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University

## **Preventive Interventions for Problem Gambling: A Public Health Perspective February 2015**

### **Summary of Findings**

The study, a literature review, explores the evolution of the public health model particularly relating to problem gambling. Prevention approaches and frameworks developed for other related health and wellbeing problems are considered and their relevance and potential application in the problem gambling field discussed.

The ACT Gambling and Racing Commission contracted The Australian National University's Centre for Gambling Research to conduct this research. This research was funded by the Problem Gambling Assistance Fund.

#### **Key results**

The key results of the study are:

- Public health models commonly describe three levels of prevention:
  - universal prevention which is targeted towards the whole population;
  - selective prevention targeted towards those at increased risk of problems;
  - and
  - indicated prevention targeted at those already showing signs of problems.
- A public health approach can be viewed as an overarching framework which has the flexibility to incorporate features of alternative approaches including harm minimisation, mental health literacy, socio-ecological models and social marketing;
- The flexibility of a public health approach allows specific components to be assessed and incorporated to provide a range of identified universal, selective and indicated prevention strategies;
- Currently there may not be sufficient evidence based specific interventions to address all aspects of a complete public health response to problem gambling;
- Specific preventive interventions are less effective when conducted in isolation and are more likely to have impact when they are incorporated into a more comprehensive and coordinated approach;
- A public health framework is an appropriate and useful approach for gambling and problem gambling and provides a basis for a contemporary health promotion framework.

**Support is available**

Anyone experiencing problems with their gambling is urged to seek assistance.

Immediate and free assistance is available anytime by phoning the ACT Gambling Counselling and Support Service on 1800 858 858 or through the national Gambling Help Online service at [www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au)