

**International Gambling Studies** >

Volume 13, 2013 - Issue 1

1,344

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Impact of problem gambling on financial, emotional and social well-being of Singaporean families

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Pages 127-140 | Received 24 May 2012, Accepted 13 Sep 2012, Published online: 31 Oct 2012

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Abstract

Problem gambling has a profound impact on family members. While this has been previously documented, this paper reports on the first study to consider the extent of this impact in Asian societies where the family continues to be a very important basis for social organization. This study, based on in-depth interviews with 50 Singaporeans with a family member who is a problem or pathological gambler, examines how their financial, emotional and social well-being is impinged upon by gambling. The enormous losses of savings, property and lifestyle, the emotional tensions based on constant harassment from moneylenders, the threats of suicide by the gambler and the distancing of social networks place family members of problem gamblers in a vulnerable state. The qualitative data in this paper fleshes out the lived experience of

family members and reveals the extent to which the family is mobilized in Asian societies to cope with problem gambling. While the impact of problem gambling on

families is similar across societies, routine mobilization of the extended family and the greater role of public shame and embarrassment in dictating Asian families' responses underscore the need for specialized services in these societies to assist family members to better cope with the financial, emotional and social strains caused by problem gambling.

Keywords: [families](#) [gambling](#) [Asian](#)

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the generous funding of the Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports, Singapore, towards completing this research.



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