

Summary of Findings

Aims

The overall aim of this study is to improve understanding of the impacts of gambling on the health and wellbeing of Māori whānau and communities, within the context of whānau ora. Specifically located within a framework which seeks to support the Māori aspirations, it is intended that the outcomes of this research will inform the development of strengths-based approaches to whānau ora as an intervention strategy for problem gambling.

Methods

This research was underpinned by principles of kaupapa Māori research, with qualitative methods and photovoice techniques the key research techniques utilised. Providers from four regions collaborated on this project: Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa (Hamilton); Rangataua Mauriora, Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira, (Wellington); Te Roopu Tautoko Ki Te Tonga Inc (Dunedin); and Toiora Health Lifestyles Ltd (Taranaki). Three key stages comprised the data collection phase: Community Focus Groups; Whānau Photovoice Focus Groups; and Community Wānanga. Nine Community Group Focus Groups, nine Whānau Photovoice Focus Groups and two Community Wānanga were undertaken

This project collates together a large amount of data, with the major challenge being to draw this information together in a way which reflects the key messages and whānau narratives being conveyed, as they relate to gambling and problem gambling within the context of whānau ora.

Key Findings

- gambling had significant harmful effects on the cohesion, cultural identity, and financial stability of Māori families. This included for example, not being able to provide the basic necessities such as food or clothes, lying and secrecy around spending money on gambling, and children waiting outside gambling venues for their parents
- electronic gaming machines, in particular, were identified as having an isolating effect on Māori from families and the community. This was in contrast to older forms of gambling such as housie which facilitated social connectedness and whānau inclusiveness
- there were fundraising benefits to Māori communities from some types of gambling (eg, housie, card games, raffles). However these benefits were very limited and it was unclear whether Māori organisations had equitable access to community funding from the gambling industry
- motivations for engaging in gambling included using it as an emotional relief from stress and daily pressures, as a means to address immediate financial problems, as a source of enjoyment, and stemmed from intergenerational family patterns
- the impacts of gambling on Māori are best understood within a wider historical, socio-economic, and cultural context that includes a focus on whānau ora and communities

Conclusions

The findings from this research have the potential to inform the development of strengths-based approaches to whānau ora as an intervention strategy for problem gambling. Significantly differing from deficit or problem focused approaches, understanding and responding to gambling within a whānau ora framework has particular implications for the way in which gambling is viewed, particularly in relation to the issues which are highlighted as priorities.

There is a complex relationship between cultural endurance, economic survival, emotional survival, accessibility, modes of gambling, inequity, compounding disadvantage and gambling harms. Gambling must be seen within its wider context and not as an isolated event undertaken by individuals. It is an activity which is embedded within multiple cultural, social, and economic contexts, with these all impacting on actions and outcomes.

Although challenging in a sector based environment, whānau ora transcends sectors and is able to be impacted on and contributed to by many different agencies, organisations, groups, and workforces. Key elements of a strengths-based framework are identified, with these providing guidance for those working with Māori whānau within the context of whānau ora, or for those wishing to develop and implement a whānau ora paradigm within problem gambling interventions.