

Research Agenda: 2011/12

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Research Vision

The Manitoba Gaming Control Commission's (MGCC) operational, policy advisory and public interest activities are 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 reliable and valid 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 reliable and valid tools for measuring gambling and the impact of gambling in Manitoba.

1. **Objective:** *Develop a reliable and valid 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 an interprovincial consortium of gambling research, regulatory and treatment organizations, now called the Canadian Consortium for Gambling Research (CCGR), to develop the CPGI, an instrument that is now internationally recognized as the most reliable and valid measure of problem gambling prevalence among adults. After the instrument had been in use for five years, the CCGR commissioned two reviews to provide direction about research initiatives that would lead to CPGI improvements. The CCGR is now funding this series of prioritized research initiatives, guided by a panel of three experts in instrument design who were recruited to lead the initiatives.

The first initiative, an analysis of the cut-off points for gambling risk levels, was completed in November 2010 and has resulted in modifications to the Problem Gambling Severity Index's scoring rules for the low-risk and moderate-risk subtypes. A second initiative is currently underway to develop new items to assess gambling-related harm more broadly.

Plan: The second initiative will be complete by fall 2011. The CCGR is continuing to pursue additional initiatives to refine the CPGI so that it remains the instrument of choice for researchers measuring problem gambling among adults.

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

Project: Developing the Canadian Adolescent Gambling Inventory (CAGI)

Status: In 2003, the MGCC partnered with the CCGR to develop the CAGI, the first gambling risk and prevalence instrument designed specifically for use with adolescent populations. This project was undertaken in three phases that included extensive validation with school-based samples in Manitoba and Quebec and with a sample of youth at high risk of experiencing gambling-related harm. The CCGR released the Phase III report, including the final CAGI instrument in English and French, in July 2010.

Plan: The MGCC does not conduct problem gambling prevalence studies, and so will not be using the CAGI in its independent research. The MGCC encourages Manitoban prevalence researchers to use the CAGI instrument.

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

3. **Objective:** *Develop reliable and valid methodologies 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 the CCGR to develop a framework for measuring gambling's social and economic impact. This collaboration resulted in the 2008 publication of the SEIG Framework, after an extensive review by an international panel of gambling research experts. The framework reflects the interdisciplinary and complex nature of this kind of research and provides a map for assessing gambling's positive and negative impact from multiple perspectives.

In 2009, the CCGR recruited two experts to conduct an international review of existing impact studies and to propose research required to advance the SEIG Framework. The final report for this analysis was released in March 2011. Based on a review of nearly 500 studies, the analysis proposed a series of best practices for conduct SEIG studies and suggested new research directions to advance the current understanding of gambling's impact.

Plan: The CCGR is currently discussing its next research directions, including potential new SEIG projects. The MGCC has chaired the CCGR's SEIG subcommittee 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. 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 2010, data were collected and analyzed for *Manitobans and Gambling III*, and the final report was released in September 2010.

Plan: The MGCC will conduct its fourth Manitobans and Gambling study in 2013. Though many questions from earlier studies will be asked again to allow for comparisons over time, some sections of the survey will be reworked to address emerging research questions.

5. **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 Dr. Michael Ellery, an assistant professor in the University of Manitoba's Psychology Department, to analyze the factor structure of the motives data from the *Limit-Setting Campaign Evaluation Report* (2009). The results of this research were written as an academic article, which was accepted for publication in *The Journal of Gambling Studies* in 2010. Publication of this article made the MGCC among the first regulatory agencies in the world to publish its research in a peer-reviewed, academic journal.

The MGCC's *Manitobans and Gambling III* (2010) survey included eight new gambling motives items. The MGCC began analyzing the factor structure of these motives in early 2011, again with a view to academic publication.

Plan: The MGCC will complete this analysis and begin submitting the article for publication by fall 2011. It is the MGCC's hope that a more sophisticated understanding of the motives behind gambling will eventually allow the MGCC to tailor its public education messaging to people who gamble for different reasons.

6. **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 time and money limits when gambling. 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 about limit-setting. The focus group findings were used to inform the development of the MGCC's 2008 limit-setting campaign.

Plan: In 2011/12, the MGCC will initiate a project to derive quantitative, Manitoba-specific responsible gambling guidelines, using data from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey. The results of this research will be used to inform the development of the MGCC's next public education campaign.

7. **Objective:** *Explore young adult Manitobans' perceptions of risks, costs and value of gambling.*

Project: Research on Perceived Risks, Costs of Play and Value of Time Spent Gambling

Status: One of the challenges in developing the MGCC's limit-setting campaign was trying to select language that would resonate with gamblers, particularly with young adult gamblers. A better qualitative understanding of how young adults perceive and conceptualize gambling risks, costs and value would be helpful to inform responsible gambling initiatives and would potentially influence a paradigm shift with respect to gambling decision-making.

Plan: In 2011/12, the MGCC will conduct focus groups with young adults to explore concepts of perceived risks, costs of play and value of time spent gambling. The results will be used to inform the development of the MGCC's next public education campaign.

8. **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 strategies to minimize gambling problems and promote responsible and informed choices. In 2005, the MGCC partnered with Manitoba Lotteries Corporation and the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba to conduct the MLSYA, a longitudinal study of young adult gambling. Since 2007, this study has been following a sample of 679 young adult Manitobans 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 fourth/final cycle of MLSYA data collection will begin in May 2011 and will be complete in the fiscal year. Preparations of data sharing protocols with partners and planning for a series of longitudinal research projects will begin during the year so that project work can begin immediately when the data collection is complete.

9. **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.*

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 analyze existing quantitative data and begin to develop impact profiles of these First Nations, based on the SEIG Framework. The project report, released in March 2011, emphasizes the significant challenges and limitations encountered in developing these profiles, particularly that knowledge is lacking about how to attribute impact to the introduction or availability of gambling, and that methodologies do not exist that allow for meaningful comparisons of monetary and non-monetary impacts.

Plan: Given the magnitude of the challenges faced in developing these impact profiles, the MGCC has postponed plans to generate qualitative follow up data until these challenges have been resolved by the broader research community. The MGCC will continue to focus on advancing the SEIG Framework through its participation in projects with the CCGR.

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

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

Project: Public Education Campaign Evaluation

Status: The MGCC evaluates its public education campaigns to assess their impact on Manitobans' gambling-related knowledge and behaviours. Thorough quantitative evaluations were conducted after the first runs of both the MGCC's myth-busting (2005) and limit-setting (2008) campaigns. Evaluation results were used to refine messaging and media choices in subsequent campaign runs to maximize the campaign's effectiveness at encouraging Manitobans to gamble responsibly.

Plan: The MGCC will be developing a new public education campaign in the latter half of the fiscal year and will conduct a campaign evaluation in 2012/13.

11. 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 2011/12, planned initiatives will include an annual employee survey and Learn @ Work Week evaluation in collaboration with the Human Resources Department and ongoing statistical analysis of the operational departments' activities. Other projects may arise throughout the year.

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

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

Project: MGCC Graduate Studentship

Status: The MGCC launched its 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. The MGCC awarded its first studentship in September 2010 to a Masters of Science (Marketing) student who is studying online poker players' motives for gambling.

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

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

Project: Assembling an Ethics Review Panel

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

Plan: In 2011/12, the MGCC will recruit academic members for a permanent ethics review panel.

14. Objective: *Collaborate with national partners to conduct major gambling research initiatives.*

Project: New Interprovincial Collaborative Research

Status: The MGCC has collaborated successfully with CCGR partners in three successful initiatives: development and refinement of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index, development of the Canadian Adolescent Gambling Inventory, and development and review of the Social and Economic Impact of Gambling Framework. Contributing to interprovincial projects maximizes the MGCC's use of resources by allowing the MGCC to contribute to major research initiatives while sharing the costs with other organizations.

Plan: As current CCGR projects are complete or nearing completion, members are beginning to discuss new opportunities for research collaboration. If new projects fit within the MGCC's research mandate, the MGCC will continue to participate in this valuable consortium.

15. 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 as part of this partnership.

16. Objective: *Create capacity and build networks between key stakeholders involved in First Nations gambling 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 responsible and problem gambling research.

Plan: The MGCC is open to similar opportunities to foster collaboration and support research with stakeholders in First Nations gaming in Manitoba.

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 principles:

1. Research goals and objectives are achieved within project budgets and timelines.
2. Research planning and processes are efficient and effective.
3. Research meets academic standards for ethics, reliability and validity.
4. Research is highly-regarded by the gambling research community and by Manitobans.
5. Research goals, objectives and projects anticipate the needs of Manitobans and evolve in response to changing needs.
6. The MGCC is responsive to changes in the provincial, national and international gaming environments and to new findings from the gambling research field.
7. The MGCC develops and maintains collaborative research partnerships within and beyond Manitoba.
8. Gambling-related research capacity is growing in Manitoba.