

**Exploration of Cultural Perceptions, Attitudes and Beliefs
Regarding Gambling and Problem Gambling in the
Vietnamese Speaking Community
in the Greater Toronto Area**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research project represents collaboration between COSTI Immigrant Services and the Vietnamese Association (Toronto).

Purpose of the Research

Given limited research in the area of problem gambling within the ethnocultural communities targeted by this project, the purpose of this research was to explore perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding gambling and problem gambling, and to explore how problem gambling may be prevented and reduced, and to assess how approaches, materials and techniques to address the issue of problem gambling in ethnocultural communities can be developed. The Vietnamese speaking community is one of seven communities involved in this research project, selected based on its size in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Participatory Action Research

In order for the results of this project to be meaningful and useful to the communities involved a participatory approach was used. This means that community stakeholders were actively involved in informing the research process from the onset to the completion of the project.

Data Collection Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative data methods were used to gather data. Focus groups were conducted with service providers and community members as well as conducting individual interviews with service providers who were not able to attend focus groups.

Data Analysis and Results

Qualitative Results

- Resources identified as useful in providing public education on problem gambling include Vietnamese language media, educational workshops, brochures distributed to lawyers, doctors, and other helping professionals and religious leaders. The information delivered should be both in English and Vietnamese and should focus on the whole family and not just the problem gambler.

- Both cultural and language barriers were identified in accessing services. Problem gambling is not generally discussed and people will generally seek help when in crisis. For the most part participants indicated a preference for service in Vietnamese. One focus group indicated that the community prefers ethnospecific services.
- Community members were not sure whether problem gambling was a priority issue in their community. However, service providers did indicate their concern with regards to problem gambling in the community and many reported having cases with either problem gamblers or their family members.
- For the most part, focus group participants were not aware of problem gambling services. Most participants were familiar with Hong Fook Mental Health Association for mental health issues.
- Most focus groups identified adult males as being most at risk of developing problems with gambling. Service providers also mentioned the increasing gambling activity among seniors given the increased accessibility.
- Gambling is an activity associated with some cultural events like Vietnamese New Year's celebrations. Some focus group participants also talked about popular cultural stories that cite the possible negative consequences of gambling as well as religious sanctions against gambling.
- Focus group participants also mentioned that there are gender differences in gambling activity and that there may be more stigma for a female gambler than for a male gambler.

Quantitative Results

- Common recreational activities were reported to be board games, casino games, monopoly, dice games, chess, going to the pool hall, buying lottery tickets, and buying scratch tickets.
- Common activities involving betting include sports betting, football betting, card games, billiards, dice games, bingo, chess, lottery/scratch tickets/proline/keno/raffles, casino games, and horseracing.
- Youth males, adult males followed by adult females and seniors were considered to be at risk of developing problems with gambling.
- 40% reported that gambling is allowed at home.
- 25% reported a cultural/religious taboo regarding gambling.
- A higher number of respondents preferred ethnospecific agencies for help.
- 73 % said that problem gambling is one of the top 10 issues in their community.
- There are no services available in the community to deal with problem gambling.
- The most effective methods of public education were identified to be workshops/seminars (45%) community TV (52%), community newspaper (64%), community radio (34%), community agencies (30%), religious institutions (27%), and cultural events (21%).
- 22% reported awareness of prior public education for problem gamblers.

Conclusion

This research project brought together a number of stakeholders and provided an opportunity for the community to begin to address the issue of problem gambling, while also providing a base for future research, prevention and treatment.