

# The Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling

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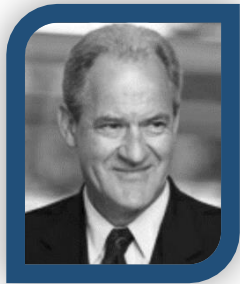
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# Project Overview

- Purpose: develop a clear, comprehensive, **internationally relevant conceptual framework of harmful gambling** that addresses a broad set of factors related to population risk and resilience beyond the symptoms-based view that affects individuals
- Previous models inform the work
- As the project sponsor, OPGRC is collaborating with an expert panel to facilitate the development of a conceptual framework of harmful gambling that captures the broad set of factors related to harmful gambling
- The framework is outlined in a **publication**, jointly authored by the expert panel members, and presented at the **OPGRC website**

# Authors and Contributors



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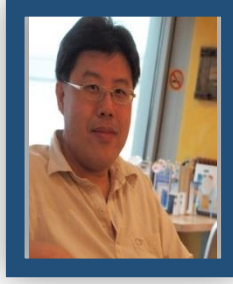
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# Framework Development Process

- The framework is being developed through a number of facilitated working sessions
- The first meeting of the group was in September 2011 to develop a preliminary framework and project plan
- Informed by stakeholder feedback
- Since then, the OPGRC has collaborated on the framework and publication with the expert panel via teleconferences, an online collaborative portal and email

# Key Outcomes

The framework is expected to facilitate **three key outcomes** with the first iteration of the publication focusing on capturing the state of knowledge and subsequent iterations focusing on the other outcomes:

1. To reflect, at a given point in time, **the state of knowledge** (across disciplines and existing models) as it relates to factors impacting harmful gambling and the relationships among those factors
2. To **assist service providers, policy makers, regulators, and the public** to better understand the complex dynamics involved in harmful gambling
3. To act as a **strategic map** that can guide the development of future research programs and identify areas where future research is most needed

# Organizing Principal

- Gambling **harm**
  - Repetitive wagering something of value
  - Recurring negative consequences
- Broader perspective of associated problems and consequences
  - Financial, physical, addictions, mental health
  - Individual, family, society
- Degree of harm ranges
  - Independent of gambling status, severity, frequency, intensity (episodic, binges, transition)

# Framework Factors

- Gambling specific – mostly external, societal
  - Environment
  - Exposure
  - Types
  - Resources
- General – proximal, individual differences
  - Cultural
  - Social
  - Psychological
  - Biological



# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR FACTORS INFLUENCING HARMFUL GAMBLING

## GAMBLING SPECIFIC FACTORS

Gambling Environment

Macro  
Economics

Micro  
Economics

Socio-political  
Environment

Corporate  
Environment

Culture of Social  
Responsibility

Availability of  
Leisure Options

Public  
Policy

Gambling Exposure

Accessibility

Context

Gambling  
Setting

Adaptation

Gambling Types

Event Frequency &  
Arousal

Skill &  
Perceived Skill

Sociability

Gambling Resources

Prevention

Harm  
Reduction

Mutual  
Help

Treatment

Self-Help

Perceptions of  
Problem Solving

## GENERAL FACTORS

Cultural

Ethnicity and traditions

Socio-Cultural Attitudes

Gambling Sub-cultures

Religion and  
other belief systems

Representations and symbolism

Gender

Social

Social Demographics

Education System

Family & Peer Involvement

Neighbourhood

Stigmatization

Deviance

Psychological

Personality & Temperament

Lifespan development

Judgement & Decision Making

Coping Styles

Co-morbid Disorders

Subjective  
Well-Being

Self Perceptions

Social Learning

Biological

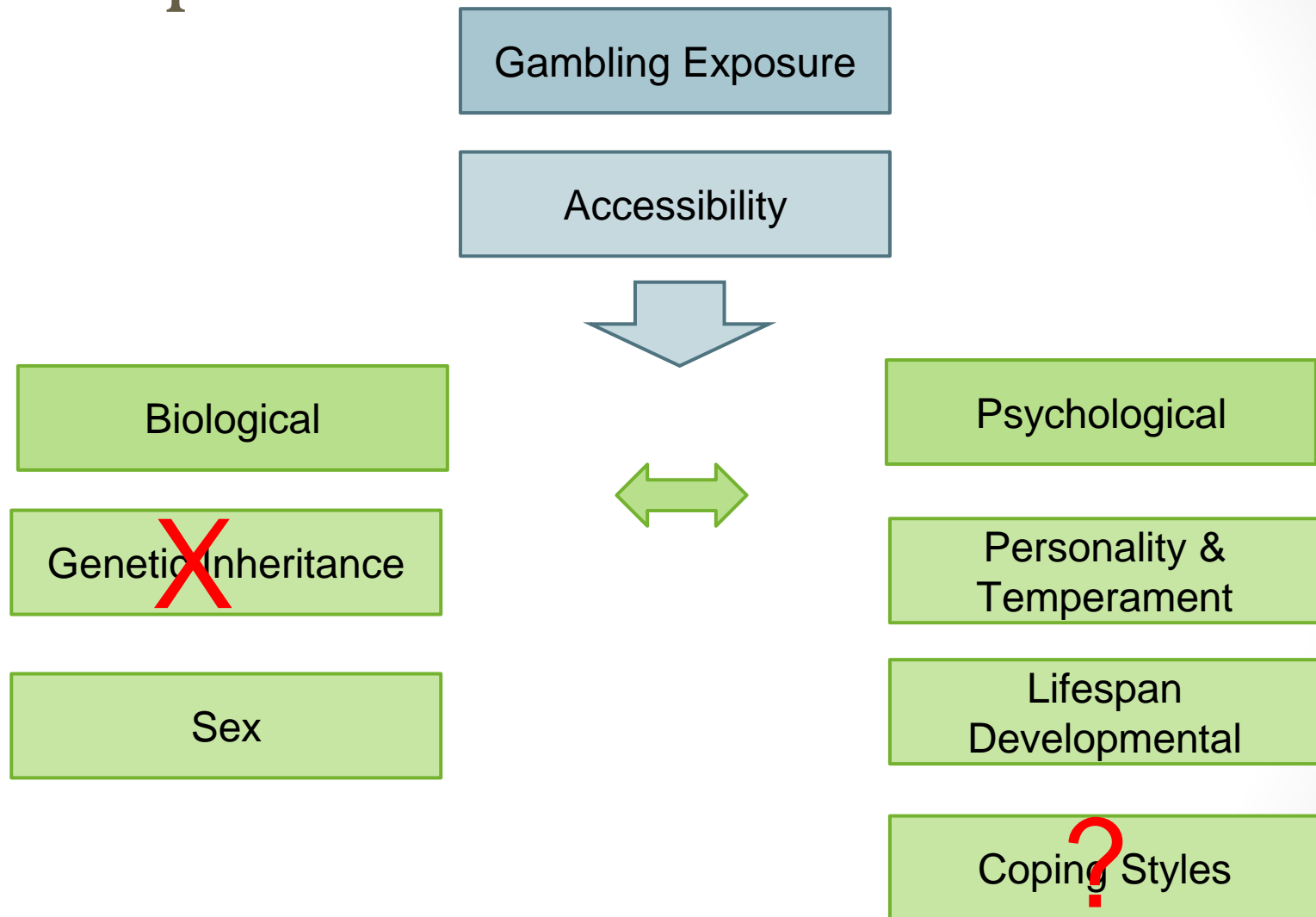
Genetic Inheritance

Neurobiology

Sex



# Example

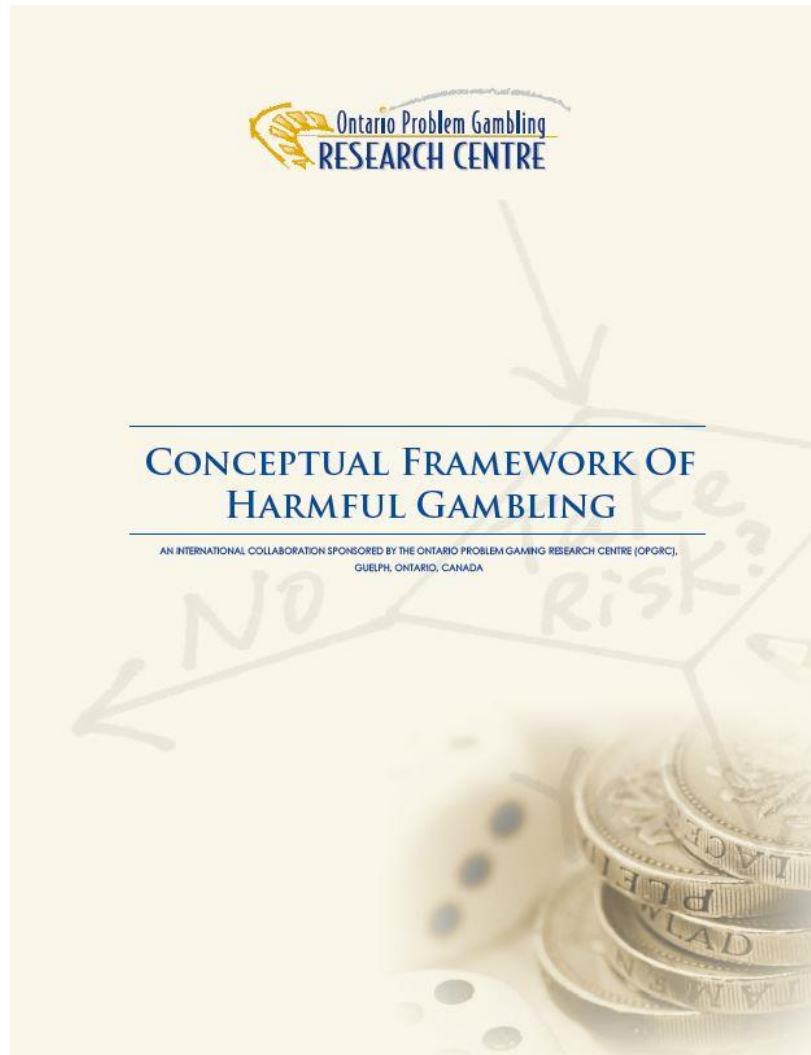


AN INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION SPONSORED BY THE ONTARIO PROBLEM GAMING RESEARCH CENTRE (OPGRC)  
GUELPH, ONTARIO, CANADA

NEWS

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# Publication in PDF-format



Abbott, Max, Per Binde, David Hodgins, David Korn, Alexius Pereira, Rachel Volberg & Robert Williams (2013). *Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling: An International Collaboration*. The Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre (OPGRC), Guelph, Ontario, Canada.



## Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling

Welcome to the Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling, an international collaboration sponsored by the Ontario Problem Gaming Research Centre (OPGRC), Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

While seen by many as a form of leisure and recreation, gambling can have serious repercussions for individuals, families, and society as a whole. The harmful effects of gambling have been studied for decades to attempt to understand individual differences in gambling engagement and the life- course of gambling-related problems.

In this framework, we present a comprehensive, internationally relevant conceptual framework of "harmful gambling" that moves beyond a symptoms-based view of harm and addresses a broad set of factors related to population risk, community and societal effects. Interactive factors represented in the framework represent major themes in gambling that range from specific (gambling environment, exposure, types, and resources) to general (cultural, social, psychological, and biological).

This framework has been created by international and interdisciplinary experts from a variety of stakeholder perspectives – including researchers, treatment providers, operators, policy makers, and individuals and their families – to facilitate an understanding of harmful gambling.

The key objectives of the Framework are to

- reflect for all readers the state of knowledge of the factors influencing harmful gambling;
- assist researchers, treatment providers, policy makers, and regulators to better understand the complex dynamics of harmful gambling and facilitate informed decision making; and
- identify areas where research is most needed in order to guide strategic research programs.

Use the Main Menu to learn more about the Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling. On this website, you will find options to [provide feedback](#) about the Framework and links to related plain language summaries of research using the Interactive Framework.

We hope that you will take a moment to explore the first edition of the *Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling*. We

### How to Use this Website?

You can navigate the conceptual framework in three ways:

1. Use the [menu](#) to learn more about the Framework.
2. Use the [interactive framework](#) to learn more about each factor and link to research synopses and research projects.
3. [Download](#) and read through the PDF.

### Subscribe to Updates!

Use the form below to subscribe and receive an email when the Framework is updated. Don't worry – we won't spam you!



## Ethnicity and Traditions

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| General Factors                      | > |
| Cultural                             | > |
| <b>Ethnicity and Traditions</b>      | > |
| Socio-Cultural Attitudes             |   |
| Gambling Subcultures                 |   |
| Religion and Other Belief Systems    |   |
| Representations and Symbolism        |   |
| Gender                               |   |
| Social                               | > |
| Social Demographics                  |   |
| Education System                     |   |
| Family and Peer Gambling Involvement |   |
| Neighbourhood                        |   |
| Stigmatization                       |   |
| Deviance                             |   |
| Psychological                        | > |
| Personality and Temperament          |   |
| Lifespan Development                 |   |

[Return to Interactive Framework](#)

We have already acknowledged that views on gambling vary between peoples and cultural traditions. These views range from gambling being a fully acceptable activity or even the norm on certain social occasions, to inappropriateness in other cases. Population surveys often show that the demographic category of foreign born individuals has elevated rates of harmful gambling. However, neither minority ethnic groups nor migrant groups are a homogeneous single group.

The cultures and traditions of their countries of origin, and different processes of acculturation, must be considered. While harmful gambling prevalence may be relatively high in some ethnic groups, among other groups – especially among women in these groups – gambling and harmful gambling may be less common than in the host society due to gambling being viewed negatively; little involvement in commercial forms of gambling; and lack of money to spend on gambling. Many groups exhibit bimodal patterns of gambling whereby the group as a whole gambles relatively little, but those members who do gamble do so heavily and experience high rates of gambling problems (Abbott & Volberg, 2000; Kim, 2012; Volberg & Wray, 2007). These are likely sectors of populations in the early stages of introduction to commercial gambling.

In the case of immigrant groups, elevated rates of harmful gambling may have several causes. One category of causes is related to the culture and traditions of the country of origin. The immigrant groups may belong to a culture where views on luck, fortune and destiny increase the risk for harmful gambling or where the level of probabilistic thinking is generally lower. In their culture, gambling may be common and accepted, with heavy gambling less likely to be seen as a problem by the gambler or people around the gambler. In some migrant cultures great value is placed on the possession and display of wealth, which attracts individuals to the world of gambling where great amounts of money rapidly change hands.

By contrast, some cultures consider gambling to be so shameful that individuals might hesitate to talk about or seek help for gambling problems. Finally, in certain cultures there may not be much gambling but if immigrants then move to a host society with plenty of gambling, they may develop unrealistic expectations of making money, which in turn could lead to excessive gambling.

Another category of causes for elevated rates of harmful gambling relates to the experience of migration and of life in the host country. Certain individuals may feel discomfort because of perceptions of being uprooted, loss of social status, altered family roles in the new country and perceptions of being excluded and discriminated against. Such psychological strains may cause them to rely on gambling to relax, dissociate or spend time in a gambling subculture, which increases the risk for harmful gambling. Migrant groups also often include refugees who have suffered physical and emotional trauma and are often characterized by high rates of gambling problems. However, little is known about the precise link between trauma and harmful gambling. Further, in the host society, immigrants or refugees may have a socioeconomically disadvantaged position which in itself constitutes a risk factor for harmful gambling as discussed in section 3.2 Social Factors. Newcomers to the host country may also experience high unemployment rates and gambling

Executive Summary

Gambling Specific Factors

General Factors

Appendices

Acknowledgements

Author Biographies

Cultural

Social

Psychological

Biological

Ethnicity and Traditions

Socio-Cultural Attitudes

Gambling Subcultures

Religion and Other Belief Systems

Representations and Symbolism

Gender

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| Coping Styles         |
| Co-morbid Disorders   |
| Subjective Well-Being |
| Self-perceptions      |
| Social Learning       |
| Biological >          |
| Genetic Inheritance   |
| Neurobiology          |
| Sex                   |

In summary, gambling problems of immigrants arise in the interaction between having roots in another culture, the experience of migration, and the process of integration in the host society. Thus, immigrants themselves do not constitute a problem in relation to gambling. In the case of indigenous minority ethnic groups, the main reason for elevated rates of harmful gambling has been argued by some to be a result of the often marginalized and disadvantaged socioeconomic position of such groups (Breen, & Gainsbury, 2013; Volberg & Abbott, 1997). Factors such as unemployment and low education are known to vary with harmful gambling as discussed in Social Factors.

## Related Synopses [17]

| Title   | Authors   | Journal  | Year |
|---|---|--|------|
| The structure of pathological gambling among Korean gamblers: A cluster and factor analysis of clinical and demographic characteristics.        | Lee, T. K., LaBrie, R. A., Grant, J. E., Kim, S. W., & Shaffer, H. J.           | International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction | 2008 |
| A cross-cultural study of gambling behaviour among adolescents.   | Ellenbogen, S., Gupta, R., & Derevensky, J. L.                                  | Journal of Gambling Studies                          | 2007 |
| A profile of lottery players in Guangzhou, China.   | Zhonglu, Z., & Dongmei, Z.  | International Gambling Studies                       | 2007 |
| Chinese and English probabilistic thinking and risk taking in gambling.   | Lau, L., & Ranyard, R.  | Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology                 | 2005 |
| Cognitive-behavioral therapy for pathological gambling: Cultural considerations.  | Okuda, M., Balna, I., Petry, N. M., Oquendo, M., & Blanco, C.                   | American Journal of Psychiatry                       | 2009 |
| Cultural influences of stigmatization of problem gambling: East Asian and Caucasian Canadians.  | Dhillon, J., Horch, J.D., & Hodgins, D.C.                                       | Journal of Gambling Studies                          | 2011 |
| Disordered gambling among racial and ethnic groups in the US: Results from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. | Alegria, A. A., Petry, N. M., Hasin, D. S., Liu, S., Grant, B. F., & Blanco, C. | CNS Spectrums  | 2009 |
| Gambling cognition and subjective well-being as mediators between perceived stress and  | Tang, C. S., & Oci, T. P.   | Psychology of Addictive                              | 2011 |

## Interactive Framework

This framework represents major themes in gambling that range from specific (gambling environment, exposure, types, and resources) to general (cultural, social, psychological, and biological). This framework has been created by international and interdisciplinary experts from a variety of stakeholder perspectives – including researchers, treatment providers, operators, policy makers, and individuals and their families – to facilitate an understanding of harmful gambling. It not only reflects the state of knowledge as it relates to factors influencing harmful gambling, but also acts to guide the development of future research programs and educate policy makers on issues related to harmful gambling.

## Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing Problem Gambling

Click on any Framework factors below to learn more and link to related synopses and research. Synopses are one-page summaries of published research studies. Learn more about the [Synopsis Project](#).


### GAMBLING SPECIFIC FACTORS

|                      |                             |                         |                             |                       |                                  |                                 |               |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Gambling Environment | Macroeconomics              | Microeconomics          | Socio-political Environment | Corporate Environment | Culture of Social Responsibility | Availability of Leisure Options | Public Policy |
| Gambling Exposure    | Accessibility               | Context                 | Gambling Setting            | Adaptation            |                                  |                                 |               |
| Gambling Types       | Event Frequency & Arousal   | Skill & Perceived Skill | Sociability                 |                       |                                  |                                 |               |
| Gambling Resources   | Prevention & Harm Reduction | Risk Assessment         | Mutual Help                 | Treatment             | Self-Help                        | Perceptions of Problem Solving  |               |

### GENERAL FACTORS

|                          |                           |                             |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Cultural                 | Social                    | Psychological               | Biological          |
| Ethnicity & Traditions   | Social Demographics       | Personality & Temperament   | Genetic Inheritance |
| Socio-Cultural Attitudes | Education System          | Lifespan Development        | Neurobiology        |
| Gambling Subcultures     | Family & Peer Involvement | Judgement & Decision Making | Sex                 |



[Home](#) [Menu](#) [Interactive Framework](#) [Provide Feedback](#) [Download](#)

## Provide Feedback

### Ongoing Development of the Framework

OPGRC is committed to continually improving the Framework so it remains *relevant* and *accessible* to stakeholders and makes a *contribution* to furthering the understanding and awareness of harmful gambling. To achieve this objective, OPGRC has committed to continue to work with the expert panel and stakeholders in the gambling field to expand and refine the conceptual framework based on new knowledge and feedback. Emerging research evidence will be incorporated into subsequent iterations of the document. Through this sustained active engagement from the scientific community and other stakeholders, the Framework is expected to evolve towards meeting our stated objectives. While similar exercises have been attempted in the past no evolving comprehensive framework currently exists in the field.

The Conceptual Framework of Harmful Gambling will be updated annually. Your feedback is important to us in improving the quality and readability of the Framework. Please take a moment to complete the survey below.

**1. How well does the publication meet its [three stated objectives](#)?**

1. To reflect for all readers the current state of knowledge (across disciplines and existing models) as it relates to factors impacting harmful gambling and the relationships among those factors.
2. To assist service providers, policy makers, regulators, and the public to better understand the complex dynamics involved in harmful gambling to enable better informed decision making.
3. To act as a strategic map that can guide the development of future research programs and identify areas where future research is most needed.


**2. Is the Framework structure and terminology explained clearly in the document?**

**3. Did you find the overall document easy to read and understand?**

**4. Do you see the value in the framework being organized around the principle of harm?**

**5. How accessible is the document to a broad audience ranging from researchers, treatment providers, policy makers and the public?**

**6. What value did you derive from reading this publication?**

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# Framework Strengths

- Relevance to public health & addictions
  - PG framed as public health concern
  - Decades behind addictions
- Embraces harm reduction
  - Beyond abstinence to empowerment
- Consideration of non-harmful gambling
  - Recreational; may or may not impact well-being
- Promotes strategic research
  - Identify gaps

# Next steps

- Document sharing
  - Distribution of written document April 2013
  - OPGRC website launch April 2013
  - Interactive web link to synopses May 2013
- Document updating
  - “Living document”
  - Yearly expert panel discussions

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