

Qualitative Investigation of Indigenous Problem Gambling in Australia

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Based on combined research with

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Introduction

- Need for research on any aspect involving Indigenous peoples to be approached from within an Indigenous paradigm rather than western colonial tradition.
- Latter approach has resulted in a deep mistrust of non-Indigenous researchers and outcomes.
- Culturally safe and respectful research must use ethics and research design, methods and interpretations at least congruent with Aboriginal worldviews.
- But, doing this poses substantial challenges for researchers outside that culture.

Selected Previous Research

- Being Indigenous implicated as a risk factor for gambling problems (Belanger, 2011; Clarke et al, 2006; Raylu & Oei, 2004, Volberg & Abbott, 1997; Wardman et al, 2001; Williams et al, 2011; Wynne & McCready, 2005)
- Under-representation of Indigenous people at professional counseling services (Bellringer et al, 2008; Dyall, 2007; Moore, 2008; Rush et al, 2002)
- Cultural resistance & stigma linked to public disclosure of problems for some Indigenous people (McMillen & Donnelly, 2008; Stevens & Young, 2010)
- Only NZ has multiple level public health strategies aimed at & involving minority groups including Maori and Pacific people (Ministry of Health, 2009).

Prior Australian Research

- 14 studies:
- 6 ethnographies,
- 4 quantitative studies using small convenience samples or secondary data from ABS,
- 4 key informant interviews or consultations (no empirical data).
- Some non Indigenous-specific population surveys have captured Indigenous gambling data, often small skewed samples from telephone surveys.

Background to Indigenous gambling projects undertaken by CGER

1. Three northern QLD locations, PhD (2006-09) qualitative,
2. One northern QLD community (2007-09) quantitative,
3. Regional location in northern NSW - six local government shires (2008-10) qualitative,
4. ARC Discovery (2010-14) - both qualitative & quantitative,
5. Qualitative methods,
6. Traditional card games.

Gambling Uptake: Model of Influences on Gambling Behaviours & Outcomes

(Thomas & Jackson 2004)

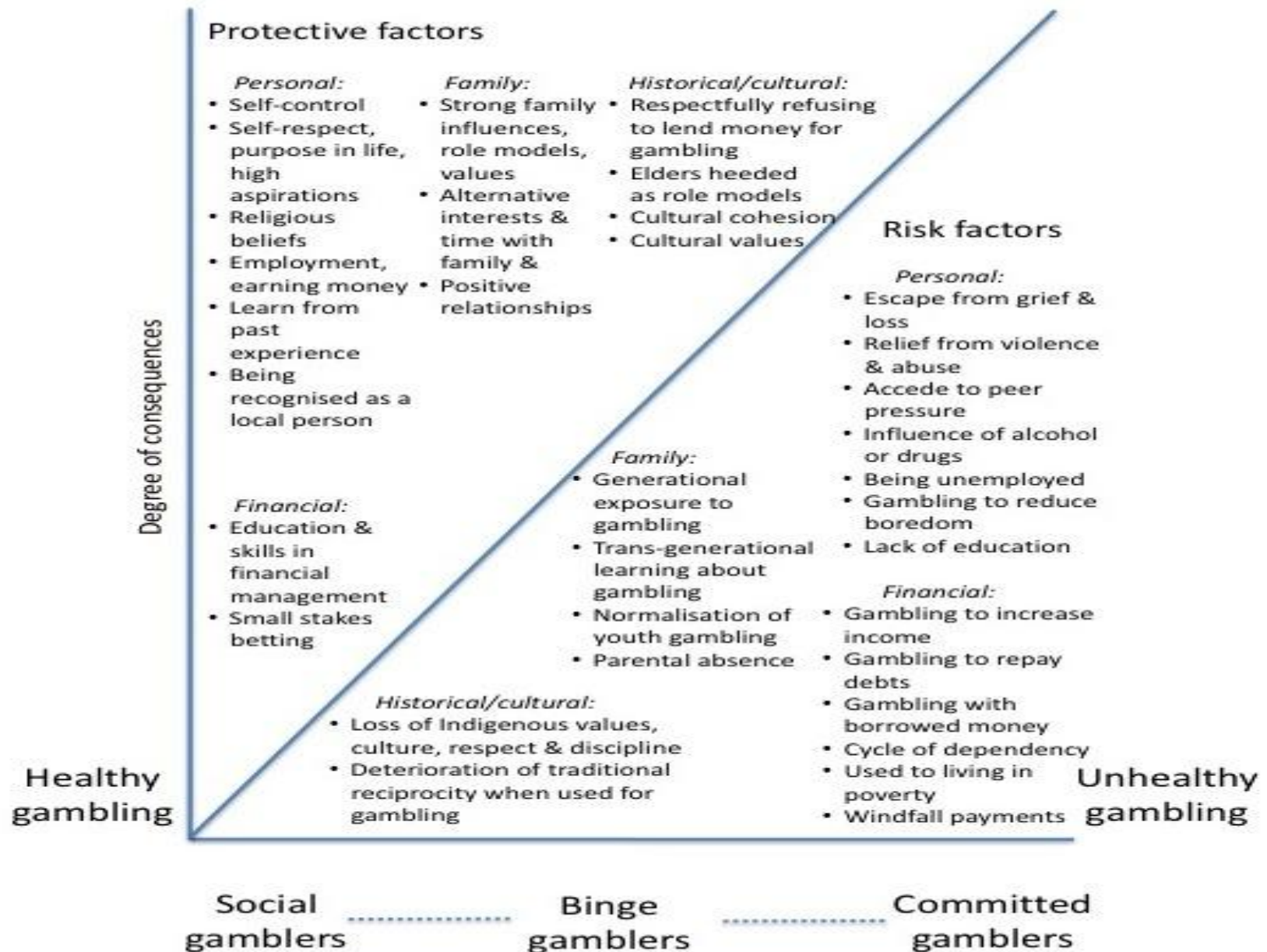


Gambling continuum: typical gambler profiles – cards & commercial

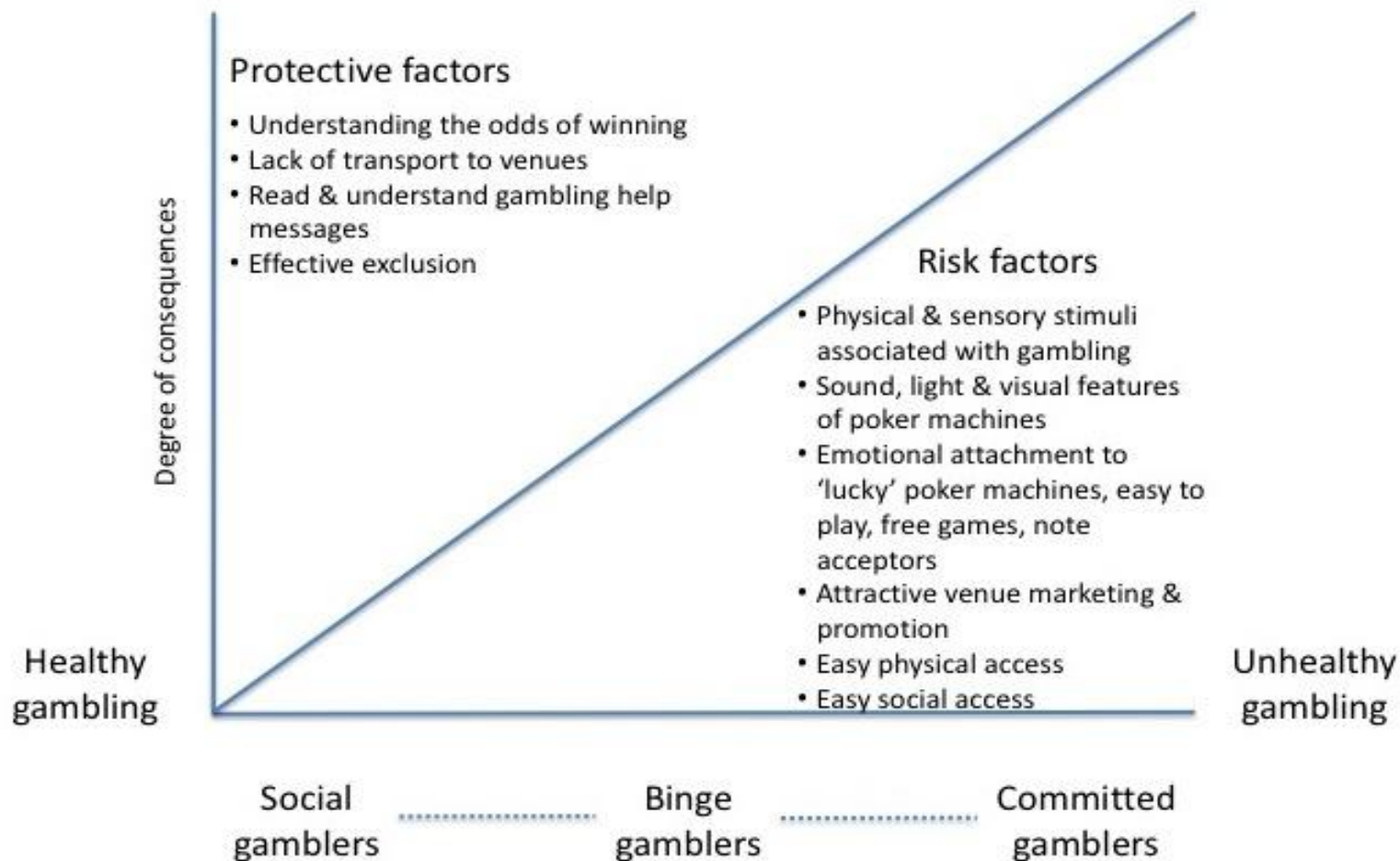


- Social gambler: low stakes, limits on time, shorter sessions, social motivations, engagement with social group, low alcohol use.
- Binge gambler: hover between social & committed gambler type, usually gamble as a social gambler but some triggers set off binge gambling episodes i.e. escape from stress, a distraction from problems, at an event traditionally associated with congregating together & gambling (rodeo).
- Committed gambler: high stakes, long sessions, fast games, frequent gambling, gamble alone, motivations to win money, borrowed gambling funds.

Propensity: risk & protective factors



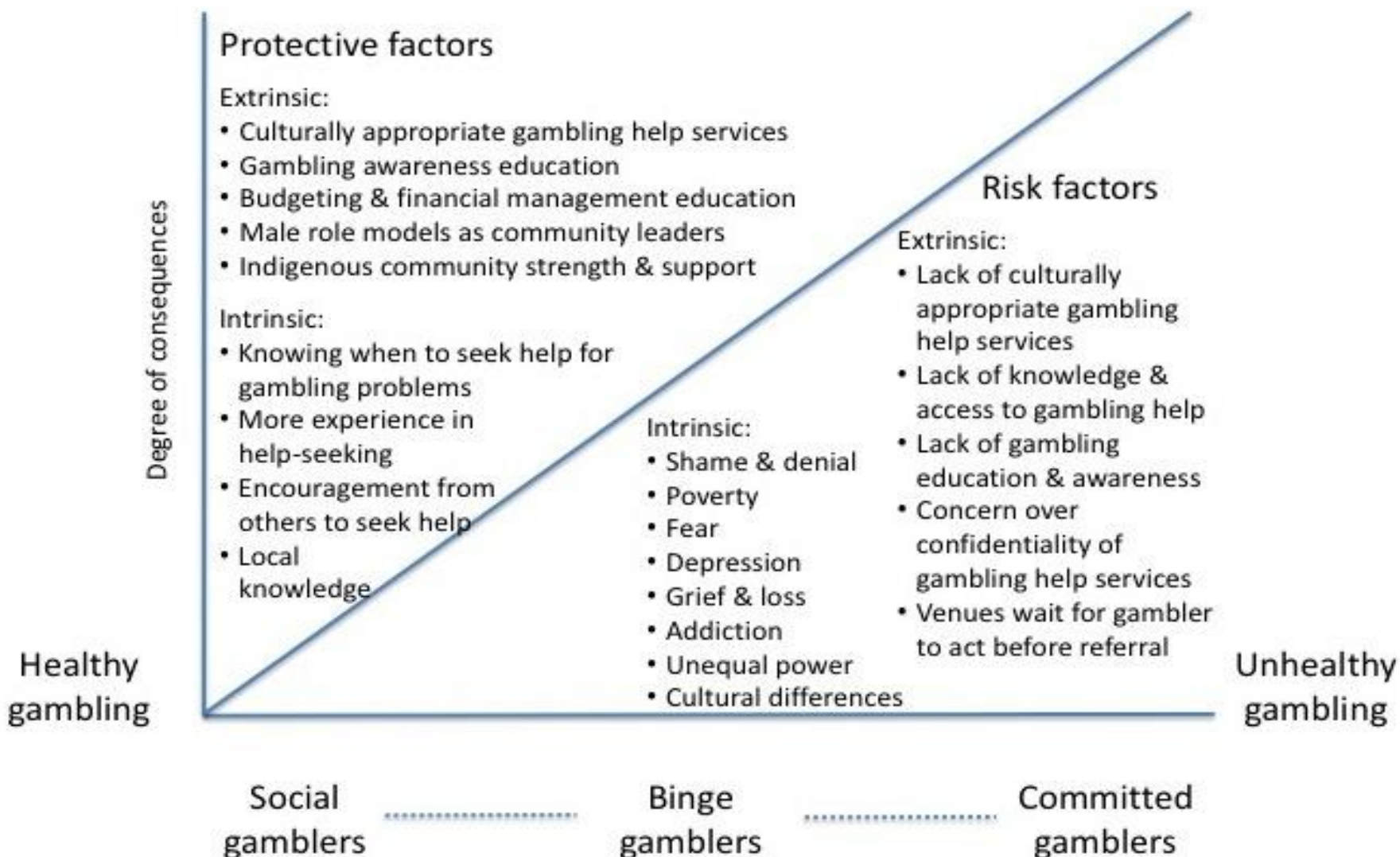
Gambling products & services: risk & protective factors



Participants' quotes identifying risky characteristics of poker machines

- 'Aboriginal people like the features of the machines ... free spins'; 'like the noise, lights, jackpots & features'.
- 'Many Aboriginal people like the machine & the noises it makes'.
- 'What did you come and talk to me for? I was winning, now I have stopped winning because you started talking to me'.
- 'Escape from problems, excitement', 'set up so it's easy to draw people in like a magnet', 'hypnotise people'.
- 'Poker machines are very attractive for visual people, Indigenous Australians are very visual people'.

Gambling consequences: risk & protective factors



Qualitative descriptors of problem gambling

- Financial problems,
- Experiencing a crisis,
- Having no money, no food, unpaid bills, seeking loans, hocking items,
- Being nervous, secretive, anxious,
- Neglecting children & relationships,
- Loss of time,
- Absenteeism.

Preferences for gambling help

1. Self-help
2. Informal help
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Other Indigenous people
3. Professional help

Participants' Suggestions

- Providing gambling education & community awareness campaigns
- Teaching budgeting skills
- Providing information about available services
- Providing Indigenous gambling counseling & treatment services
- Cultural awareness training for non-Indigenous counselors
- Facilitating access to self-exclusion
- Making gambling reforms a government priority - restricting access to poker machines

In conclusion

- Some shift in policy focus:
- More direct attention could be paid to prevention, to recreational & low risk gamblers, rather than concentrating only on people with severe problems.
- More focus on self-help resources and providing appropriate gambling education to Indigenous communities to assist families & friends in helping low risk & moderate risk gamblers effectively as well as problem gamblers.