

Research Agenda: 2010/11

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Research Vision

The Manitoba Gaming Control Commission's (MGCC) operational, policy advisory and public interest activities are consistently grounded in a strong foundation of valid and reliable empirical research. The MGCC combines academic standards with its regulatory perspective to be a leader in gambling research relevant to Manitoba's gaming environment.

Research Mission

The MGCC strategically conducts and supports independent and collaborative research to inform its broad regulatory responsibilities and to build research capacity in the province. Research is conducted within a public health paradigm that emphasizes engaging provincial, national and international stakeholders and partners in the research process. Research integrity is ensured by triangulation, a high degree of methodological rigour, peer review and public dissemination of research.

Research Goals

1. Develop valid and reliable tools for measuring gambling and the impact of gambling in Manitoba.
2. Measure gambling and its impact in Manitoba over time to create an accurate and complete picture of Manitoba's dynamic gaming environment.
3. Monitor operational achievements and identify ways to develop and improve services.
4. Build networks to maximize gambling research and create gambling-related research capacity in Manitoba.

Research Action Plan: 2010/11

Research Goal: 1. Develop valid and reliable tools for measuring gambling and the impact of gambling in Manitoba.

1. **Objective:** *Develop a valid and reliable tool for measuring problem gambling prevalence among adults in Manitoba¹.*

Project: Refining the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI)

Status: In 1999, the MGCC partnered with a national committee to oversee the development of the CPGI, an instrument to measure problem gambling prevalence among Canadian adults. This instrument is internationally recognized as the most valid and reliable measure of problem gambling prevalence. Since releasing the instrument, the national committee has commissioned two reviews to provide direction about research initiatives that would lead to CPGI improvements. In 2009, the committee recruited a panel of three experts in instrument design to lead a series of CPGI refinement initiatives, based on the priorities identified in the earlier reviews.

Plan: The first initiative, an analysis of the Problem Gambling Severity Index's cut-off points and the potential benefits of weighting the index's items, will be complete by late 2010. The national committee will then continue funding additional initiatives to evolve the CPGI so that it remains the choice instrument for researchers measuring problem gambling among adults.

2. **Objective:** *Develop a valid and reliable tool for measuring problem gambling prevalence among youth in Manitoba¹.*

Project: Developing the Canadian Adolescent Gambling Inventory (CAGI)

Status: In 2003, the MGCC partnered with a national committee to oversee the development of the CAGI, an instrument to measure gambling risk and problem gambling in adolescent populations. As it is likely that widely-accepted measures designed for adults are inaccurate when used with adolescent populations, there is a great need for a valid instrument that will allow researchers to conduct consistent and comparable studies of adolescent gambling.

A preliminary CAGI instrument was released in 2008. Since then, extensive validation research has been underway with a sample of youth at high risk of experiencing gambling-related harm. This Phase III research was completed in late 2009.

Plan: The Phase III report, including a final CAGI instrument, will be released in spring 2010. At this point, the MGCC will no longer be directly involved in the CAGI project, as it does not conduct prevalence research. The MGCC will encourage Manitoban prevalence researchers to use CAGI instead of other instruments, like SOGS-RA and DSM.IV-J.

¹ Although the MGCC does not conduct independent prevalence research, it is committed to ensuring that valid measurement instruments are available for researchers who do.

- 3. Objective:** *Develop a valid and reliable tool for assessing the social and economic impact of gambling in Manitoba.*

Project: Advancing the Social and Economic Impact of Gambling (SEIG) Framework

Status: In 2005, the MGCC partnered with a national committee to oversee the development of a framework for measuring gambling's social and economic costs and benefits. This collaboration resulted in the publication of the SEIG Framework in February 2008, after an extensive review by an international panel of gambling research experts. The framework reflects the interdisciplinary and complex nature of gambling research and provides a map for assessing the true impact of gambling from multiple perspectives.

Plan: The SEIG Framework is not a static document, but rather will continually evolve as researchers and policy makers use it to conduct impact studies and as new research emerges to fill the many gaps in present research knowledge. In 2009, the national committee assembled a team of two experts to conduct a detailed analysis of the causality research and data required to sustain the SEIG Framework. This analysis will be complete in fall 2010, at which point the national committee will begin to plan new research initiatives to advance the framework.

The MGCC has chaired the national committee since 2006 and will continue in this leadership role for new SEIG initiatives.

Research Goal: 2. Measure gambling and its impact in Manitoba over time to create an accurate and complete picture of Manitoba's dynamic gaming environment.

- 4. Objective:** *Measure gambling-related attitudes, knowledge and behaviour among Manitobans and monitor changes in these over time.*

Project: Manitobans and Gambling Studies

Status: The MGCC's series of Manitobans and Gambling studies analyze Manitobans' attitudes, awareness, knowledge and behaviours related to gambling. Studies are conducted every three years, and the results of *Manitobans and Gambling* (2004) and *Manitobans and Gambling II* (2007) were used respectively to select the target audiences, messaging and media for the MGCC's 2005 myth-busting campaign and 2008 limit-setting campaign.

In March 2010, the MGCC began collecting data for the third study in this series. *Manitobans and Gambling III* will be used to evaluate the second cycle of the MGCC's limit-setting campaign and to inform the development of new public education initiatives. Although many questions from *Manitobans and Gambling II* (2007) will be asked again to allow for comparisons over time, some sections of the survey will be reworked to address emerging research questions, such as how sensation-seeking preferences relate to the frequency of Manitobans' gambling.

Plan: The *Manitobans and Gambling III* data will be analyzed in summer 2010, and a final report will be released in the fall.

- Objective:** *Explore Manitobans reasons for gambling and how different motives impact gambling choices and behaviours.*

Project: Analyzing Gambling Motives

Status: In 2009, the MGCC collaborated with a professor from the University of Manitoba's Department of Psychology to conduct an indepth analysis of motives data from the *Limit-Setting Campaign Evaluation Report* (2009). The results of this research were written as an academic article.

Plan: The MGCC's *Manitobans and Gambling III* survey included new items to measure gambling motives. The MGCC will analyze this data as a special initiative, again with a view to academic publication, once the *Manitobans and Gambling III* report has been released in fall 2010.

- Objective:** *Identify gaps in knowledge about responsible gambling strategies among Manitobans as well as opportunities to fill these gaps.*

Project: Research on Setting Limits when Gambling

Status: Research on responsible gambling guidelines has begun to dissect the concept of setting limits. In 2008, the MGCC conducted a series of focus groups across the province to learn about Manitobans' limit-setting choices and how best to convey public messages on limit-setting. The focus group findings were used to inform the development of the MGCC's 2008 public education campaign on limit-setting.

Plan: In 2010/11, the MGCC will initiate a project to derive quantitative, Manitoba-specific responsible gambling guidelines, using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey.

- Objective:** *Conduct a longitudinal analysis of young adult gambling that identifies protective factors that promote responsible gambling and risk factors that increase the likelihood of experiencing gambling-related harm.*

Project: Manitoba Longitudinal Study of Young Adults (MLSYA)

Status: The MGCC recognizes that a longitudinal perspective is required to design effective educational and legislative strategies to minimize gambling problems and promote responsible and informed choices. In 2005, the MGCC partnered with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba and Manitoba Lotteries Corporation to conduct the MLSYA, a longitudinal study of young adult gambling. This study is following a sample of 679 Manitobans between the ages of 18 and 20 over a five-year span to analyze their changing gambling-related behaviours and knowledge and identify social, psychological and biological factors that can be linked to these changes. The MGCC's Research Department coordinates the project on behalf of the partners.

Plan: The first cycle of MLSYA data collection was completed in 2008, and the second in 2009. The third cycle of data collection will begin in summer 2010 and will be complete in the fiscal year. Analysis of earlier cycles will continue throughout the fiscal year.

8. **Objective:** Collaborate with First Nations stakeholders to assess the *social and economic impact attributable to the construction and operation of the Aseneskak and South Beach casinos, as required by their Gaming Agreements.*

Project: Assessing the Social and Economic Impact of First Nations Casinos

Status: In 2001, the MGCC documented social and economic benchmarks for Opaskwayak Cree Nation and Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, the First Nations on which Aseneskak Casino and South Beach Casino are respectively located. In 2008, the MGCC continued this work by initiating a project to develop socio-economic impact profiles of these First Nations, based on the SEIG Framework. The MGCC selected a research firm in 2009 to conduct Phase I of this project, which involves analyzing existing quantitative data on the casinos' social and economic impact. Quantitative data assembly and analysis are complete and a final report is expected in April 2010.

Plan: Once the Phase I report is received, planning will begin for future phases of this project, which will involve generating new quantitative and qualitative data to fill the gaps in available indicators of the social and economic impact of the Aseneskak and South Beach casinos.

Research Goal: 3. Monitor operational achievements and identify ways to develop and improve services.

9. **Objective:** *Evaluate the impact of the MGCC's public education initiatives.*

Project: Public Education Campaign Evaluation

Status: In 2009, the MGCC conducted a quantitative evaluation of its 2008 public education campaign on limit-setting to assess the campaign's impact on the strategies used by Manitobans to gamble responsibly. The evaluation process and questions were similar to the MGCC's 2006 evaluation of its myth-busting campaign, although some questions were reworked because of the different goals of the two campaigns. Evaluation results were shared at gambling conferences in 2009 and were used to refine messaging and media choices for the campaign's second run in fall 2009.

Plan: Ongoing evaluations enable the MGCC to continually refine its public education messaging so that it is most effective at reaching Manitobans. In the interest of maximizing resources, questions evaluating the second run of the limit-setting campaign were incorporated into the *Manitobans and Gambling III* survey, the results of which will be published in fall 2010.

10. Objective: *Provide ongoing research support to the MGCC's operational departments.*

Project: Research to support operational initiatives

Status: The Research Department conducts a variety of research projects in collaboration with other MGCC departments, as required to inform operational initiatives.

Plan: In 2009/10, projects will include a stakeholder survey as part of the implementation of the MGCC's strategic plan, an annual employee survey in collaboration with the Human Resources Department, and ongoing statistical analysis of the activities of the Registration and Licensing Departments. Other projects may arise throughout the year.

Research Goal: 4. Build networks to maximize gambling research and create gambling-related research capacity in Manitoba.

11. Objective: *Support graduate research at universities in Manitoba.*

Project: MGCC Graduate Studentship

Status: In 2008, the MGCC launched a studentship program to demonstrate its commitment to supporting high-quality, innovative research and to building research capacity in the province. The program provides financial support of up to \$10,000 to masters and doctoral students who are conducting gambling research at universities in Manitoba.

Plan: This is an ongoing initiative, with studentship competitions held biannually in June and November.

12. Objective: *Foster collaborative and supportive relationships with the academic researchers at universities in Manitoba.*

Project: Assembling an ethics review panel

Status: The MGCC's research initiatives are not eligible for review by university ethics boards. Though the MGCC has assembled ad hoc ethics review panels for some past projects, assembling a permanent ethics review panel would ensure more consistent ethical oversight and would simplify collaborative opportunities with academic researchers.

Plan: In 2010/11, the MGCC will develop terms of reference and recruit academic members for a permanent ethics review panel.

13. Objective: *Collaborate with national partners to promote a better understanding and implementation of responsible gambling programs and to reduce problem gambling through joint research, issue analysis and information sharing.*

Project: Canadian Partnership for Responsible Gambling (CPRG)

Status: In 2004, the MGCC was a founding member of the CPRG, a national collaboration of non-profit organizations, gaming providers, researchers and regulators to find and promote effective ways of reducing the incidence of problem gambling. The MGCC co-chaired the CPRG from 2004 to 2007 and remains an active member.

Plan: The MGCC will continue to contribute to the CPRG and to seek new opportunities to further responsible gambling research and initiatives. Delegates from the MGCC will be attending and writing the final report for the CPRG's April 2010 forum on responsible gambling information centres.

14. Objective: *Create capacity and build networks between key stakeholders involved in First Nations gaming research in Manitoba.*

Project: First Nations Conference Funding

Status: The MGCC was a major financial supporter of the Second and Third National Aboriginal Gambling Awareness Conferences, which were held in Winnipeg in November 2004 and June 2007, respectively. One of NAGAC's objectives is to present Aboriginal problem and responsible gambling research.

Plan: The MGCC is open to similar opportunities to foster collaboration and support research with stakeholders in First Nations gaming in Manitoba. The MGCC has invited representatives from the Aseneskak and South Beach Casinos and from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs' Trust to participate in the CPRG's forum on responsible gambling information centres to boost these agencies' understanding of responsible gambling initiatives and opportunities.

Research Evaluation

Articulating research goals and plans permits the MGCC to evaluate the success of its research and to report on research outcomes. Research success is evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Are research goals and objectives achieved, in keeping with project plans and timelines?
2. Are research planning and processes effective and efficient?
3. Do research projects meet academic standards for ethics, reliability and validity?
4. Is research highly-regarded by the gambling research community and by Manitobans?
5. Do research goals, objectives and projects anticipate the needs of Manitobans and evolve in response to changing needs?
6. Is the MGCC responsive to changes in the provincial, national and international gaming environments and to new findings from the gambling research field?
7. Does the MGCC develop and maintain collaborative research partnerships within and outside of Manitoba?
8. Is gambling-related research capacity growing in Manitoba?