk factor for problem gambling amongst youth is parental problem gambling (Delfabbro, Lahn, & Grabosky, 2005; Dowling, Jackson, Thomas, & Frydenberg, 2010).

Asian stakeholders displayed concern especially for those children in households where playing mah-jong is a common occurrence:

*They play games like mah-jong [at someone's house] and the four year old holds the money because they're the only ones they can trust...so at a very young age they're already integrated into the gambling scene. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

## **Violence in the family**

Family violence was cited as a huge issue for problem gamblers and their families. Indian participants appeared more willing to talk about these issues than other participants:

*My husband was very violent. He drank every day and came home, beat me and the children. He once threatened me with a knife and indeed left a big scar on my baby's head. I asked him what he wanted. He never answered. When I told a teacher about it, the teacher put me on some kind of government agencies and I and my children were moved to a women's refuge centre. Later on, at the court, he said that he beat me because I gambled. But when I had asked why he got angry with me, he had never mentioned about gambling. (REF-F-4-XG)*

*He has hit me so many times. He has pushed me on the bed. He has been very abusive. Verbally, he has used very vicious words. And later on he has said sorry. But at that time, he owes the money and if I don't give it to him he becomes absolutely wild and his eyes become completely of a different person. His personality is completely different at that time. He has to cure himself. (IND-F-3-FM)*

A number of stakeholders and community workers noted that violence is often associated with problem gambling:

*Usually because the conflict [about problem gambling] gets quite serious and they will have an argument, usually something quite serious and a neighbour will call the [police]. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

*I had a woman come in to see me this morning, because of [her] husband's gambling problem. It created family violence and it's become quite serious. She just had to move back to China because of safety issues and he continued gambling and no one can stop him. He says he's going to sell the house because of his gambling problem and his parents knew that but no one can stop it and the parents, they just want peace so they give him a little money.(PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)They usually don't call police unless it really becomes a threat to their life. Usually they don't tell us the actual reason. If he has a gambling problem or alcohol problem they hide that and tell us he has got an anger issue. Or else they say they are not getting along or children [related] issues etc. Usually the family violence in Indian family comes out only when it goes to a stage where she has no other option. They have that basic restriction [from Indian culture]. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*Usually they, predominantly males, go to casino to get some money, but they lose the money, then they have more fights with the woman and then they get separated. Mostly it ends in family violence. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*Gambling is one of the reasons for family violence. Once you are addicted you leave the family and go to casino. You return home late night every day. So the family won't be a functional family. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*In New Zealand, the major part of your income goes to paying rent or mortgages. Other than that drinking is not a major part of our life. We don't need to have a bottle of wine or meat everyday on our table. So normally for food just \$200-250/week will do. So when their basic needs get deprived there is a problem. It could lead to violence. There are a few cases that have led to violence. (IND-F-3-CW)*

*It affected financially at first, then led to cold wars among partners, not talking to each other, publicly scolding and fighting with each other, the woman calling everyone and complaining about her gambler husband. (IND-F-3-CW)*

However, many women do not report violence in the family caused by problem gambling mainly for cultural reasons such as the stigma attached to divorce, for example:

*There are a lot of Indian women who just accept it because they are very scared of that term 'divorce' or 'separation'. They feel that that's going to be a stigma on their personality. Therefore they bear everything and keep quiet. Even though they are living in the western world, they will not let themselves be called a 'divorcee' or a 'separated woman'. (IND-F-3-FM)*

### **Family breakups**

Violence caused by problem gambling often leads to a breakdown of the family unit. Some family members were willing to talk about this despite the taboo associated with this:

*When I got seriously depressed last year, I decided to divorce. I thought what's left for me after years of sacrifice. I asked myself why are you still with him? Other women go off on their own and build a new life again. I thought I could and I have to do that too. (KOR-F-4-FM)*

*I have worked as a volunteer and met some Korean people who were suffering from problem gambling. One of them was a wife of a problem gambler. She tried to stop him, and he became more violent. When he finally got banned from the casino, he started drinking and became even more violent. Now, she is filing for divorce. She said she can't live with him anymore. I feel sorry for her. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

Problem gamblers also talked about losing or almost losing their families because of their problem gambling:

*I broke up my family resulting from my gambling and if I knew its consequence, I would not do it. So, gambling only gives negative impacts, such as losing money and breaking up the family. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

*We had many more arguments here. She never understood me. I also didn't realise what I was going through. Our arguments were mostly caused by the lack of money. We didn't have enough to support our children and maintain everyday life. We were almost going to divorce. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

### **5.3.7 Consequences for Asian International Students**

Problem gambling is reportedly a huge problem amongst Asian international students and this has consequences for the students. International literature also identifies financial stress as an issue for some international students. For example, an Australian study found that Indian students experienced more financial problems related to problem gambling than Chinese students, and the Chinese students experienced more financial problems than Western students (Thomas, 2010).

Furthermore, the Indian students exhibited a significant positive relationship between severity of gambling problems and all of the stressors (i.e., academic, financial, and relationship) and socio-cultural adaptation. Chinese students had a significant positive relationship between severity of gambling problems and financial and relationship stressors; and an almost significant relationship for academic stressors.

Students in this study reported losing money that had been provided for tuition and living expenses on gambling and the family has to send them more money. Apparently, squandering all their funds on gambling is increasingly becoming a problem for many students living here without the supervision of adults:

*I have a friend who spent all of his international student tuition fee on gambling. It was like \$30,000. He later lied to his parents. He told them he lost all that money for doing other things, and he received his tuition fee again from them. He still goes to the casino. He should have learnt some lesson from his previous experience. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

Students also cited issues around borrowing money from each other to fund their gambling addiction; a behaviour which caused problems amongst them:

*Problems and gossips started spreading about me and my friend borrowing and owing each other money. Gossips circulated around university and our friendship just broke off. Recently, I did catch up with this friend in Malaysia, but things weren't the same anymore, it felt like he still thinks I betrayed him and I think it's sad that we lost the brotherhood. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

## **5.4 Impacts of problem gambling on Asian families and communities**

The following section outlines a number of associated negative impacts of problem gambling. These have been grouped under the sub-headings of family and community impacts. It should be noted that many of these can also be observed among non-Asian gamblers and their families and communities.

### **5.4.1 Family impacts**

The consequences discussed above have enormous impacts on the family. In some cases gambling had serious consequences on the 'sense of family' and sense of security that is usually a core feature of Asian families.

*When my mother heavily gambled, my family was like, just as if the heart of the family stopped pumping, everything was frozen. It's because, when things like this are going on, you really don't want to talk about it because if you try to fix it, it's only going to make your feeling worse with no outcome. She will keep gambling. So no one of us talked about it and ignored what was going on. The family wasn't really a family. It was just a collective of different individuals not touching each other's issue. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

Some Asian families reported a loss of future opportunities due to gambling. In general, parents were motivated to migrate to New Zealand in search of better

opportunities for themselves and their children. However, those afflicted by gambling find that these options are now limited. For example:

*My parents say to me that I used to have an above average lifestyle (financially) and now that I've lost so much, I only can live an average lifestyle now and so will my kids. If I had more money I could bring up my kids to do more things like dance, music lessons etc. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

#### **5.4.2 Community impacts**

The impacts of problem gambling on Asian communities are reportedly pervasive and wide-ranging. Asian community members expressed concern about the negative impacts of problem gambling on their communities:

*I would say most of them in the [Burmese] community have gambled or currently gamble. It's actually quite a big problem. (REF-F-6-CW)*

Auckland stakeholders endorsed this view saying that the community suffered material and monetary losses because of problem gambling:

*The community impact is associated with business. So the business owner or the shop owner if they gamble and lost their business, it will affect the community. Some of them they haven't paid their employees and they haven't paid their suppliers and they go bankrupt. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

This has the potential to strip communities of the interest in investing time and energy back into their community initiatives. Furthermore, trust within the community breaks down. A stakeholder reported on such a case:

*The gambler goes to church. She hides her gambling addiction, but borrows money from people. She is a single mum and she says she has no money for the children; she needs to pay for this bill, that bill. So she will borrow money from at least 10 people from the church. But from outside the church she will borrow money from her own group of friends. So she borrows a lot of money and she is a VIP [at the casino]. She uses the money to try to earn money back to pay her debts. Her debts get bigger and bigger. So she is under more stress. It also affects her children because they need to pay her debt. Then once the church found out. Someone went to the casino and saw she was there. They discovered she used all the money to gamble. Then they started to ask her [for] the money back. So it created a lot of distrust and hurtful feeling in that group of people. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

This splits the community and erodes the social support mechanism within that community:

*The other community impact is that the community sees that a lot of people [within the community] are in trouble. Then the whole community may not be so close to each other. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

However, the views of problem gamblers on community impacts differed from those of stakeholders. Generally they did not appear to realise or accept that their gambling impacts their communities:

*Myself, I think that my gambling does not affect the community as I only use my own money to gamble and I only lose my money. Moreover, the community has no way to help as this is considered as my own personal business. However, some people do provide the negative impact to the community. For example, some people lose too much until having no money to rent a house. Then, once they are kicked out from the house, they start to find the community to help, to deal with the WINZ, as they have many kids with no place to stay (they live in other people's garage). (SEA-M-4-XG)*

*I do not think that my gambling affects the community as I am not the only one who gambles, but other people in other ethnicities do the same things. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

Consequently, when community members have tried to help them, they have misconstrued their intentions:

*After we told the security people to stop them from going into casino, they found out we did it. They told the community that we were trying to destroy their business, because they thought they could earn money from the casino. (REF-M-5-FM)*

Seemingly, the effect on the community is appreciated when gamblers stop gambling and take stock of their behaviour:

*I understand that this affects my family [home country], as my parents said that I would bring shame to the family (SEA-M-4-XG)*

## 5.5 Summary

Table 9: Summary of Coping Behaviours, impacts and consequences of gambling on Asians

Coping Behaviours, impacts and consequences of gambling on Asians	
<b>Functional coping strategies employed by Asians</b>	
<b>Recognising and acknowledging that there is a problem</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first step to coping with a gambling problem functionally</li> </ul>	
<b>Recognising what the problem is and what is causing it</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The second step to coping functionally</li> <li>Some, but not many, problem gamblers are able to recognise exactly what the problem is and where it arises. Social gamblers and family members seemed to have insight into why it occurs and what needs to be done to help.</li> </ul>	
<b>Taking action</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The third step to coping functionally</li> <li>Apart from taking practical steps to stop gambling, other steps reported by some ex-gamblers to quit gambling included turning to spirituality and religion.</li> </ul>	
<b>Dysfunctional coping strategies employed by Asians</b>	
<b>Denial, pretending and ignoring of problem gambling behaviour</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pretending apparently gives people an illusion of coping with difficult situations.</li> <li>This form of suppression would create more serious psychological problems due to emotional repression or isolation of feelings</li> </ul>	
<b>Escape and stress release</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The casino allowed gamblers to escape from their problems and to relieve the</li> </ul>	

stress that these were causing.

### **Aggression**

- Some problem gamblers are resorting to aggression in order to take control of their lives. This often takes the form of violence at home, in particular against spouses and partners.

### **Resigned acceptance of one's lots**

- Accepting the problem as part of their destiny with no control over it.

## **Consequences of problem gambling for Asians**

### **Loss of social connection**

- Relationships with others change and gamblers appear to move towards isolating themselves from their friends and family

### **Loss of financial security**

- Problem gambling impacts the financial security of problem gamblers and their families, irrespective of their ethnicity.
- More significantly for recent Asian immigrants, financial insecurity impacts on their ability to settle successfully in New Zealand

### **Engagement in illicit activity**

- Illicit activity such as crime and prostitution to procure money to feed gambling addiction.

### **Addiction and vicious cycle**

- The third stage of pathological gambling, the desperation phase - a vicious cycle is set up where problems gamblers chase their losses.
- At this stage, gambling motivations are irrational and could lead to serious consequences such as family break-ups, court convictions, etc.

### **Mental health issues**

- low self-esteem
- stress and anxiety
- anger and unhappiness
- depression
- alcohol and drug abuse
- suicide ideation and suicide

### **Family conflict**

#### *Family neglect*

- Not available to their families when needed.
- Not able to provide basics for them – loss of opportunity.
- Impacts on children was greatest concern.
- Parents who were problem gamblers were poor role models - exposed children early to gambling.

#### *Violence in family*

- Family violence - spouses and partners in particular. Many families do not report violence caused by problem gambling mainly for cultural reasons such as stigma.

#### *Family breakups*

- Violence caused by problem gambling often leads to family breakups.
- Divorce increasing despite cultural stigma attached to this.

## **Impacts of problem gambling on Asian families and communities**

### **Family impacts**

- Loss of opportunities - Many Asian families who have migrated to New

Zealand for better opportunities are unable to achieve this.

- Physical health issues - Some report that mental health issues have manifested physically e.g. diabetes.

### **Community impacts**

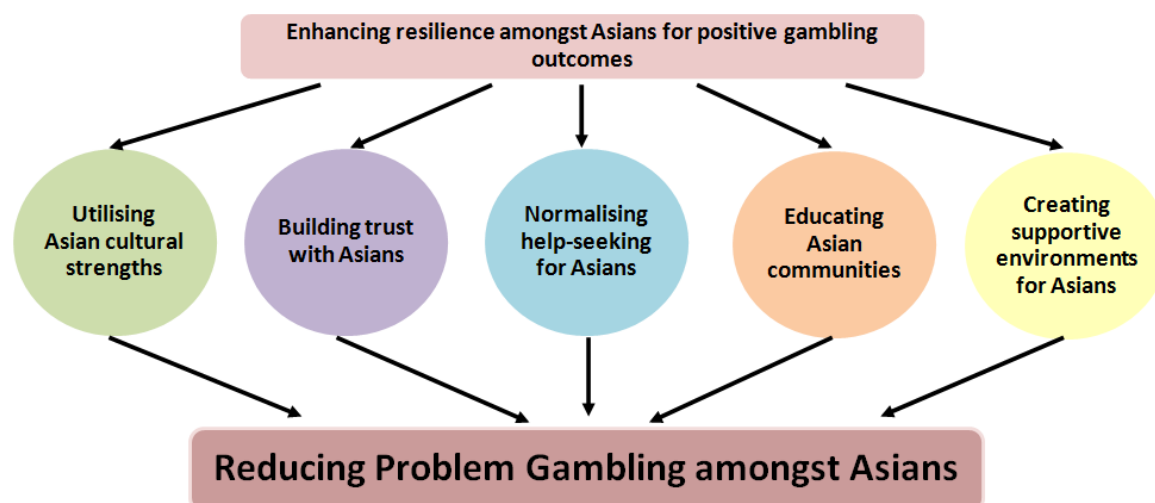
- Negative impact on communities:
  - Material and monetary losses are suffered by community members.
  - Loss of trust within the community.
  - Splits community and erodes social support mechanism within community.



## Chapter 6. An Ecological Approach to Reducing Problem Gambling amongst Asians

There is no easy answer to reducing problem gambling amongst Asian communities in New Zealand. It is clear from the information presented in earlier chapters that gambling and problem gambling are complex matters impacted by culture and settlement into the New Zealand environment, hence an ecological approach has to be employed in attempts to reduce problem gambling amongst Asians. A number of domains, including Asian cultural views of gambling and New Zealand's social, institutional, and settlement environments, need to be modified to varying degrees in order to ameliorate the impacts of gambling on Asian families and communities. This is undoubtedly an enormous task which cannot be achieved in a short space of time; however, some incremental steps can be taken that could have positive outcomes and may constitute effective primary prevention measures as part of a public health approach. A number of points have emerged as key to an ecological approach to the reduction of problem gambling amongst Asians. They include utilising Asian cultural strengths, building trust, normalising help-seeking, educating Asian communities about the dangers of gambling, creating a supportive environments for Asian immigrants, and enhancing resilience. These interactions and relationships have been depicted in Figure 3 and are discussed in turn throughout this chapter.

Figure 3: Reducing problem gambling amongst Asians



### 6.1 Utilising Asian Cultural Strengths

The chapter on Asian culture has illustrated that whilst Asian culture can under some circumstances be a risk in terms of gambling, it has a greater potential to be

protective. There are many cultural strengths that can be utilised to protect Asians from falling into the problem gambling trap or to reduce existing problem gambling behaviours. These strengths lie in values such as family connectedness and respect, spirituality and religion, the stigma attached to gambling, as well as the need to save face. If these values can be enhanced and not allowed to erode in the new social environment in New Zealand, they could assist with ameliorating the problem by enhancing resilience.

## 6.2 Building Trust

As observed in other New Zealand research (e.g., DeSouza & Garrett, 2005), recent Asian immigrants are unfamiliar with New Zealand's privacy laws as these do not exist in Asia. Confidentiality in the public sector is not commonly practised in Asia where private information about clients is openly discussed amongst service providers and others. Consequently, Asians do not trust health or other services with confidential information about themselves or their families as reflected in the following statements:

*I don't think many people would want to talk their private stories to the counsellor. It took me a while too. We as immigrants sort of have got to know that once you tell something to someone, it's easy to come back with a lot of rumour. So you become very hesitant in being open to people and keep things on your own and just be nice. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*I don't think Burmese people would go for counselling although they have really serious problems. We tend to think it's the family business or my own business and don't want to talk to strangers. I am same. I can talk to you because I know the interpreter very well and feel okay to talk about anything. Also you are from a university so things won't spread out. (REF-F-3-SG)*

*I've talked to a friend about my dad's issues but that's it and that email I sent out to the gambling agency. It's embarrassing to tell people about this and I don't want to speak about my dad in a bad light. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

Stakeholders believe that they expect the Asian situation to apply in New Zealand, hence many are reluctant to divulge family problems to strangers:

*In Korea, confidentiality is between doctor and patient and lawyers and their clients but they don't think about the student advisor or any other professional... It's a different attitude. So all people working with people bound by the confidentiality clause, they need to know. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

*Yes, I see that because in countries like mainland China, privacy doesn't exist. So they find it very difficult to believe that it happens in this country. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

*With privacy issues we've been seeing a lot in health now. There's a lot of anecdotal evidence out there where people are not accessing services because they don't understand our health [services]. We're seeing people from refugee cultures where many of them, the male demands to be in the doctor's surgery with his wife... [in some cases] this has happened and the doctor has found themselves almost forced into talking about his wife's condition with the husband present. But being able to pull back from it because of privacy laws but people don't understand these. Under 21 year old Asians won't access essential health treatment, which is*

*free, because they're too scared the doctor is going to pick up the phone and tell their mother what they've been doing. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

Stakeholders suggested that the problem is compounded with international students who have less knowledge of the New Zealand system:

*Lots of gamblers are students. So students don't know their privacy [rights] here – 'you talk to me I can't talk to anyone else unless I have your permission'. ...Also in the Asian education system, they view us as a supervisor as no different from academic staff and the general staff and if we were in China, I would have the right to tell anyone, like their parents [if they told me they had a problem], so they worry I will tell their parents and I can tell all other teachers. So they really worry I will tell anyone or my colleague will tell anyone. [Then] it will impact their study and tell their parents...that's why probably they ...want to stay away rather than ask for help. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

The NZ system is very different to the Asian hierarchical system. This becomes a problem especially for students and a barrier for help-seeking:

*In Asia, the environment, the support advisor in China, we evaluate student 50% by your study, 50% by your behaviour. So I do, as a support advisor I do monitor their behaviour. If there is a gambling issue, I have the right to call them and say 'you can't do that otherwise it will affect [your grades] because you're gambling.' But here we don't have that... We don't have that system in place to keep them away from [gambling]. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

Christchurch stakeholders also discussed the lack of understanding of privacy rights amongst Asian students in New Zealand as being a significant barrier to help seeking. In Asian countries such as China, teachers and other persons in authority have the right to fully disclose information a student has shared with them, with the student's parents etc. One or two Christchurch stakeholders mentioned the difficulty associated in getting students to understand that what they spoke about would be private:

*It's not enough to say at the very beginning 'this is confidential'. It needs to be said right through the process so people are reminded and reassured. But it is a very difficult concept. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

In one instance, a stakeholder explained that this lack of understanding about confidentiality / privacy may extend to Asian peoples that work within some health-centred services:

*I have an administrator not from China but speaks Chinese...after the student goes out my door he's saying 'what is the student [coming to see you about]?' (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

As highlighted in the literature review (e.g. Tabora & Flaskerud, 1997) and in Chapter Three, 'saving face' is an important issue for Asians. Many participants in this study indicated that they were hesitant to talk to people from their own

communities about problem gambling issues out of fear that it will spread around the community:

*Laotian people do not like listening to suggestions provided from other Laotian. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

*I firstly wanted to sort things out without having Koreans involved. I didn't want to talk my private things to people in our community. However I think there are things I need to talk with Korean counsellor and different things better to be discussed with Kiwi counsellor. (KOR-F-4-FM)*

*Another problem is, although there is one (interpreter), [you can] hardly imagine that people would feel comfortable to use one. Because it's such a small community, people know each other very well and don't want to tell their problems to others. (REF-F-6-CW)*

This, together with the stigma attached to problem gambling, makes it difficult when it comes to providing help and treatment for gambling; as suggested by a stakeholder:

*It's a hard thing to change, isn't it? That's part of their belief system, isn't it? You say that in Asian countries they have no concept of confidentiality, if you're 45 years of age and you've grown up with that and you come to another country where it is part of it, that belief system won't change overnight. It'll never change. So that's a huge issue. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

The factors outlined in this section indicate that there is clearly a need to build trust amongst Asians, especially the Chinese community, in order to de-stigmatise gambling-related issues, normalise help-seeking and improve their participation in problem gambling services and ultimately reduce problem gambling amongst them. Ways in which to achieve this need to be explored further, but a starting point could be educating Asians about the privacy laws in New Zealand and matters of confidentiality and anonymity.

### **6.3 Normalising Help-seeking**

Formal help-seeking (i.e. seeking assistance from professionals) for mental health issues is not common amongst Asians in New Zealand (e.g., Tse, et al., 2006). This pattern has also been observed with regard to problem gambling: seeking help for gambling related problems is not the norm for most Asians, mainly for cultural reasons and issues around trust - as discussed above. De-stigmatisation of problem gambling, and the normalisation of talking about these problems and seeking help for them, has the potential to reduce problem gambling harm. This research indicates that the following may be important to consider:

#### **6.3.1 Change perceptions of help-seeking**

In order to normalise help-seeking, the current perceptions held by many Asians about help-seeking need to be understood. Many Asian participants expressed the

view that only the problem gambler can stop the problem and nobody else can help; hence they believe that they cannot intervene when there is a problem:

*There is no cure for gambling. No counselling, no matter how many times you go for it. It does not help unless the gambler himself or herself realises. Self-realisation is the best realisation. (IND-F-3-FM)*

*No one can discontinue your gambling, except yourself. To do this effectively, you need to reduce your gambling slowly. For example, if last time you spent \$1000 to gamble, this time you need to cut off to a lesser amount and so on... The community has no effect to stop people from gambling as this depends on the individuals themselves. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

*I have never thought about seeking help for my husband. The most important thing to me is my children. If my children were young, I will definitely seek help as it will affect them. But since they are all grown up and most of them are married now I don't worry as much now. And I know I can't change him (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*Nobody can help in this matter. It depends on yourself. When I gambled at the age of 20, nobody stopped me to gamble, did not encourage either. I had few friends at the venue. But wherever you go, say for a movie, you will find at least 3-4 people to talk about it. But decision should be ours. (IND-M-5-XG)*

Some also believe that agencies such as the Problem Gambling Foundation are powerless to stop gambling behaviour:

*They can only try. The PGF or any such organisation can only try their level best to counsel the gambler, to get them out of it. But they just can't do anything more than that because these gamblers are old enough to understand and they are not children that they can be smacked, slapped or admonished or reprimanded. They are all full grown adults, they have a mind of their own and they are very stubborn. And they are big actors, very big cheats and liars. They can do anything to get hold of money. The most that they can do is that they can go to these little pubs and ban [the gambler]. (IND-F-3-FM)*

Others feel that it is not that simple and support services need to intervene to help the problem gambler:

*I think it's kind of a disease really. You can't simply get out of it. I mean it needs some kind of treatment other than your own will (KOR-M-3-XG)*

Some gamblers do not wish to burden their families with their problems, so don't seek help from them:

*He keeps thinking he doesn't want to burden people so he doesn't share, even inviting us to yumcha with him he fears that he is wasting our time. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

Others believe they don't need help as long as they have sufficient funds to support their gambling and are not harming anyone:

*The day I feel I have gone too far and things have gone out of my control, say for example if I go to the extent of beating someone for money or harming myself, probably then I would go for counselling. Instead, as long as we have money to spend, as long as things are going fine nobody would go there. (IND-F-2-SG)*

As supported by the literature (e.g., Lawrence, Murray, Klugman, & Banerjee, 2010; Miville & Constantine, 2007; Vogel, Wade, & Hackler, 2007; Vogel, Wester, & Larson, 2007) some participants had a negative view of counselling based on cultural perceptions, believing it is “shameful” as it portrays a weakness, and will not access such treatment:

*I think Koreans think having counselling is a big deal. They believe it's shameful. That is the problem. If they see counselling as something they can casually try, a lot more people can benefit from it (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*He neither believes in rehabilitation centres. I know about them. But again, the rehabilitation, [the word] itself says that you are so weak. For starters, he has to first make himself feel 'I am weak. I need some rehab, I have a mental weakness or a psychological problem'. The name itself gets the person displeased. So firstly, rehab is not a good word. Instead, do something motivational. I have always been positive. I think through positive ways we can get better results. (IND-M-5-XG)*

*I don't think most of my friends would want to go to see counsellor even if they want to stop. They would say I won't go anymore, then will be at the Casino or bar when they got money again. (KOR-M-4-PG)*

Others felt they would rather talk to each other about their problems than see a counsellor:

*Once I realised problems are built up, I sort of talked with my close friends. We then sort of tell each other like it's better not to go today, or better to stop and go back home something like that. I think we can do this for each other as we are not very addicted yet. (REF-F-3-SG)*

*I love talking about what I experienced to other gamblers. I can understand them better than others like... I am an immigrant and was a gambler. I've been there and I am still working hard to control myself. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

One stakeholder explained that, rather than counselling, Asians prefer to see a fortune teller which they perceive as akin to counselling:

*From my experience...Asians, we don't have counselling. So when we talk about counselling we're talking more about going to the fortune teller, because Asians really believe in that. So when you're talking about counselling, Asians [think of] fortune-telling [as the] same as counselling. You pay them and talk to them. When I think of my clients and counselling, I think it's not going to work; they don't believe in it. What they say to me is that "it's just talk. I want a solution, I want it now!" Particularly for Asian people, I don't think [counselling] will work. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

However, those participants who had experienced counselling recognised its value:

*I think that raising awareness about negative impacts of gambling through TV or radio is not as adequate as face to face meeting. There is total difference between the two. The former involves indirect effects because after I watch it, I am not so interested and I am more likely to discard the information straight away. The latter has stronger effects as I feel so close and feel that I have someone to discuss with openly, and particularly I think that I can control myself more by this way. (SEA-M-3-PG)*

*Talking with counsellor was helpful. I talked not only about gambling but also other things about my life too. That helps me to deal with the issues important to me. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*I could talk with the counsellor about myself quite openly because I heard that what I would talk about is confidential. (KOR-F-5-XG)*

*We can show the way out only to people who want to come out, something that the PGF is doing. I think the Problem Gambling Foundation is doing a very good job. They help the gamblers a lot. (IND-M-5-XG)*

This demonstrates that it is possible to change views of Asians on counselling. Changing perceptions has the potential to have a positive impact on outcomes for problem gamblers.

Another reason why Asian problem gamblers and their families do not seek help is that they do not understand the recovery process. They apparently expect instant results from counselling and do not go back when this does not happen. Ensuring that Asians are well informed and have accurate expectations about the recovery process may encourage and normalise help-seeking:

*This is a team play really. The gambler herself can't fix the problem. I think family members need to work together and need counselling along with the gamblers. It was very helpful to learn that although the gambler got treatment, the outcome doesn't come instantly. The gambling behaviour relapses and requires constant attention and patience. I learned this through family counselling. If I didn't know and got disappointed by her slow progress, I might have blamed my mother which could bring all the problems back. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

Some participants provided examples of the importance of this understanding: when the recovery process is understood, Asian families are able to work through the process successfully with positive outcomes for their family members:

*Financial problems are in control now. I am managing all the money in the family now. She is happy with that. Also because we are trying to be patient with her recovery, the family relationship is pretty good now. While those things get better, she seems feeling good about herself and her gambling has dramatically reduced. She has almost stopped now. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*I stopped gambling and went again. It happened a couple of times. I could get out of it thinking that I can do it. Thinking about positive side of myself was very important. Also I talked to my counsellors about it very openly and asked help. I think those experiences make me stronger. Having relapses is pretty much part of the process I think. (KOR-M-3-XG)*

It is clear that much education is required to normalise help-seeking amongst Asian communities. What form this education might take is explored later in this chapter.

### **6.3.2 Provide culturally appropriate services**

Whilst some gamblers reported not wanting people from their community to know about their gambling, it was evident that others in the community valued the ethnically matched services that were available. One of the main reasons cited by participants for not accessing support services, even when Asians are aware of them, is the perceived cultural inappropriateness of these services. Whilst the Chinese and other North and East Asian communities have access to counselling services specifically designed for them, other Asian communities including refugees do not have such ethnic specific services:

*Probably since more Chinese people are involved in gambling I have heard about gambling counselling for Chinese people, but I have not heard about anything for Indians. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*There is no social/organisational services existing specifically for the gamblers of our [Burmese] community. There is no counsellor speaking the language at PGF. RAS [Refugees As Survivors] don't deal with gambling issues. As far as I know, there is no one or no organisations (REF-F-6-CW)*

Stakeholders confirmed the need for culturally appropriate counselling services:

*Quite often we find that some certain type of Asian group they want to find their own speaker / advisor... we have found that [people from] the Chinese group will do come to ask a Chinese advisor, the Koreans, even though I'm not Korean they will seek help from other source to say 'how do we help Korean students?' because they don't want to come to talk to us you know, ...it's the trust issue. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

They also suggested that ensuring that mainstream services are responsive to the needs of Asians, and other ethnic minority communities, would help with normalising help-seeking amongst Asians:

*People don't always know what is available and there needs to be a range of services available so those that choose to go to one community [advisor] have that opportunity. If they choose not to, there needs to be mainstream services that are culturally competent and able to work appropriately with people. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

It is not always feasible to provide separate culturally appropriate services for each ethnic group; hence, as suggested by stakeholders, mainstream services could be made culturally responsive by ensuring that staff represent the ethnic groups catered for by agencies.

## **6.4 Educating Asian Communities**

There appears to be a naiveté amongst many recent Asian immigrants about problem gambling and its dangers, which places them at risk for problem gambling (as highlighted elsewhere in this report). As discussed in previous chapters, many Asian people have misconceptions about gambling (Chapter Four) and have limited



information on available gambling help services. There also appears to be a strong link between stress, coping strategies, and problem gambling (Chapter Five). It is clear from these discussions that there is a need for education on these matters to decrease risk of problem gambling in their communities. Some suggestions about how this may be achieved follow:

#### **6.4.1 Create awareness about the dangers of problem gambling**

Social gamblers, problem gamblers and ex-gamblers believed that creating awareness about the dangers of problem gambling is needed in Asian communities. South Asians in particular appeared to feel quite strongly about this:

*There should be social awareness [about gambling], like in temple, mosque or church where Indian communities are getting together, where they have their cultural programmes. They should provide knowledge about gambling. Some elder people should explain to the younger kids that gambling can take you to such an extent. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*The people who have already been addicted to it need awareness. Make them aware of what are they doing, where will they land. Otherwise they will realise only when it is too late. (IND-M-5-XG)*

*There should be more awareness of gambling I think. It can get serious [though] it is a slow process. It kills you slowly. It takes it's time [whereas] the drug can affect you straight away. (IND-M-2-SG)*

Stakeholders agreed that awareness and understanding is needed in the Asian community:

*That's certainly a major part - lack of knowledge and misconceptions about gambling. If they had some understanding, a better understanding about gambling, and that gambling is certainly not a way to make money in the long run.... (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

However, achieving this in an effective manner is another issue. Some felt that implementing awareness programmes may not work as many immigrants, especially South Asians, work long hours and will not have time to attend:

*So even if we conduct an awareness program it is going to go waste because the date and time may not be suitable for everyone as many Indians work on weekends and after hours as well. (IND-F-2-SG)*

Furthermore, language barriers are an important factor to consider when educating Asians. Discussions in previous chapters show that participants feel that the media could play a big role in education. This is discussed in further detail, later in this chapter.

#### **6.4.2 Dispel misconceptions about gambling behaviours**

An important aspect of educating Asians about problem gambling is dispelling misconceptions and erroneous beliefs about gambling. Socialisation is known to play an important role with regard to gambling (e.g. Productivity Commission, 1999), including both the introduction to and maintenance of gambling behaviour (e.g. Tse et al., 2005). Participants felt that a common misconception amongst many Asians is that they are simply socialising in the casino, but that this is often not the case. A stakeholder felt strongly that this misconception needs to be dispelled and awareness created about the actual nature of the activity:

*... in the casino, it sounds like they go there to socialise. Actually they're really not talking to each other; they see each other, but they're [focused] on the game. So it's a less social activity component in the casino. I think this is quite a key thing. From my experience with clients, a lot of problems are caused because people think it's a social activity. Actually, it's not. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Another misconception amongst some participants is that gambling is better than drinking alcohol, so it is acceptable to engage in this activity:

*What is more important is that those friends don't think of gambling as a risky, harmful, or dangerous behaviour. They see others spending so much money on drinks and getting wasted in the street and often say they cause more problems. So to them, it is ok to continue to gamble. Surprisingly, they don't drink as much. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

Another point raised by participants was the commonly held misconception amongst problem gamblers (which, according to stakeholders extends beyond Asian groups) that gambling is an opportunity to make money. One stakeholder described his experience with a range of Asian problem gamblers who believed that they could earn money at the casino:

*They talk to people [at the casino] who say 'Oh, I made a lot of money from this'...they don't have a concept [of how the casino works]. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

This misconception is apparently a particular problem with international students:

*Lots of students think casino is a money-making machine. By the time they realise, it is too late. If you are introducing the after effects of gambling and drugs together, then probably they are aware of it. If you are not making them aware of gambling, they tend to do it anyway. (IND-M-2-SG)*

Another misconception was that pokie machines are rigged whilst table games etc. are more 'fair'. While this was recognised as being quite common amongst Asians, it was also thought that this perception occurs pan-culturally:

*The perception that they (pokie machines) are rigged is very high and I would say.....not specific to culture. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

### 6.4.3 Provide information on services

Information received from participants shows that most recent Asian immigrants from Korean, South-East Asian and South Asian subgroups are mostly unaware of the support services available to problem gamblers and their families:

*Most of my friends don't know about the Problem Gambling Foundation. It's important to promote their services and let them know there is always help available out there for those who want to quit gambling. (KOR-F-4-XG)*

*No I don't know. I have never heard about it. Not many Indians might be aware of it I reckon. Even if they know about them they will not go. They just think 'I already know it is wrong. Why should I go to someone to learn that again?' (IND-F-2-SG)*

*I have never accessed Problem Gambling Foundation or support services before as I do not know about this. (SEA-F-4-PG)*

*He never received any help to quit gambling. I don't think there are any services that might help gamblers stop going to casinos and gambling. (KOR-M-4-FM)*

*Like I didn't know there were counsellors and services available from the Problem Gambling Foundation, a lot of them [other people affected by gambling] don't know about these as well. I'd like to help them. They need access to these services and realise the effects of gambling. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

*I also didn't know that I and my mother can get help through others such as PGF. I accidentally got to know and told my mom to go. I think she never had a safe place to talk about her own thing before. The counselling gave the opportunity and it was very helpful (KOR-M-2-FM)*

This view was confirmed by a stakeholder who said:

*They actually don't know about many services in the New Zealand. They don't know what they are doing, so it's different attitudes, so they need some education. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Furthermore, many Asians do not know how to access services that they may know are available:

*My brother was the only son in the family so mom had no choice but to help him, and back then we weren't really educated, we knew there were social workers but we didn't know how to reach them to get help etc. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*I am very frustrated that there is not enough effort in this society about this issue. I mean, there should be more easy ways to understand those services, and make the services more accessible. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

Various reasons for not knowing how to access services have been offered by other New Zealand research on Asian access to health services in general (e.g. Tse et al. 2006; Parackal et al., 2011). These studies list a lack of adequate and accessible information about the services as one of the significant barriers to accessing health services. An initial orientation programme for Asian immigrants together with a comprehensive public health campaign (e.g. other education forums and awareness raising via social marketing media) would assist with disseminating this information.

#### **6.4.4 Coping strategies and management of stress**

Effective methods for managing the underlying drivers of stress (e.g. stress related to settlement issues) enables functional coping and protects against problem gambling. It has been recognised elsewhere that Asians disguise their emotional distresses and/or deny their existence because they do not wish to be exposed as weak (Chung, 1988). As many Asian problem gamblers appear to be coping with stress in a dysfunctional manner, hence their addictive behaviour, participants thought it is necessary to teach them alternate coping strategies such as:

*There are so many places to visit. We hardly go to casino. We go out to eat, go to friends' house, movies and so much do. [If we don't have a car] we can go to a shopping mall and do window shopping or sit with the computer, chat with friends on Facebook, talk to your people back home on Skype. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*So they can spend more time with family, going to movies, eating out together and socialising. So you are just trying to keep your husband from getting deviated. Only when you get bored you will feel like getting into all this. Teaching a woman to be self-dependent itself is a great art. (IND-F-3-CW)*

*If we want to stay away from gambling we need to go to the gym, sports like shuttlecock or football which will also keep us healthy. The students need to engage themselves in part-time jobs to divert their attention away from gambling. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*It'll be good to get dad to spend more time with our younger siblings and do more outdoor activities. We did go rock climbing once but that was just for a birthday. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*It's quite hard to see husbands taking their families out to the beach or parks. They just haven't done that before. I think if someone could take them out to the beach and show what they can do and show the children how to play with the sand and the sea and so on, that would be helpful. (REF-F-6-CW)*

#### **6.4.5 Developing new goals**

All immigrants migrating to a new country have goals that they wish to achieve in their new lives. However, as shown in previous chapters, many find they are unable to achieve these goals in New Zealand. This incongruence between settlement goals and the ensuing reality can be extremely disconcerting and attempts to cope with this are often dysfunctional, that may negatively impact on their health and wellbeing.

Many participants displayed an appreciation of these issues and made corresponding recommendations, for example, developing new goals and finding new ways of keeping busy and earning an income:

*Having goals and achieving something successfully reduces the risk of becoming addicted to gambling e.g., a good job. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*The best way is to invest and buy property so I don't have extra money to gamble/use. (CHI-M-5-PG)*

*I became very busy after separation with my ex-husband. I have to find my own place to live, make money, make friends so on. So it (cutting down on gambling) came quite naturally. (REF-F-4-SG)*

*Dads needs active participation in something and feel useful in doing something on a daily basis. I hope dad can get into hobbies like golf and yoga. He has mentioned to me and my sister before that he had some interest in these. (CHI-F-2-FM)*

*The difference between now and the time before is that I didn't have much to do previously. Now I am quite busy with new friends and also I got a job too. We (the participant and her friends) sometimes go to Casino together but it's just for having fun during the spare time. I didn't have much time to play at Casino with the new relationships and new work. (REF-F-4-SG)*

*Before dad had the business and everything was fine, and when he was younger he'd go out with aunty (his wife – participant's stepmother). He needs to keep busy. He's 63 this year, I think he finished up (his business) too early. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

If Asian immigrant communities are educated about their new environment and how to cope with it, this will help maintain and enhance the resilience that they bring with them.

## **6.5 Creating a supportive social and institutional environment**

The social and institutional environment is significant as it can enhance or erode resiliency amongst Asians. A major issue contributing to problem gambling amongst Asian immigrant communities has been cited as discrimination and its concomitants of isolation and employment issues in particular. The social environment needs to be moderated so that it becomes more supportive of Asian immigrants at various levels (e.g. socially and institutionally) and enables successful settlement. A supportive social environment would have a positive impact on the institutional environment and together they would be protective against addictive behaviours such as gambling.

Moreover, these changes would contribute to better employment and other opportunities for Asian immigrants, which would in turn enhance their cultural security, self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience and enable them to achieve a higher degree of competence in negotiating their new environment. These goals are consistent with those outlined in the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy* (Department of Labour, 2007). It includes seven intermediate-level goals<sup>6</sup> that contribute to the outcomes articulated in the high-level goals ensuring that immigrants, refugees and their families:

- “are accepted and respected by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and their community interactions are positive;

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<sup>6</sup> These goals are still applicable, although the language has been altered, see: <http://www.ssnz.govt.nz/living-in-new-zealand/government-support/nz-strategy.asp>

- obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation;
- become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support;
- access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community;
- form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity;
- feel safe within the wider community in which they live;
- accept and respect the New Zealand way of life and contribute to civic community and social activities” (pp 9-11).

Creating a supportive environment can potentially be achieved by engaging in the following:

### **6.5.1 Providing Social support**

Improving the social environment includes providing appropriate social spaces for interaction for Asian communities that are in the early stages of integrating into the New Zealand society. Currently, a predominant available space in Auckland appears to be the casino:

*Everyone goes to the casino to meet people, to have a couple of drinks. You create such an atmosphere elsewhere, then there will not be a need to go the casino. (IND-M-5-XG)*

Stakeholders agreed that the casino is currently the only place of entertainment that Asians are attracted to and that there is a need for other more appropriate spaces for socialising:

*So many people think that when their families and friends come over, they got to go to the casino, I don't know why, but wouldn't it be great if we have some other place where we can go to. Great if there was some other place, some other place that didn't involve gambling. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

The provision of social spaces to facilitate inter-ethnic interaction is also needed. Consultation with Asian communities would ensure that appropriate spaces/facilities are provided. This will also impact on and expedite acculturation both for Asian immigrants and for the host community. Acculturation is a two-way street and the host community also needs to acculturate to its immigrant population.

Facilitating community support would also assist with providing a supportive social environment. Asian participants, especially those of refugee background, felt that having more community support would be protective against addictive behaviours and would reduce problem gambling amongst their people. This could mean

encouraging and facilitating ethnic communities living in the same area, for example. Some cited examples of where such community support helped include:

*We stayed together and helped each other. Many of my refugee friends are those I have known since then. I also got to learn many things about New Zealand at that time. They taught us systems and basics to survive in this country. That was quite helpful. (REF-M-4-SG)*

*One day the father of a bookie asked me, 'what are you doing here? You don't have any bad habit. You don't smoke or drink. Why are you into this betting?' I said, 'I just do it for fun'. He said, 'this habit is not good for you, my son. Get away from it'. That day I thought it is the end and that's it. I never went there after that. That was end of the story of 6 months. (IND-M-5-XG)*

Participants who had received help from their communities were motivated to offer such help to others:

*I want to do some work for people like me in our community. There are many Burmese refugees not knowing where to start and what to do. I don't know how useful I would be. But whatever it is, if I can work for them, it will be really great. (REF-M-4-SG)*

On the other hand, some refugees, who lacked freedom in the past, were unsure of whether engaging in community activities would be able to counteract gambling as they no longer wished to be restricted and controlled:

*We were not allowed to go Casino in Burma. Indeed we haven't thought about it. Also there were lots of things not allowed there. So I think we don't want to be told what should do or what shouldn't do here now. Maybe this is also one of the reasons we don't necessarily want to participate in community activities that much. We don't want to belong but [want to] enjoy freedom. So replacing gambling with community activities is not that simple a thing. (REF-F-3-SG)*

Where Asian International students are concerned, there were suggestions from stakeholders that they are a high risk group in relation to problem gambling because of their lack of social networks and support systems and the large sums of money they bring with them. One Wellington stakeholder noted that:

*[When] I worked as a researcher we had a tremendous number of international students, gambling was one of the issues. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

This is in keeping with a national study (Ward & Brown, 2002) that indicates that the amount of cross-national interaction for international students is typically low, that international students expect and desire greater contact with members of the host community, and that interaction with domestic peers is generally associated with psychological, social and academic benefits for the international student. A potential benefit could be protection from the negative impacts of behaviours such as gambling.

### 6.5.2 Enhancing family support

As collective societies, Asians are naturally family oriented. However, migration fractures families and the support systems that accompany these. Providing opportunities for reconstructing families and enhancing family support would reduce the risk for problem gambling. Enabling this is a complex matter and would involve collaboration from various agencies such as Immigration and Social Development. However the outcomes would be beneficial to both immigrant and host communities.

Evidence of this effect is seen in reports from some young participants who showed much appreciation of the parental support they had received; they felt that the guidance of their parents could protect them from the negative impacts associated with behaviours such as alcohol consumption and gambling:

*The support I had then was mom and dad and they forgave me and helped me out. Family is annoying but they are the best protection as they always try to give you the best. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*My parents have scolded me a lot... It is not scolding as to blame me, but they are actually trying to correct me. And it is also how you take it as well. Your parents are the only people who want good for you rather than anybody else. Your immediate family is the people who want good out of you. If they tell you [for example] alcohol is wrong [for] you, definitely something is wrong with it. They are not lying about it. ... You don't have to just listen to them all the time. If you think what they are saying is correct we should follow that. It is not like I am Mummy's boy or Daddy's boy, but you are just having advice from them. I know some people who...don't listen to their parents. They just go out and drink and they suffer the consequences. Then they realise their parents were right, what they said was correct. And that's how they learn. They learn the hard way. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*My mom also helped me a lot, when I didn't have a job, she left me her credit card, and so in emergencies I could use it. Her trusting me again was a big thing for me. I realised that family is so important. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

International student participants were also grateful for the help they received from their parents which protected them from becoming problem gamblers or assisted their recovery from problem gambling:

*If mom and dad were here when I was an international student, there was no way I would be going out every day and gambling 24/7 so having parents around definitely helps in some way. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

*The turning point was when my mum opened my letters and statements and found out that I used up all the tuition fees. I was fortunate that dad was calm and dealt with the situation nicely. Mom was screaming and yelling and crying the whole time she found out. Well, after talking to dad, this put a full stop to my problem. I knew I had to restart my life. I can't gamble anymore. (CHI-M-3-XG)*

On the flip side, family support in the form of financial support could be a risk factor when it is not questioned and given indiscriminately, as often occurs with international students:



*I am the only son to my parents. So if I call my father and say I need money urgently, they will straight away send money. They never ask me any questions. But if they are aware that I am playing in the casino and I have lost all my money in the casino they will ask me questions. (IND-M-2-SG)*

This might point to a need to educate parents of international students about the risks of gambling that their children may be exposed to when they have unsupervised access to large sums of money.

### **6.5.3 Increasing support from Government and other agencies**

#### **Community responsibility**

All initiatives to improve the social environment and reduce problem gambling need support at various levels, including central and local government and other related agencies such as NGOs and community organisations. It is the social responsibility of the host government to improve the social environment of immigrants to ensure that they settle well into their new country (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1996-2012) . Support from government is required at various levels such as influencing attitudes towards Asian immigrants, garnering media support in doing this and for public health messages for gambling , enforcing social responsibility in gambling venues, providing educational programmes and resources for these programmes, and facilitating inter-agency support, amongst others.

This is well illustrated in the following comment of an Asian stakeholder:

*It's about social responsibility... There are a number of groups even for the elderly or for people from the same places. These organisations, small NGOs or community organisations can be approached to work together to help build communities. So I think basically it's the social fabric, how to weave it better and welcome new [immigrants] and particularly for students, not to exploit their money but to help them, to assist them to make them feel like New Zealand is their new home, make them study well and spend money, of course spend money, but not on gambling. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

A stakeholder from the host community acknowledged that current attitudes of the host community in New Zealand are not always positive towards Asians, and suggested that whilst it will be difficult to change those attitudes amongst the older generation of New Zealanders, the new generation will have a positive attitude, which will be supportive of Asian immigrants:

*The reality is that we're not bicultural, we're multicultural and I think if you look back at the 60s, you might look at your parents, they will have belligerent views about migrants. There is no way you will change those views. But the littlies coming through school and they're going to school with the little girl with her caftan on and the little Asian boy and the little Island boy, they're going to create a society where someone who comes in new 'yeah, fine you're accepted'. That's a generational thing, it will change and it won't be an issue. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Another stakeholder from the host community widened the notion of host responsibility to the greater community and talked about the responsibility of Manaakitanga:

*The manaakitanga of looking after new immigrants, the manaakitanga of bringing international students into NZ where they are contributing a whole lot of money... What is the responsibility of the people who recruit these people? (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

In particular, many of the focus group and individual interview participants believed that government and the New Zealand society in general had much responsibility to ethnic minority victims of problem gambling as these groups are vulnerable and the government has a role in protecting them. Across all four regions, stakeholders also agreed that the government had some responsibility toward ethnic minority immigrants. The general feeling in Auckland was that:

*The government should take more responsibility to help the minority group. They need to support the service providers and have more finance to do so. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

The main way that stakeholders saw this being achieved was through the provision of resources:

*Funds! Have service providers which provide services to Asian and refugees...this group is more difficult to serve because of the language barriers. Also we need to advertise [services] in so many languages. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Other suggestions included:

*You have to have a license to go into the casino, and there are casinos that do that, I think in Holland they do that. So you have an access card and that links to all the casinos in Holland. It's all inter-linked and done electronically...It could be done, it will cost them some money but they should do it. If legislated they have to do it. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

### **Orientation of New Immigrants**

The inclusion of an educational/informational programme about New Zealand culture and the harms of gambling was something noted in every focus group. Focus group participants, including those in the stakeholder groups, felt that what was required for new immigrants was a New Zealand immersion programme where Asian immigrants are introduced to life in New Zealand with a component on problem gambling:

*It's possible that community or government agencies work on letting people know how the Casino and gambling works. I am not too sure if it works for the addicted gamblers but will be helpful for people less seriously gambling. (REF-M-5-SG)*

*They should have a fixed term initial settlement curing time about six weeks, two months and we need to provide gambling awareness workshop to all new migrants. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Participants felt that it would make sense to provide such a programme on arrival in New Zealand as part of settlement orientation rather than individual counselling after the problem. This education could be extended to schools. They also believed that service providers should be involved in settlement programmes.

One stakeholder highlighted the need for:

*Different [education] streams across the board running parallel to each other ...and everyone who is responsible needs to make sure they step up and do it...[the information] is coming from a number of different angles as opposed to trying to infiltrate it at one point (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

### **Perceived Conflict of Interest**

A number of participants expressed concern regarding the Government's conflict of interest when it comes to addressing gambling related problems: they perceived that the extent to which government would intervene in gambling due to the revenue they receive from was limited. The larger impacts for society were a concern:

*I think this is a bit cynical of me to think this, but I do, that the government is like people with an addiction, they're only looking at... it's kind of like when someone gambles they remember what they've won, but they don't remember what they've lost. And I think the government looks at what comes in but they don't look at what they are having to expend really to mop up after this (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

*The government can help to motivate people [through] facts and figures. But you see, even the government gets income from them. I don't know how much government is involved in this. For example, when government gets heaps of tax out of tobacco, then why would the government ask people not to smoke? The government wants its revenue. (IND-M-5-XG)*

*Sky city wants more gamblers because they are getting money. So they promote gambling. But the government will not stop it completely because it is a big income for them as well. (IND-M-3-CW)*

*[In regard to gambling], they [the government] are only concerned with making revenue out of it. So it will not control gambling I reckon. It might encourage it further. (IND-F-2-SG)*

The above quotes illustrate a dilemma that is beginning to be discussed / recognised throughout the gambling field. The dependence of governments on gambling funds, the governance and regulation of gambling, and the distribution of gambling related funds have been highlighted as an issue both here in New Zealand and internationally (Adams, Buetow, & Rossen, 2010; Adams & Rossen, 2012; Borrell, 2008; Doughney, 2002; Marin, 2007; Orford, 2011; Smith & Rubenstein, 2011).

### **Host responsibility in gambling**

All participants, including gamblers, family members and stakeholders, were vocal about the need for greater enforcement of social responsibility in gambling venues.

*The casino needs to control these people (problem gamblers). It should be part of their job too. (CHI-M-5-CW)*

*It's difficult to stop [gambling] by themselves they don't care what the media says or any friend's advise. [There] should be stronger limitations made [on gambling] by the law. That is the only way. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

They believed government needed to play a bigger role in ensuring that this is done. Many felt that the exclusionary orders are good, but are not being enforced in all venues and that problem gamblers are still able to gain entry to venues. Participants also suggested that the order is not enforced in the casino due to the vested interest of the casino. For example:

*I have visited the casino with one of the counsellors from the PGF to register my car and his car on their list of problem gamblers so he wouldn't be allowed to enter the casino. But he still ended up there somehow. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*Even the persons who have banned themselves for life-time, they are going to casino again and the Skycity is allowing them, because it is a business for them. (IND-M-2-PG)*

*When I asked the manager at the casino to stop my son from coming into the place, he asked for evidence that he was coming to the casino. Without it, he said we are accusing him of doing something that maybe he wasn't actually doing. I thought that was ridiculous. I think they just like to let him in since it's their business to attract people to gamble. (KOR-F-5-FM)*

*[The exclusion order and in instances where an excluded client is able to sneak in means] You're increasing the excitement [associated with gambling] not decreasing the excitement [because they are 'getting away with it'] (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

*Sometimes they do [sneak into the gambling venues], but what amazes me here and I can only speak for ..... is how the security guys are so good at identifying people, albeit there are people that get through because they're appearance changes or they may actively try and avoid being detected but on the other side, there are people that get caught....is so much bigger, but people do get caught up there. There is a whole lot of contributing factors as to what goes on. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

However a few participants reported that the casino is very strict about their exclusionary orders, which kept some gamblers away from the casino. The need for a multi-venue exclusion process was also highlighted, as it was thought that problem gamblers will find alternative venues to go to, so their compliance needs to be monitored as well:

*They [Sky City] are very strict. In fact he never went back there. He went to other places; you know the little pubs in the city like Rose & Crown. There are so many. He doesn't drink but he goes to play there. (IND-F-3-FM)*

*He has also banned himself from the Sky City casino. This was I think one and a half years ago. So he doesn't go there. He banned himself right in front of me. He took me as witness. Now of-course he doesn't go there but he goes to the local pubs. (IND-F-3-FM)*

However, as expected, several participants, mostly family members and some stakeholder groups, suggested that gambling venues should be shut down completely or that the amount of minimum bet / amount of money that can be gambled should be limited:

*If you once go to the casino, there are drinks, drugs and everything. The only way New Zealand can look at stopping this is completely banning it. Or have a rule that a particular individual with a particular ID can play only up to this limit in a week. (IND-F-3-CW)*

*So far we're been concentrating on saying the casino is the main part of this problem, but of course the only way [to fix this] is to get government to get rid of casinos which, you know, would be a hopeless battle. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

*I think there shouldn't be a casino in NZ, there is only harm and no good. It harms the society and family. (CHI-M-5-CW)*

*The government should cut out all the clubs (pokie machine bars) and restrict problem gamblers at the casino. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*Gambling is like smoking. They (government) should ban it. They should do campaigns like the smoking ones. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

*Whatever the government provides legally, people will just fuel it more like legal gambling. So if you make it harder to get for people, it will stop a lot of people doing it. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

One participant suggested that although banning gambling could encourage "underground gambling", the numbers participating in this would be much smaller and easier to work with:

*Don't think it will become more risky and dangerous for New Zealanders if legal gambling was banned and underground gambling started happening because only the 'average Joe' or dodgy, really addicted people would go. Yeah, only a minority of people will be affected [by underground gambling]. (CHI-F-3-FM)*

Participants also offered the following suggestions about how problem gambling could be reduced by government. For example:

*They can make a law, like a tax method on winning. On every winning you should pay a tax. Then...counselling at national level, TV advertisements, gambling helpline desks, even at the airports; informing people about gambling problems when they enter New Zealand. (IND-M-2-XG)*

*At Skycity there are ATM machines. There should be a poster saying 'don't waste your money in [gambling]'. (IND-M-2-XG)*

### **Media support**

Whether gambling is considered an acceptable activity or not is influenced by the media (Lee, Lemanski, & Jun, 2008). An issue raised by many participants was that of insufficient media promotions against gambling and the harms that can arise from gambling, both in the ethnic and mainstream media.

*[Gambling] is not sensational news for the media. The media will not report news until it is sensational. If you write a report about gambling and the effects of gambling on young students or families, it is not going to increase their paper sales even by 1%. It is a boring article to read. Rather, give a heading with statistics like 'New Zealand has got the highest teen pregnancy', and everybody will read that article. [Gambling] topic cannot beat the attraction of this topic. (IND-F-3-CW)*

*I have seen many advertisements promoting Lotto. But never seen or heard about ads against gambling. (IND-F-2-SG)*

Although there have been significant public health campaigns delivered via mainstream media (e.g. those managed by the Health Sponsorship Council), this last statement is significant as it points to some participants' lack of awareness of the advertisements related to problem gambling harms, especially in ethnic media. Some participants thought that more dramatic advertisements on the harmful effects of problem gambling are needed, for example:

*I think gambling advertisements like the government car crash campaign on TV should be made to scare people off gambling (CHI-F-3-FM)*

It is widely known that many Asians read their own newspapers and watch their own television, often because of their limited English proficiency; hence they are not exposed to any advertising in the mainstream media.

*Advertisement on the TV has no effect on my gambling as I watch mostly Thai TV. (SEA-F-3-PG)*

*The advertisement to raise the awareness about harm resulting from gambling has not been helpful for me as I do not know and understand English. (SEA-F-5-PG)*

There was consensus across all four stakeholder focus groups that social marketing about the dangers of problem gambling were not reaching the Asian communities, in part, because of a language barrier:

*The social marketing does not reach the Asian community, most likely they are in English. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

It was argued that to ensure that advertisements reach Asian (and other ethnic minority) communities, government needs to procure greater involvement of the ethnic media:

*When you talk about Asian community newspapers, medias and groups I think the groups actually can do a lot of things as I know in Auckland and well, every big city there are quite strong Chinese communities. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

An alternative argument / way forward was seen as:

*It would be good to apply for funding to fund advertisements to counter the things from the casino, their advertisements. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

With one stakeholder suggesting:

*Maybe we can get a percentage of how much is spent by casinos in their advertising [to spend on public health messages]! (PHIV-STAKEHOLDER)*

Other stakeholders mentioned that vast amounts of money are spent on pro-gambling campaigns, such as those run by the Lotteries Commission; they thought that these funds could be better used to combat gambling:

*The Lotteries Commission used to be the number one advertiser in dollar terms on television. They probably still are because their ads cost a lot of money to produce. Big Wednesday ones that I see, they cost in excess of 0.5 million to produce so you're talking about a lot of money being spent. (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

*The amount of money that these people [gambling providers] put into these media campaigns could probably open several service intervention centres! [to help service users] (PHIV-STAKEHOLDERS)*

As expected, some participants advocated for no advertising for gambling at all:

*There should be no promotion of gambling at all in NZ especially Skycity; they should stop all its advertising. They don't have smoking ads on TV... why gambling then? (CHI-F-2-FM)*

The above discussion highlights the significant role that media plays in shaping our social environment. With regard to interethnic attitudes, it determines whether the environment is accepting or not of ethnically different immigrants (van Dijk, 1993). Government agencies have a responsibility in ensuring that the media does not reinforce negative stereotypes of ethnically different immigrants and promote negative attitudes towards such people. In fact, creating awareness in the mainstream population of the positive contributions of immigrants, Asians in particular, would improve attitudes towards and social support for them. The existence of social support systems, both formal and informal, has been seen to be critical to the process of building resilience (Silberberg, 2001). This has the potential to increase the self-esteem and self-confidence of Asians and enhance their levels of resilience which would in turn protect against behaviours such as gambling.

## **6.6 Enhancing resilience**

Each of the factors outlined above and in Figure 3 contribute to resilience. It could be argued that all immigrants, especially refugees are, of necessity, resilient people. Without resilience, they would not be able to negotiate the daunting journey of moving to a foreign land to start a new life. For non-refugee immigrants, it is likely that at least one member of the family, usually the primary applicant, has a number of attributes associated with a high level of resilience (e.g. high intelligence, functional coping styles) which increases the likelihood of the family coping successfully with the stresses of migration. However, everything associated with the migration experience can be considered a risk factor (Greeff & Holtzkamp, 2007),

and if these experiences are overly negative, protective factors that facilitate resilience can be eroded. The data in this report suggest that the negative migration experience of problem gamblers may have eroded their levels of resilience rendering them susceptible to addictive behaviours such as gambling. As discussed in the literature review, resilience helps families resist disruption in the face of change and adapt in the face of crisis situations (Hawley, 2000). Successful adaptation protects against dysfunctional coping and addictive behaviours such as problem gambling as it provides people with strength to adapt to difficult situations and to recover comparatively easily and quickly from adverse circumstances that migration and settlement may present, such as shock, illness, hardship etc.

Another important characteristic and contributor of resilience is self-esteem: enhancing self-esteem increases the likelihood of resilient outcomes. It is clear from the data provided in the previous chapters that many Asian problem gamblers have experienced reduced levels of self-esteem due to settlement difficulties such as discrimination and unemployment, underemployment and misemployment. This has an adverse impact on their ability to cope functionally. Although difficult to achieve, enhancing the self-esteem of Asian individuals and communities would enhance resilience and assist in protecting against addictive behaviours. Enhanced self-esteem also develops self-confidence which protects against behaviours such as problem gambling as seen in the following three quotations from Indian participants:

*When I came here I was confident. You know my confidence level is very high. I did 5 years marketing in India. That's why my confidence level is very high. That's why I know nobody can cheat me. When I came here I was not scared... I am positive in life. That has brought me out of frustrations and also got me out of troubles. My willpower is also very strong. If I decide I never want to go to the casino I will never go. (IND-M-2-SG)*

*It [gambling] is a very bad addictive behaviour. If you get trapped once it will suck you inside. Only if you have self-confidence and awareness can you get out of it. No one else can protect you. (IND-F-2-SG)*

*You should have confidence in yourself. You should have self-determination. Then you can do anything. In my life I have not come across any addiction for which I had to struggle to get rid of. You should have control of your life and confidence in your abilities. You can do anything. (IND-M-5-XG)*

An important contributor to self-esteem is cultural security. Our discussion of resilience in Chapter One shows that a sense of cultural heritage and the presence of religious and/or spiritual beliefs (Walsh, 2002), and shared values and maintenance of family rituals (Silberberg, 2001) are associated with resilience in immigrant families. Earlier sections of this report have also illustrated that while Asian culture can sometimes be a risk factor, it has great potential to be protective. Maintaining Asian culture and its values provides cultural security to Asian immigrants. This can enhance resilience. This view was endorsed by some participants, Indian adults in particular, who displayed an understanding of the



importance of cultural security and its role in enhancing self-esteem and protecting against addictive behaviours:

*Encouraging Indian culture would protect from the harm [of gambling]... (IND-M-2-PG)*

*Teaching the children about Indian culture is very helpful [against problem gambling]. (IND-F-2-SG)*

Cultural security, high self-esteem and self-confidence enhance resilience, which would in turn assist with ameliorating the problem of gambling addiction.

Most participants understood that lack of self-control is a major factor in problem gambling.

*Casino is all about temptation. A person can't control himself in casino. He has to play. No other option. (IND-M-2-PG)*

Those who achieved resilient outcomes, discussed being able to strengthen their inner locus of control, exercise self-control and avoid problem gambling behaviours.

This was reported by ex-gamblers and family and community members:

*I do go to the Skycity events sometimes with my friends who are VIPs and they get free tickets to the movies for example, but I am not tempted to go to the casino at all now. (CHI-F-4-XG)*

*It is hard for some people to be resilient. I need to control myself; if I want to gamble, I need to limit how much I need to spend and if I lose, I'll stop gambling straight away. (SEA-F-5-XG)*

*Some people do stop gambling by themselves. They tend to be able to control themselves... they appear to learn this is not helpful at all and stop on their own. (REF-F-6-CW)*

*He knows his bottom line, he will never borrow from loan sharks, so he has some kind of control. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

They are also able to cope with adversities caused by problem gambling in their families as evidenced in the following Chinese and Korean family members:

*I've learnt how to be independent. What if he [husband] doesn't look after me anymore because he lost all our money? What if my children can't look after me? ... So I have savings, so if anything happens at least I have my own money. (CHI-F-5-FM)*

*I am a pretty independent person. So apart from financial problems, I wasn't very influenced by my mother's gambling. I didn't need much... Indeed, I had to be independent because I won't get it from my mother anyway. (KOR-M-2-FM)*

## 6.7 Summary

Table 10: Summary of an Ecological approach to reducing problem gambling amongst Asians

### **An ecological approach to reducing problem gambling amongst Asians**

Problem gambling may be reduced by taking into consideration the ecological context of Asian immigrants and moderating those variables that contribute to problem gambling and enhancing those that protect against problem gambling. This can potentially be achieved by:

#### **Enhancing resilience**

- Immigrants are, of necessity, resilient people.
- The migration experience, if negative, can erode levels of resilience.
- Resilience can be enhanced by enhancing cultural security, self-esteem and self-confidence which has the potential to protect against behaviours such as problem gambling.
- Resilient people are able to strengthen their inner locus of control, exercise self-control and avoid problem gambling behaviours.

#### **Utilising cultural strengths**

- Asian culture has strengths that can be protective against gambling and should be utilised.
- These strengths lie in values such as family connectedness and respect, spirituality and religion, the stigma attached to gambling, as well as the need to save face.

#### **Building trust**

- Confidentiality in the public sector is not commonly practised in Asia - private information about clients is openly discussed.
- Consequently, Asians do not trust health or other services with confidential information about themselves or their families.

#### **Normalising help-seeking**

- Seeking help for gambling related problems is not the norm for most Asians
- Normalise talking about these problems and seeking help by:
  - changing perceptions of help-seeking and
  - providing culturally appropriate services

#### **Educating Asian communities about the dangers of gambling**

- Create awareness about the dangers of problem gambling
- Dispel misconceptions about gambling behaviours
- Provide information on services
- Teach alternate ways of stress release
- Assist with developing life goals

#### **Creating a supportive social and institutional environment for Asian immigrants**

A supportive environment will assist with enhancing resilience and protecting against gambling behaviours. This may be achieved by:

##### *Providing social support through:*

- Appropriate social spaces for interaction for Asian communities that are in the early stages of integrating into the New Zealand society.
- Social spaces for improving inter-ethnic interaction.
- Community support from ethnic communities.
- Improving the social environment may enhance resilience which would protect

against gambling.

*Enhancing family support through:*

- Opportunities for reconstructing families e.g. extended family.
- This would provide support families settling into New Zealand and reduce the risk for problem gambling.

*Increasing support from Government and other agencies for:*

- Influencing attitudes towards Asian immigrants, including garnering media support in doing this
- Improving public health initiatives, including host responsibility measures, with regard to gambling:
  - Garnering media support for public health messages for gambling.
  - Enforcing social responsibility in gambling venues.
  - Providing educational programmes and resources for public health programmes.
  - Facilitating inter-agency support.

## Chapter 7. Conclusions

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This chapter draws conclusions based on the findings of the study, and presents similarities and differences amongst the Ethnic groups, and outlines a number of learnings and implications that can be drawn from the findings. It also identifies gaps in the study which could be addressed through future research.

### 7.1 Antecedents and etiology

In this study, we have explored the roles of risk and resiliency factors in relation to Asian gambling and their interactions with the health and wellbeing of Asian families and communities; the antecedents and etiology of problem gambling in Asian people, and similarities and disparities between the major Asian ethnic subgroups in New Zealand. Based on our personal and empirical knowledge of Asian peoples, culture and their circumstances in New Zealand, we determined that employing an ecological approach to our investigation and exploration of these themes would enable us to delve into those variables contributing to problem gambling in these communities. This approach, as discussed in Chapter 1, values and acknowledges the contextual framework in which individuals live and operate, and allows consideration of the multiple environments in which they operate and the complex roles and relationships that they fulfil within these environments. The data gathered illustrates that gambling amongst Asians is a complex issue that has to be understood within the wider social and institutional context in which Asians are located.

The data presented in the previous chapters show that there are three main variables impacting Asian gambling in New Zealand. These are:

- Asian culture,
- Experiences relating to the settlement process in a new environment, and
- Coping strategies employed in relation to the settlement experience in New Zealand.

It is clear that Asian culture significantly impacts on gambling conceptions / behaviours and that there may be a bidirectional relationship between these two variables; evidence is emerging that Asian culture may also be impacted to some extent by gambling behaviours. This will be discussed further in this chapter. The migration and settlement experience of Asians and the new social environment they find themselves in is another significant factor impacting on their gambling behaviours. How they cope with these experiences and environment appears to impact on the behaviours and consequent health and wellbeing of Asian individuals, families and communities, and the coping strategies they utilise are determined to a large extent by personal and cultural variables as well as their settlement experience

and new environment. This presents a rather complex picture of inter-related variables interacting with one another. Furthermore, the way these variables interact is also determined by circumstances of families prior to migration and their expectations in New Zealand after migration; both of which are often associated with ethnicity and country of origin.

We have attempted to depict these relationships and interactions in the following diagram:

**Figure 4: Factors contributing to problem gambling amongst Asians**



While not explicitly outlined in the above diagram, it should also be noted that the data in this project highlighted a number of structural issues that exist in New Zealand with regard to gambling and problem gambling. These were observed by participants to impact on Asian people at various levels, including the individual, family units and communities. Structural drivers of problem gambling in New Zealand include availability, access, inducements and marketing, regulation, and conflict of interest.

## **7.2 Risk and resiliency**

All immigrants are resilient people – it is this characteristic that enables them to start a new life in a foreign country. Hence, every immigrant family will have at least one person who has high levels of resiliency. However, as explained in previous

chapters, this resiliency is often eroded by negative settlement experiences. Many Asian immigrants in New Zealand experience social discrimination and non-acceptance which generates institutional discrimination, which then manifests in employment and other difficulties. Most Asian immigrants bring high qualifications and skills – in fact these are important factors with regard to gaining entrance into New Zealand. Accordingly, they expect to find employment commensurate with those skills. Failure to do so has deleterious effects on their self-esteem, confidence and resilience, often with adverse mental health impacts. Consequently, they employ dysfunctional coping strategies to deal with adverse settlement circumstances, and this places them at risk for addictive behaviours such as gambling.

As with other ethnic groups, the Asian problem gamblers in this study are clearly those whose resilience is compromised and who are unable to cope functionally with adversities. The data suggests that enhancing and maintaining resilience will in turn enable functional coping and protect against such behaviours and vice versa. Based on the data provided by participants, we have developed, in Chapter 6, potential strategies for enhancing resilience and other variables that protect against problem gambling and moderating those variables that may increase risk for problem gambling. These include: utilising cultural strengths, building trust, normalising help-seeking, educating Asian communities about the dangers of gambling, and creating a supportive social and institutional environment for Asian immigrants.

### 7.3 Similarities and differences amongst ethnic and other groups

As collective cultures, all Asian sub-groups share many commonalities in cultural philosophies and values which is reflected in their responses to and experiences of gambling. However, the Asian group also comprises a very diverse group of sub-cultures which exhibit many differences which are also reflected in responses and experiences. Generally, however, there were more similarities in the ethnic groups than differences. Noteworthy similarities amongst ethnic groups have been outlined in the following table:

Table 11: Similarities amongst Ethnic groups

Similarities amongst Ethnic groups	
Points of similarity	Groups involved
<b>Settlement, integration and social isolation issues</b>	All ethnic groups reported experiencing negative settlement outcomes which impacted on their mental health and contributed to gambling behaviours. However, as most Indians integrate faster mainly due to English language competence, they reported less addiction-related issues than Chinese and Koreans.

<b>Acculturation issues such as power structure changes and intergenerational issues</b>	All Asian sub-groups experience this, especially Indians who appear to be integrating faster. This impacts on mental health of parents and children and contributes to problem gambling prevalence (especially amongst males).
<b>Culture: Stigma and face saving</b>	This is an issue for all sub-groups, but appears stronger amongst North and East Asians. Impacts on help-seeking and the need for ethnic matching vs. generic services.
<b>Culture: Superstition and 'luck'</b>	All Asian sub-groups are influenced by superstition and the belief that luck plays a significant role in gambling. This encourages gambling participation.
<b>Culture : Spirituality and Religion</b>	Most Asians are spiritual and/or religious and this often protects against gambling involvement. They also resort to this as a coping strategy to deal with adversities.
<b>Gambling knowledge and awareness</b>	All sub-groups have little knowledge and awareness about problem gambling and its harms and believe that because it is legal in New Zealand, it must be safe. Many also have beliefs around the fairness and level of skill involved in various casino gambling modes.
<b>Venue preference</b>	All Asians prefer the casino to pubs and frequent the casino as an entertainment hub and for socialising. Hence, the casino was the focus of discussions.
<b>Gambling mode</b>	Most gamblers across sub-groups prefer table 'games' to pokie machines.
<b>Age groups</b>	All of the Asian sub-groups reported a wide age range in gamblers in their communities – from early adulthood through to the elderly.

Throughout the course of this study, the research team noted that the Chinese participants appeared less willing than those in the Indian, Korean and South-east Asian streams, to talk about the gambling-related issues being faced by them and their community. This may be one of the reasons why Chinese were found to be more likely than other ethnic groups (including other Asian sub-groups) to nominate themselves, their family or their community as being responsible for the management of gambling problems rather than outsiders (Raylu & Oei, 2004; Rossen, et al., 2009a). The following table outlines further notable differences amongst ethnic groups:

Table 12: Differences amongst Ethnic groups

Differences amongst Ethnic Groups	
Points of Difference	Groups involved
<b>Previous exposure to gambling</b>	Apart from Chinese, most Asian sub-groups had very little previous exposure to gambling, hence were quite naive about gambling harms. For them the casino was a novelty and tourist attraction.
<b>Gambling participation, gambling related harm and problem gambling prevalence</b>	<p>In this study there appeared to be more social gambling amongst South, Southeast Asians and Refugees; Chinese and Korean participants appeared to be impacted to a greater extent by problem gambling than the other groups. It appears that English language proficiency plays an important role in the differences observed between these groups.</p> <p>Gambling related harms and problem gambling appeared to be least prevalent amongst refugees apparently because they have limited funds at their disposal; less amongst Southeast Asians and South Asians; and apparently more amongst Chinese, Koreans and international students who have more resources.</p> <p>However, these findings should be treated with caution due to the possible effects of the recruitment strategies employed.</p>
<b>Talking about problem gambling</b>	South Asians appear to be more willing to talk about problem gambling and related issues. This may be due to their English competence and/or their high settlement expectations. Chinese appear less willing to divulge issues, possibly due to language issues and stronger need for face-saving.
<b>Service preference</b>	Intra- and inter-group variations for ethnic matching vs. mainstream services – some people in each sub-group prefer working with service providers from their ethnic group while others prefer to work with mainstream service providers due to confidentiality issues. However, all of the ethnic sub-groups prefer cultural appropriateness in services which may include making mainstream services more responsive to ethnic minority communities by employing ethnic minority staff.
<b>Gender</b>	Southeast Asians and Refugees reported more gambling and gambling problems amongst women. This was



	largely attributed to lifestyle changes in New Zealand which allow women to enjoy greater freedom.
<b>Duration of residence in New Zealand</b>	New immigrants are at greater risk for gambling behaviours as they are less integrated and experience more settlement issues; older immigrants are more integrated, hence have less risk.

## 7.4 Learnings and implications

Five significant learnings were drawn from this study. These, together with their implications, are discussed below.

### 1. *Problem gambling is an ecological issue:*

The main learning from this study is that problem gambling amongst Asians is a complex issue that cannot be considered in isolation. It needs to be viewed contextually, employing an ecological approach that acknowledges the whole environment within which the individual and the family are embedded and the impacts of that environment on the individual and family. This implies that multiple agencies may need to work together in finding solutions to problem gambling in this community, e.g. public health agencies, Government agencies such as Immigration and Social Development, and non-Government agencies.

### 2. *Structural issues as fundamental drivers of gambling:*

The data collected in this study clearly identifies a number of structural issues related to gambling, such as availability, access, inducements and marketing, regulation, and conflict of interest as fundamental drivers of problem gambling amongst Asians in New Zealand; issues that are shared across all ethnic groups in New Zealand. As such, the responsibility of problem gambling amongst Asians does not only lie with the Asian population, but is an issue that requires the sincere attention of communities, NGOs, government agencies, and members of the gambling industries (particularly casinos).

### 3. *Asian culture impacts conceptions of gambling:*

Another significant learning is that conceptions of gambling are influenced greatly by Asian culture. The Asian culture has values and beliefs which can function as risk or protective factors in relation to gambling. These cultural aspects could be utilised to intervene in problem gambling behaviours, e.g. Asian focus on family and community, stigma attached to gambling, spirituality and religion.

### 4. *The settlement experience impacts gambling behaviour:*

The experiences associated with settling into New Zealand have a huge impact on Asian immigrants. For many, these are negative and have negative consequences for mental health which places people at risk for a number of difficulties, including

problem gambling. Improvement of the settlement environment for Asian immigrants has potential to alleviate the stressors and pressures that make some Asian immigrants more vulnerable to problem gambling. This could be part of a larger holistic community strategy to promote healthy lifestyles and integration of Asian populations into New Zealand mainstream culture. Again, this would require collaboration amongst multiple agencies.

*5. Interventions need to consider cultural diversity and appropriateness:*

There is a wide range of cultural diversity within and between Asian sub-groups which means that one size does not fit everyone in terms of interventions. Cultural appropriateness has to be assessed for each ethnic group, and sometimes for individuals, and interventions designed accordingly.

## **7.5 Gaps and next steps**

The study did not sufficiently explore the extent of online gambling amongst Asians as this issue did generally not arise in discussions and interviews. This may suggest that this form of gambling is not an issue for this population at the current time or that the phenomenon is still at its infancy with this population.

Some older adult participants did talk about not having any interest in going to the TAB as it was difficult for them to bet due to lack of English proficiency. This may also be the case for online gambling for many older Asian gamblers and those who lack English competence. English proficiency would need to be at a certain level to understand the online gambling 'games', unless it was in the gambler's own language.

Whilst this may not be a significant issue at the current time, there is some suggestion that this may be a growing issue amongst Asian youth, with concerns being expressed by stakeholders in particular, about the challenges of managing such a problem. The potential for technology (e.g. mobile phones, internet, social networking etc) to be utilised to disseminate information and interventions was also highlighted.

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## Appendices

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### Appendix A: Participant Information Sheets



**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**  
**FACULTY OF MEDICAL AND  
HEALTH SCIENCES**

Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation  
Social and Community Health  
School of Population Health  
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### Participant Information Sheet

For Focus Groups

**Title: The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

**Funder:** The Ministry of Health

**To:** The participants of focus group discussions

**Researchers:** Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218, Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz) or [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

#### **What is this research all about and why is it happening?**

This study is being undertaken to investigate the impact of gambling on Asian families and communities. We are particularly interested in finding out about the issues that contribute to or cause gambling and problem gambling behaviour, as well as those that protect individuals from gambling and problem gambling.

Reports from around the world indicate that the level of participation in gambling by people from Asian countries is increasing and that Asian people are affected by problem gambling to a greater extent than other ethnic groups. As Asians make up the fastest-growing ethnic community in New Zealand today, there is a clear need for accurate knowledge of the issues and impacts of gambling and problem gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand.

#### **Who and what will the research involve?**

This research will involve a series of focus group discussions with staff from Asian problem gambling intervention services and other stakeholders. Participants will be recruited from within the Auckland region and we are talking to people from each of the five major Asian ethnic groups in New Zealand (Chinese, Indian, Korean, South-east Asian, and Asian with refugee background).



If you choose to take part in our study, you will be asked to participate in a group discussion that will cover issues relating to the impact of gambling and problem gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand. The discussion is expected to take approximately 1 hour and will be held at a time and place convenient to the participants and in the preferred language of the group. A researcher who is of your own ethnicity and can speak your language will facilitate the discussion, and if required, interpreters will be available.

The researchers may take notes during the discussion, which will also be audio-taped with your consent. The recording cannot be stopped on request as it is a focus group; however, you may leave the focus group or choose not to answer any question. The tapes may be transcribed by a member of the research team for further analysis. In recognition of the time you have given to take part in this research, we will offer you a \$20 supermarket voucher.

### **How will the findings of the research be used?**

At present, little is known about the impacts of gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand. This project aims to address the current gap in knowledge and address the needs of a high-risk population within the problem gambling field. The type of information and knowledge gained will assist with the development of effective and culturally appropriate prevention measures and policy initiatives.

A summary of research findings will be sent to the funding agency and other stakeholders, and will be made available to participants at their request. Peer reviewed publications and presentations at conferences will inform academics, researchers, and other stakeholders of the findings.

### **Keeping what you share safe and anonymous**

The research team cannot ensure confidentiality of the information shared in the focus group, as it requires everyone who takes part to keep the information confidential. We will ask participants to keep the information shared confidential and your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. Your name or any identifying details will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study. If you choose to take part in this study, you may ask any questions about the research at any time and refuse to answer any particular question.

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the research at any time. However individuals may not withdraw any information provided in a focus group, as this is a group discussion and removing sections of the data will impact on the information provided by the group as a whole. As all information is anonymous, any comments you provide will be unable to be identified.

Transcriptions of focus group discussions and any other information will be kept by the researchers in a locked cabinet on University premises. Information stored as a computer file will be kept on a University of Auckland server that requires the researchers' password for access. This information may be stored for up to six years after this research for future reference if necessary. After this period, transcriptions will be destroyed by shredding and audio-tapes of the focus groups will be erased by the researchers after they have been transcribed.

On completion of the project, de-identified transcripts of the focus group discussion will be handed over to the research funder (Ministry of Health) and securely stored for a period of 10 years. If you agree to take part you will be required to sign the consent form provided.

### **Any Questions?**

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact the principal investigators, Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj and Dr Fiona Rossen listed below:

Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj  
Director, Centre for Asian Health  
Research and Evaluation  
School of Population Health, The  
University of Auckland  
Phone: 373-7599 Ext 89204  
Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz)

Dr Fiona Rossen  
Co-Director, Centre for Gambling  
Studies  
School of Population Health, The  
University of Auckland  
Phone: 373-7599 Ext 89218  
Email: [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7999 Ext 83711.

**Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 for 3 years. Reference number 2010 / 273.**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**  
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## **Participant Information Sheet**

For Face-to-face Interviews

**Title: The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

**Funder:** The Ministry of Health

**To:** The participants of face-to-face interviews

**Researchers:** Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218, Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz) or [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

### **What is this research all about and why is it happening?**

This study is being undertaken to investigate the impact of gambling on Asian families and communities. We are particularly interested in finding out about the issues that contribute to or cause gambling and problem gambling behaviour, as well as those that protect individuals from gambling and problem gambling.

Reports from around the world indicate that the level of participation in gambling by people from Asian countries is increasing and that Asian people are affected by problem gambling to a greater extent than other ethnic groups. As Asians make up the fastest-growing ethnic community in New Zealand today, there is a clear need for accurate knowledge of the issues and impacts of gambling and problem gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand.

### **Who and what will the research involve?**

This research involves interviews with randomly selected individuals who have experienced problem gambling or been impacted by someone else's problematic gambling. Participants will be recruited from within the Auckland region and we are talking to people from each of the five major Asian ethnic groups in New Zealand (Chinese, Indian, Korean, South-east Asian, and Asian with refugee background).

If you choose to take part in our study, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured interview that will cover issues relating to the impact of gambling and problem gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand. The interview will be undertaken face-to-face and is expected to take approximately 1 hour. The interview will be held at a time and place convenient to you and in your preferred language. A researcher who is of your own ethnicity and can speak your language

will conduct the interview, and if you would like to, you are welcome to bring a support person with you.

The researcher may take notes during the interview, which will also be audio-taped with your consent, but you may request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the discussion. The tapes may be transcribed by a member of the research team for further analysis. In recognition of the time you have given to take part in this research, we will offer you a \$20 supermarket voucher.

### **How will the findings of the research be used?**

At present, little is known about the impacts of gambling on Asian families and communities in New Zealand. This project aims to address the current gap in knowledge and address the needs of a high-risk population within the problem gambling field. The type of information and knowledge gained will assist with the development of effective and culturally appropriate prevention measures and policy initiatives.

A summary of research findings will be sent to the funding agency and other stakeholders, and will be made available to participants at their request. Peer reviewed publications and presentations at conferences will inform academics, researchers, and other stakeholders of the findings.

### **Keeping what you share safe and anonymous**

The research team will ensure that all information provided by you will be kept confidential. Your name or any identifying details will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study.

If you choose to take part in this study, you may ask any questions about the research at any time and refuse to answer any particular question. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the research at any time without giving reasons. You may also withdraw any data you provided up to 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2011. Transcriptions of interviews and any other information will be kept by the researchers in a locked cabinet on University premises. Information stored as a computer file will be kept on a University of Auckland server that requires the researchers' password for access. This information may be stored for up to six years after this research for future reference if necessary. After this period, transcriptions will be destroyed by shredding and audio-tapes of the focus groups will be erased by the researchers after they have been transcribed.

On completion of the project, de-identified transcripts of the interviews will be handed over to the research funder (Ministry of Health) and securely stored for a period of 10 years. If you agree to take part you will be required to sign the consent form provided.

### **Any Questions?**

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact the principal investigators, Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj and Dr Fiona Rossen listed below:

Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj  
Director, Centre for Asian Health

Dr Fiona Rossen  
Co-Director, Centre for Gambling Studies

Research and Evaluation  
School of Population Health, The  
University of Auckland  
Phone: 373-7599 Ext 89204  
Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz)

School of Population Health, The  
University of Auckland  
Phone: 373-7599 Ext 89218  
Email: [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

Talking about gambling and/or the impacts of gambling could be a good experience. Sometimes, however it can bring up painful issues or feelings, which is quite normal. If you continue to find such thoughts painful, please contact the researchers who can help arrange some assistance for you, or you can talk to someone at the Gambling Helpline on 0800 654 655, Lifeline on (09) 5222 999, Problem Gambling Foundation of New Zealand on 0800 664 262 or their Asian Hotline on 0800 862 342.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7999 Ext 83711.

**Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 for 3 years. Reference number 2010 / 273.**

## Appendix B: Consent Forms



**THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND**  
**FACULTY OF MEDICAL AND  
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Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand  
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Fax +64 9 3737624

# Consent Form

(Focus Group Discussion)

This form will be stored for a period of six years

**Title: The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

**Funder:** The Ministry of Health

**Researchers:** Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218. Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz) or [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand I may ask further questions at any time. I understand that my name will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used.

I understand that the research team cannot ensure confidentiality of the information shared in the focus group discussion, as it requires everyone who takes part to keep the information confidential. I agree to keep the information shared in the focus group discussions confidential.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and to decline to answer any particular question. I also understand that if I withdraw from the study, any comments I have provided within the focus group discussion will be unable to be identified and withdrawn from the project.

I understand that the discussion will last approximately 60 minutes and that the researchers may take notes during the focus group. I understand that the focus group discussion will be audio-taped with my consent. I also understand that I cannot request for the recorder to be turned off as this would impact on the group as a whole, but that I may leave the focus group at any time. I understand that the audio-tapes will only be transcribed by the researchers if needed and erased after being transcribed. The data will be kept for up to six years after this research by the researchers, as it might be used as part of future research projects in the same field. I understand that on completion of the project, a summary of research findings will be sent to the research funder (Ministry of Health) along with de-identified transcripts of the focus groups which will be securely stored for a period of 10 years.

I understand that I may invite a support person to attend the focus group discussion and **choose / do not choose to do so**.

**I request / do not request** for a summary of the key research findings.

**I agree** to the focus group being audio-recorded.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 for 3 years. Reference number 2010 / 273.**

**The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

Please send a summary of the research findings to the following address (if requested):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand  
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## **Consent Form**

(Face-to-face Interviews)

This form will be stored for a period of six years

**Title: The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

**Funder:** The Ministry of Health

**Researchers:** Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218. Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz) or [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand I may ask further questions at any time. I understand that my name will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used.

I understand that the research team will ensure the confidentiality of the information that I share with them in the face-to-face interview.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and to decline to answer any particular question. I also understand that I can withdraw any data traceable to me up to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2011.

I understand that the interview will last approximately 60 minutes and that the researchers may take notes during the interview. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped with my consent, and that I may request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the interview. I understand that the audio-tapes will only be transcribed by the researchers if needed and erased after being transcribed. The data will be kept for up to six years after this research by the researchers, as it might be used as part of future research projects in the same field. I understand that on completion of the project, a summary of research findings will be sent to the research funder (Ministry of Health), along with de-identified transcripts of the interviews. The Ministry of Health will securely store these for a period of 10 years.

I understand that I may invite a support person to attend the interview and **choose / do not choose to do so**.

**I request / do not request** a summary of the key research findings.

**I agree / do not agree** to be audio-recorded.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 for 3 years. Reference number 2010 / 273.**

**The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

Please send a summary of the research findings to the following address (if requested):

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Confidentiality Form



THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
FACULTY OF MEDICAL AND  
HEALTH SCIENCES

Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation  
Social and Community Health  
School of Population Health  
Tamaki Campus, University of Auckland  
Morrin Rd, Glen Innes  
Private Bag 92019, Auckland, New Zealand  
Phone +64 9 3737599  
Fax +64 9 3737624

# Confidentiality Agreement

This form will be stored for a period of six years

**Title: The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand**

**Funder:** The Ministry of Health

**Researchers:** Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218

Email: [a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz) or [f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz)

I have attended this focus group or interview as a **support person** for the individual participating in the above research project. I understand that the information shared in this focus group discussion or interview is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with anyone.

OR:

I agree to **transcribe** the focus group / interview audiotapes for the above research project. I understand that the information contained within them is confidential and must not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone other than the researcher and his/her supervisor(s).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2010 for 3 years. Reference number 2010 / 273.**

**Appendix D: Focus Group and Interview Schedule**

# **The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand Project**

## **Semi-structured Interview Guideline** *for Focus Groups*

This Interview guideline will be used for Focus Group Discussions with Asian gamblers, problem gamblers and other people associated with or know of gamblers and problem gamblers.

The interview guideline will cover the following *themes* and include individual, familial, community and environmental impacts of gambling and problem gambling. The order and wording of the questions will be determined by the cues provided by participants. Some *examples of questions* are included as a guide to interviewers:

### **1. Cultural assumptions about gambling and problem gambling:**

- What is your understanding of gaming in your culture? (Difference between gaming and problem gambling)
- When does gaming become a problem?
- What sort of awareness is there of problem gambling amongst Asian communities?
- What is your perception of gaming in your home country and in New Zealand?

**At this point, make it clear to the participants that when gambling is referred to in this focus group discussion it means problem gambling – explain the New Zealand definitions of gambling and problem gambling**

### **2. Individual impacts associated with gambling:**

- How does gaming affect Asian individuals (generally and in your community)?
  - Extent (age, gender, length of time of residence in NZ, family (nuclear or extended), support (family, community), type of employment/funds, etc.)
  - Positive impacts (e.g. entertainment etc)?
  - Negative impacts (e.g. less time to concentrate on career, less disposable income etc)?
- How does gambling affect Asian individuals?
  - Extent (age, gender, length of time of residence in NZ, family (nuclear or extended), support (family, community), type of employment/funds, etc.)
  - Positive impacts?
  - Negative impacts (e.g. mental health issues)?

### **3. Familial impacts associated with gambling:**

- How does gaming affect Asian families (generally and in your community)?
  - Extent (age, gender, length of time of residence in NZ, family (nuclear or extended), support (family, community), type of employment/funds, etc.)
  - Positive impacts?
  - Negative impacts (e.g. less time together as a family)?
- How does gambling affect Asian families?
  - Extent (age, gender, length of time of residence in NZ, family (nuclear or extended), support (family, community), type of employment/funds, etc.)
  - Positive impacts?
  - Negative impacts (e.g. less time together as a family)?

### **4. Community impacts associated with gambling:**

- How does gaming affect your Asian community?
  - Extent (age, gender, length of time of residence in NZ, family (nuclear or extended), support (family, community), type of employment/funds, etc.)
  - Positive impacts (e.g. fund-raising etc)?
  - Negative impacts?
- How does gambling affect your Asian community?
  - Extent (age, gender, length of time of residence in NZ, family (nuclear or extended), support (family, community), type of employment/funds, etc.)
  - Positive impacts?
  - Negative impacts?

### **5. Risk and resiliency factors in relation to Asian gambling:**

- What factors increase the risk of gambling impacting negatively on Asian people? (level of participation in gambling, cultural beliefs, age, gender, length of residence in NZ, level of social inclusion/support)
  - Personal factors (e.g., peer pressure)
  - Familial factors (e.g. lack of family support, intergenerational conflict)
  - Community factors (host and immigrant, e.g. lack of integration, support and acceptance)

- Environmental factors (e.g., unemployment, gambling promotion, availability of gambling)
- What factors protect Asian people in relation to the negative impacts of gambling? (level of participation in gambling, cultural beliefs, age, gender, length of residence in NZ, level of social inclusion/support)
  - Personal factors (e.g. life skills/coping skills, self-esteem)
  - Familial factors (e.g. nuclear or extended family, support)
  - Community factors (host and immigrant, e.g. support, acceptance, interaction)
  - Environmental factors (e.g. employment, raising awareness)

#### **6. Help seeking behaviour:**

- Level of awareness of how/where to seek help for gambling related issues?
- What are the barriers to help-seeking for Asian people?
- What are the facilitators to help-seeking for Asian people?

#### **7. Other issues**

# The Impact of Gambling and Problem Gambling on Asian Families and Communities in New Zealand Project

## Semi-structured Interview Guideline

### *for Face-to-face Interviews*

This Interview guideline will be used for Face-to-face Interviews with Asian gamblers, problem gamblers and other people associated with or know of gamblers and problem gamblers.

The interview guideline will cover the following *themes* and include individual, familial, community and environmental impacts of gambling and problem gambling. The order and wording of the questions will be determined by the cues provided by participants. Some *examples of questions* are included as a guide to interviewers:

#### **1. Background in gambling:**

- How did you become aware of gambling?
  - At what age?
  - Under what circumstances? (e.g., movies, friends, Chinese New Year)
- How did you/your family member/significant other become involved with gambling?
  - What type of gambling activities were you (or your family member/significant other) involved in?
  - Where? (e.g., at friends house, casino, pokie machine bar)
  - Why? (e.g., new experience)
- Are you (or your family member/significant other) still involved with gambling?
  - If so how often?
  - What games are most played? (e.g., pokie machines, table games)
  - Where are these games played usually?
- Are you aware of the harm gambling could bring?
  - Please give some examples

#### **2. Impacts associated with gambling (Individual + Family + Community):**

- How has gambling (or your family member/significant other's gambling) affected you?
- How has your (or your family member/significant other's gambling) gambling affected your relationship with your family?
  - Discuss positive and negative impacts
- How has gambling (in general and own/family's gambling) affected your community (e.g., friends, ethnic community)?
  - Discuss positive and negative impacts
  - Please give some examples

#### **3. Risk and resiliency factors in relation to gambling:**

- What factors have increased the risk of you (or your family member/significant other) to continue gambling?
  - Has settling in New Zealand been part of increasing this risk? If so, please explain.

*Prompts:*

- Personal factors (e.g., peer pressure)
- Familial factors (e.g. lack of family support, intergenerational conflict)
- Community factors (host and immigrant, e.g. lack of integration, support and acceptance)
- Environmental factors (e.g., unemployment, lack of money, gambling promotion, availability of gambling)
- What factors have decreased the risk of you (or your family member/significant other) in gambling?
  - Personal factors (e.g. life skills/coping skills, self-esteem)
    - How did you help yourself (or your family member/significant other) get out of gambling? What kind of help/support did you use?
  - Familial factors (e.g. nuclear or extended family, support)
    - How did your family (or the rest of your family) help you (or your gambling family member/significant other)? What kind of services/support was use?
  - Community factors (host and immigrant, e.g. support, acceptance, interaction)
    - How did your community (e.g., neighbours, friends, colleagues etc) help you (or your family member/significant other)? What kind of services/support was use?
  - Environmental factors (e.g. employment, raising awareness)
    - How did situational/environmental factors help? *e.g., finding a job distracted me from going to the casino, I saw a TV advertisement about the harm gambling could bring, I started doing voluntary work...*

**4. Help seeking behaviour:**

- Have you used any problem gambling support services (e.g., Problem Gambling Foundation) or support services (e.g., Lifeline) for your (or your family member/significant other's) gambling problem?
  - If you haven't, why haven't you approached those services?
  - If you have, tell us about your experience?
    - What was helpful, what wasn't helpful
    - What made your trust and use these services?

**5. Other issues**

- What was one thing you learned from your (or your family's) gambling experience?
- Any other important issues to add to this interview?

**We need to know what you think!**

# Gaming & Gambling in the Asian community



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF AUCKLAND

FACULTY OF MEDICAL  
AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Centre for Asian Health  
Research & Evaluation  
Centre for Gambling Studies



*We need participants from **Chinese, Korean, Indian, South-east Asian** (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian) and Asians with a **Refugee** background to tell us what you think about gaming and gambling!*

**Participants will get a \$20 supermarket voucher for participation**

**All information given is confidential and will be kept anonymous**

Please contact Anita Wong by phone 09 923 1693 or by email [anita.wong@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:anita.wong@auckland.ac.nz) if you are interested in participating in the project





THE UNIVERSITY  
OF AUCKLAND

FACULTY OF MEDICAL  
AND HEALTH SCIENCES

**CENTRE FOR ASIAN HEALTH RESEARCH & EVALUATION  
CENTRE FOR GAMBLING STUDIES**

**Individual Interview about  
Gaming and Gambling in the Asian community**

**Participants will receive a \$20 supermarket voucher for participation**

*All information given is confidential and will be kept anonymous*

We need Asian participants with a **Refugee** background to take part in a 1 hour interview - to tell us what you think about gaming and gambling!

**I WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT, MY CONTACT DETAILS ARE:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Or you can contact Anita Wong by phone 09 923 1693 or email [anita.wong@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:anita.wong@auckland.ac.nz) for more information on the project

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