
Talking about Casino Gambling: Community Voices From Boston Chinatown

A report prepared by

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First published on October 24, 2019

Updated on July 20, 2020

Acknowledgments

The authors thank members of the research team for their collaborative guidance, meticulous work, and generosity in contributing time and expertise. Yanhua Li provided leadership in the articulation of our research questions, conceptual framework, writing of interview questions, protocols, interpretation of interview data, and training of the research team. Yoyo Yau, Director of Family and Community Engagement at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, advised in all phases of the research, including interview methods and analysis of interview data. Pong Louie and Terry Yin conducted, transcribed, and translated interviews, and contributed to the analysis of the interview data, with the assistance of Fengqing (Tina) Wang, Lawrence Li, Alan Xie, Charlie Phan, Long Long, Hsin-ching Wu, and Abigail Yu. Carolyn Rubin read the entire report and suggested improvements.

The Gaming Research Advisory Committee of the Massachusetts Gaming Commission provided valuable suggestions on the design of this research project. The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling applied their prior experience in community education in Chinatown and other Asian American communities to make useful recommendations. We thank Victor Ortiz, Director of Problem Gambling Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, who advised on community engagement approaches. Chien-chi Huang, Executive Director of Asian Women for Health, offered suggestions on community-based research and approaches to gambling education. The Asian American Commission gave support and advice on research goals.

We thank the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and the Public Health Trust Fund Executive Committee for their support of this project.

Executive Summary

This pilot study examined the casino gambling practices of residents and workers in Boston Chinatown. Our aim was to learn about the trajectory and life context of individual participants' gambling activity, including how individual participants describe their motivation, nature and frequency of gambling, and its effects on self and family. The research was conducted by a university based research team in partnership with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, and with the assistance of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

Twenty-three individuals participated in face-to-face interviews. Most participants were low-wage workers or retirees from the food and services industries in Chinatown. All but three had limited English proficiency and spoke in their preferred Chinese dialect. The three who preferred to interview in English had some college education. The convenience sample included individuals whose self-reported behavior indicated they were recreational gamblers or at risk for problem gambling. Researchers followed strict protocols to protect confidentiality of participants. No names, phone numbers, or addresses of participants were ever revealed to researchers.

The stories told by our participants illustrate multiple and overlapping risk factors for problem gambling. Our conceptual approach took into account the dynamic interaction of risk factors from multiple sources: stressors in participants' daily lives rooted in socio-economic conditions, exposure to targeted marketing aimed at Chinese immigrants inside and outside the casino, casino inducements, family contexts, and individual-level psychological and/or emotional factors. Protective factors include the support of social networks or families.

It is known that cultural influences in immigrant communities are complex and varied, affecting individuals differently from varied generational, age, gender, and place of origin backgrounds. Our approach and findings challenge erroneous notions found in popular media and some misinformed academic writings that homogenize and reify culture by depicting Chinese as "gamblers". Many of interviewees described varying degrees of dependency on gambling in casinos to relieve the drudgery of work in low-paying jobs in the food service industry, and the isolation of life in linguistically isolated neighborhoods with few alternative opportunities for recreation.

Participants expressed concern about increased risk for problem gambling with the establishment of the new Encore Boston Harbor casino. There are no culturally-appropriate prevention and treatment programs in Chinatown. Interview themes point to why there is an urgent need to fill this gap: concentrated poverty, social isolation, language and cultural difference, lack of recreational alternatives, and the longstanding practice of casino targeted advertising to Chinatown community members. The need for evidence-based and culturally appropriate prevention and treatment programs is shared by other low-income Asian American communities in Massachusetts.

The research team recommends that the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and Public Health Trust Fund support:

Culturally appropriate prevention and services for Asian Americans

- (1) Public health campaigns, including youth and adults.
- (2) Treatment services and culturally appropriate wellness programs.
- (3) Preventive education and services for casino workers of Asian descent and immigrant background.
- (4) Provision of state-supported reimbursement for services.
- (5) Training of professional counselors in community settings.

Participatory deliberation in regulatory process:

- (6) Engagement of community-based organizations and professionals knowledgeable about Asian American communities in goal-setting for reducing the negative impact of legalized gaming on the low-income Asian populations.
- (7) Community engagement at the grassroots level in public policy deliberations.
- (8) Formation of a regulatory advisory committee to review the ethics of targeted ethnic marketing practices toward vulnerable populations, including low-income, racial-ethnic minority and immigrant communities.

Expanded scope of collaboration and services:

- (9) A co-learning and mutual support pan-Asian American coalition of community-based organizations that provide family support and wellness programs for immigrant and refugee communities in the region.
- (10) Community-based efforts to provide healthy and culturally appropriate recreational alternatives to casino gambling in local neighborhoods.

A five-year research program to develop:

- (11) Increased understanding of social-economic impacts of legalized casino gaming in ethnically diverse Asian Americans communities.
- (12) Culturally appropriate health communication approaches for research dissemination and implementation in Asian American communities.
- (13) Methods to obtain representative samples for hard to reach populations.
- (14) Expansion of research on Asian Americans prioritizing for next steps study of gambling problems, prevention, and treatment in communities of low-income Vietnamese and Cambodians residing in Dorchester, Quincy, Lowell, Malden, and Worcester.

Part 1: Research Aims and Methods

The primary purpose of this project was to learn about casino gambling and risk factors for problem gambling among ethnic Chinese individuals who are patrons of Connecticut casinos and work in low-wage jobs in or near Boston Chinatown. The process of examining risk factors led to a complementary exploration of protective factors. The university-based research team developed the research design and implementation in close collaboration with a community partner, the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), and with the assistance of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling (MCCG).

The research strategy used qualitative methods to learn about gambling behavior and risk, as well as effects of casino gambling on individuals and families. We recruited a convenience sample of primarily low-wage workers and their spouses and conducted in-depth, face-to-face, interviews in the language dialect of their preference. Most individuals worked in Chinatown and lived in Chinatown or a neighborhood in an accessible location and with a concentration of Chinese immigrant residents. To diversify the sample, we also recruited a small number of college educated professionals.

Collecting qualitative data from face-to-face interviews had two distinct advantages. First, the semi-structured interviews allowed research participants to communicate information about their gambling activity and thoughts about its effects on their lives using their own frameworks of thinking and preferred language idiom, rather than responding to pre-established conceptual concepts and fixed categorical answers. Second, oral interviews fit the communication style of many residents of Chinatown with limited formal education. To realize these two research advantages, we ensured that participants could communicate in their preferred language dialect, providing interviewers proficient in the three Chinese dialects spoken by most Chinatown residents and workers: Cantonese, Mandarin, or Taishanese. Recruitment and interviewing in participants' preferred dialects helped establish trust, which was critical in seeking candid information on the very sensitive subject of gambling and gambling problems.

Many of the Chinese immigrant patrons constitute a population group vulnerable to gambling problems because of their disadvantaged work, turbulent family life, small social networks, and limited neighborhood-based resources for recreation.

Why Prioritize Chinatown for Gambling Research?

Boston Chinatown is a neighborhood of concentrated poverty with many residents employed in low-paying jobs and lacking proficiency in English (Asian Americans Advancing Justice, 2013; Boston Public Health Commission, 2013). It is commonplace to see sizeable groups of service workers and residents gathering to ride Chinatown buses to casinos, which depart every couple of hours, seven days a week. Many of the Chinese immigrant patrons constitute a population group vulnerable to gambling problems because of their disadvantaged

work, turbulent family life, small social networks, and limited neighborhood-based resources for recreation (Fong, 2005).

Proximity to the new Encore Boston Harbor casino in Everett, MA, has raised concern in the Chinatown community, including among several of our research participants, about increased risk exposure of community members vulnerable to gambling problems. The casino is easily accessible from Chinatown and the Chinese enclaves in Quincy and Malden. From Chinatown residents can take the Orange MBTA line to Malden Center, where a free casino shuttle takes customers directly to the casino. A couple weeks after the casino opening, our researchers took this route mid-day on a weekday, riding on a full shuttle bus with persons who appeared to be 95% of Asian descent. The proximity of the new Everett casino to Boston Chinatown will vastly increase access to gambling activities for casino patrons from Chinatown, as well as other Asian Americans, including Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Chinese in Quincy, Dorchester, Malden, and Lowell.

Chinatown is often the first destination point for work and residence for immigrant workers and the elderly (Asian Americans Advancing Justice, 2013). Among immigrants, many have enjoyed games combining varied degrees of skill and chance in private social settings as a form of socializing and leisure in their communities of origin in China. The social games were typically not commercialized and there was no lure from sophisticated and targeted ethnic marketing campaigns conducted by large gambling enterprises to “win big”. Because in China, casinos are not present outside of Macau and most gambling is illegal, for most first generation immigrants from China their first exposure to casino gambling is likely to be in the U.S. unless they were able to visit Macau where gambling is legal. In the U.S., casino gambling is legal in many cities and suburban areas. Casinos are often accessible by a low-cost bus ride from places of work or residence.

Concentration of Low-Income Residents, Social and Linguistic Isolation: Our study targeted low-wage immigrant workers with limited English proficiency. We prioritized this population sector because of its vulnerability to gambling problems (Fong, 2005; Kong et al., 2013; Welte, Barnes, Tidwell, & Hoffman, 2011; Welte, Barnes, Wieczorek, Tidwell, & Parker, 2004). Nineteen (nine males, ten females) of our twenty-three research participants fit this socio-demographic profile. Two of these twenty-three participants were spouses of gamblers and spoke about family effects; these two persons did not report gambling much themselves. Two other persons among the twenty-three participants were both the female spouses of individuals who engaged in casino gambling and also took part in this gambling activity themselves.

The Boston Health Commission has compiled census data comparing socio-economic indicators across the city’s neighborhoods. In 2010, Chinatown’s population numbered 12,843 persons and over the previous decade had experienced the largest population growth (39.7 percent) of all Boston neighborhoods (the next largest was in South End (21.6 percent)). The 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that 24 percent of all families in Chinatown had incomes below the poverty level, while comparable percentage for all families in Boston remained under 20 percent. In Chinatown 35 percent of the population 26 years and older had less than a high school diploma, compared to 14 percent in Boston as whole (Boston Public Health Commission, 2013).

Beyond socio-economic disadvantages, other factors have been shown to increase the risk for gambling disorders among immigrants and racial-ethnic minorities (Fong, 2005). For many immigrants employed in restaurants, eateries, and other ethnic businesses, there is little time for recreation after working long hours in physically demanding and low-paying jobs. Economic disadvantage and cultural difference lead to social isolation, which is increased when immigrants experience prejudice and discrimination, heightening distress, loneliness, and alienation. Recreational gambling can be one of the few outlets for entertainment available to immigrants and is often benign in its effects on financial and general well-being. However, the risk of gambling becoming compulsive and going untreated by professional health providers is increased in Chinatown because of the lack of culturally appropriate treatment. Furthermore, many residents have difficulty navigating complex healthcare and insurance systems or obtaining health information from sources widely used by people who are English and computer proficient. Although the largest community health clinic in Chinatown provides behavioral health services, for persons concerned about gambling problems insurers require clinical diagnosis of gambling disorder according to DSM-5 criteria. At this site, state-supported treatment for gambling problems is not available.

In Boston Chinatown, moreover, there are few programs and little space for residents to engage in recreational activities. The only outdoor public space for sports is a small asphalt area next to Highway 93, where heavy vehicular traffic emits toxic air pollution (Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health, 2017). Although many of the nonprofit organizations in Chinatown cultivate strong communities among their service population, these circles are tight-knit and often need-specific. The underemployed, elderly, at-risk youth, and mothers of children with special needs constitute the major sub-groups of the Chinatown population. There are opportunities for them to support each other, but the lack of a “third space” in Chinatown, and the relative disinvestment from state and local government have led to a loss of cohesion among community-members, and as a result, less social connectedness and resilience. Notably, several of our research participants reported that they did not engage in casino gambling until coming to the U.S. and living in this context, which is not surprising because casino gambling is illegal in China outside of Macau.

Targeted Advertising and Casino Patronage: The practice of targeted ethnic marketing to attract Chinese customers to casinos is well-honed and widely practiced. Because our study focused on Chinatown residents and workers who gambled at the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos in Connecticut, we note the following comments of the senior vice president of marketing at Mohegan Sun, quoted in the Connecticut Courant in 2007.

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Asian American customers represent about 25 percent of the casino's table game revenue, and that clientele has grown by about 45 percent over the past two years, said Anthony Patrone, senior vice president of marketing at Mohegan Sun. Although many casinos cater to an Asian clientele, Patrone said he believes none has gone this far, especially for the day-trip customers who arrive on one of 48 daily buses catering to the Asian customers... "It is our most robust segment in terms of growth," Patrone said. "It is easy to spend capital on a fast-growing market." (Peters, 2007)

In a similar vein, an article in a tourism trade journal reported that Foxwoods, the biggest casino in the world based on gambling floor space, estimates that at least one-third of its 40,000 customers per day are Asian. Mohegan Sun says Asian spending makes up a fifth of its business and has increased 12 per cent during the first half of this year alone (Simpson, 2006).

The targeted marketing toward Asians is evident from the online marketing webpages of Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos. Both have specialized “Asian webpages”, which advertise transportation options: On July 16, 2019, 18 Asian line runs were listed from the Boston metropolitan area and Lawrence to Mohegan Sun; and 27 to Foxwoods. The webpage ads are written in Chinese but not Spanish or any other minority language. Inside the casino, another marketing device targeted Chinese customers is clear on the electronic gaming machines: among the techniques are display of brightly colored Chinese themed images and game themes on the screens.

The purpose of the present study was not to examine advertising practices of the casino industry. However, published standards of corporate social responsibility for the gaming industry (Chóliz, 2018) and a recent report by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (Marotto, n.d.) point to the need for close scrutiny of advertising messages that inflate chances of winning or getting rich or saturate media venues (United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2019), especially in communities of vulnerable populations.. In Canada and Europe, there is widening discussion of standards for socially responsible casino advertising. For example, one professor of gambling studies in the United Kingdom wrote: "Most of us who work in the field of responsible gambling agree that all relevant governmental gambling regulatory agencies should ban aggressive advertising strategies, especially those that target people in impoverished individuals or youth (Griffiths, 2015). Opposition to aggressive advertising targeting ethnic Chinese markets among community leaders has recently grown in Ontario, Canada, as illustrated by one local news story with this headline: “Ontario, Canada Gaming Campaign Lures Chinese Gamblers, Despite Indications of High Risks for Addiction” (Smith, 2018).

Need for Education on Problem of Reifying Chinese Culture: The playing environment for Chinese social games in immigrant communities stands in stark contrast to the commercialized casino setting, where some table games are derived from traditional Chinese games and slots machines feature Chinese themes. Among Chinese immigrants, playing social games, including Chinese card or tile games, such as Mahjong, in homes, private parks, and other community spaces is a popular recreational pastime. (Kim, 2012; Loo, Raylu, & Oei, 2008; Raylu & Oei, 2004). Recent research indicates healthy Mahjong playing among elderly may have positive effects by promoting social engagement and cognitive activity. (Kim, 2019) Mahjong as a social game has served to build social and community bonds not only among Chinese immigrants but also in Jewish American communities since the early 20th century (Walters, 2013). In contrast, playing Chinese themed table or electronic machine games in casinos can easily heighten the risk of addiction, especially when fast repeat play is a feature of electronic games, sophisticated marketing messages encourage players’ dreams of huge winnings, and free drinks are served.

Some studies have examined gambling behavior among people of varied cultural backgrounds (Oei, Raylu, & Loo, 2019). Published research provides no

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scientific data that culture is a causal factor giving rise to gambling problems among cultural-minority populations. Our approach to investigating cultural factors among Chinese immigrants is informed by a long tradition of cultural studies that critiques reification of culture, which turns abstractions into physical entities (Adams & Markus 2002) and cultural essentialism, which categorizes groups of people according to supposed “essential” qualities. This literature shows that cultural traditions, thinking, and attitudes are malleable and intertwined with complex multi-layered historical, social and psychological factors (Meyer & Li & Karakowsky, 2002; Meyer & Geschiere, 1999). As Lee (2018) points out, essentialized myths of the “Chinese gambler” imagine a supposed “Chinese personality”, a media-driven image that love of gambling is somehow in-born. Our own interviews challenge that false notion.

Our interviews demonstrate the need to educate public health researchers about the reality of changing and multi-faceted Chinese cultural influences interacting with socio-economic conditions shaping the daily lives of our research participants. It is important, moreover, to educate public health providers, academic researchers, and the general public about the falsity of claims such as the following, provocatively stated in the opening sentence of a recently published academic article’s abstract: “The Chinese have always been identified as gamblers, and they accept this” (Papineau, 2013). No evidentiary support is given for this claim which should be at least dubious to readers on face value. To the contrary, our interviews point to wide diversity of culturally-influenced thinking and attitudes and beliefs about gambling among ethnic Chinese. The Chinese immigrants are part of an ethnic group with heterogeneous viewpoints, generational and educational backgrounds, income levels, regions of origin, immigrant experiences, and differences in young people’s exposure to gambling in home or community settings.

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Investment in Culturally Appropriate Prevention and Treatment: Problems related to lack of services cannot be solved by simply adding funds to existing programs. Prevention and treatment of problem gambling require cultural attunement and nuanced understanding of the complex immigrant experience (Lee, 2015; Lee & Awosoga, 2015; Lee, Kellett, Seghal, & Van den Berg, 2018; McComb, Lee, & Sprenkle, 2009; Reichel, & Morales, 2017).

In Chinese communities, understanding and respecting family inter-relationships is vital in prevention and treatment. One promising approach emphasizes family systems as a social determinant of health and conceptualizing problem gambling as a family issue (McComb, Lee, & Sprenkle). In Part III in our discussion of participants’ views on prevention and our recommendations, we elaborate on the applicability of the BCNC’s extensive practice in family services to problem gambling prevention and counseling.

It is also critically important that health providers understand culturally influenced views toward mental health

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services. In data derived from the National Latino and Asian American Study (2002-2003), researchers found that Asian Americans seek mental health services at lower rates than the general population. U.S. born Asian American used these services at a higher rate than immigrants (Abe-Kim et al, 2007). Examining help-seeking behavior specifically in a Chinese minority population, one survey found that persons who were less culturally adapted to the dominant culture are often most in need of education about the utility of mental health service (Ying & Miller, 1992). Underlying low rates of usage of mental health services is fear of losing respect (Loo, Raylu, & Oei, 2008).

Research Precedents: Our study aims and approach build on results from prior research on gambling among Asian Americans. The ethnic Chinese population is heterogeneous in Massachusetts. Some Chinese live in predominantly low-income neighborhoods, including Boston Chinatown; others reside alongside neighbors of diverse racial-ethnic minority background and in communities with varying income levels; still others live in dispersed patterns in relatively affluent suburbs. Stories of the economic success of relatively prosperous and well-educated Chinese often lead to misinformation about the status of Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants, hiding the prevalent poverty in low-income neighborhoods. For survey research, obtaining representative samples of the entire Chinese population is expensive. It is necessary nonetheless to conduct research sensitive to the differences in segments of the ethnic population.

In a still emerging area of research, several published studies have found that Asians may gamble less frequently than whites but have a higher rate of problem gambling (Kong et al, 2013; Welte, Barnes, Tidwell, & Hoffman, 2011; Welte, Barnes, Wieczorek, Tidwell, & Parker, 2004). However, estimates of prevalence of problem gambling are not consistent. A recent study at one large southern university found that a significantly larger proportion of Asian students met probable pathological gambling criteria and at-risk gambling criteria than Caucasian, African American/Black, or Hispanic/Latino(a) students (Rinker, Rodriguez, Krieger, Tackett, & Neighbors 2016). An early study conducted in five states found that Asian American university students had the highest rates of pathological gambling of all racial-ethnic groups (Lesieur et al, 1991). In contrast, a California study found that lifetime rates of problem and pathological gambling among Asian and Pacific Islanders was low (Volberg, Nysse-Carris, & Gerstein, 2006). The reasons for such variable estimates may arise from methodological problems. For those studies that report estimates for subgroups described as “Asians”, “Asian Americans”, or “Asians and Pacific Islanders”, data for diverse ethnic groups are aggregated under the umbrella racial category. However, it is known that demographic, socio-economic, and health conditions (such as chronic diseases) differ across the major Asian ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Asian Indian, and Vietnamese (Islam, et al., 2010; Wong, Hosotani, & Her, 2012). Within ethnic groups, moreover, differences in economic attainment and resources are the source of health disparities.

In other countries, research on gambling among Asian populations provides a wider lens than the U.S.-based literature alone. In Australia, the Victorian Casino and Gaming Authority (2000) found that individuals who spoke Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, or Greek had lower rates of gambling than others in the general population, but rates of gambling disorder were five to seven times higher than in the general population, as indicated by scores on the South Oaks

Gambling Screen of 5 or more. Abbott and Volberg (1994) found that individuals in New Zealand who identify as Maori or Chinese are at high risk of gambling problems. Devlin and Walton (2012) report that Maori (2.7%), Asians (2.4%), and Pacific Islanders (0.6%) had a higher rate of gambling disorder than Caucasians (0.2%).

Despite progress in the study of gambling among Asian Americans, including Chinese, disaggregation of Asian American data by ethnicity is rarely performed and may reveal important differences. At one study conducted at a public university, for example, undergraduate respondents self-identifying as Chinese gambled less frequently than whites. But among those Chinese students who gambled frequently there was a larger proportion at high risk for gambling disorder than among white students who gambled frequently. The Vietnamese students did not share the same patterns of gambling behavior as the Chinese (Wong & Wu, 2019). Focusing on Southeast Asians, two studies of adult Cambodian refugees revealed high rates of problem or disordered gambling, rates which may be related to the trauma of the refugee experience (Petry, Armentano, Kuoeh, Norinth, & Smith, 2003; Marshall, Elliott, & Schell, 2009).

Obtaining representative samples of specific Asian ethnic groups (disaggregated by ethnicity) in large-scale population surveys in Massachusetts would require oversampling strategies and administration in Asian languages. Public agencies have found the costs to be prohibitive. Taking into account the amount of funding available for this study and the costs of alternative strategies, our research approach focused on a single community site in Chinatown, where there is pressing need for understanding of risk and protective factors for problem gambling and provision of culturally appropriate treatment.

In its 2015 baseline study, the Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) estimated the prevalence of problem gambling in the Massachusetts population. The study left gaps in knowledge about problem gambling in Asian American and other vulnerable population groups (Volberg et al, 2015). Recognizing these limitations, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health called for research specially tailored to improve understanding of the problem gambling in certain vulnerable populations, including their exposure to potential harms of expanded gaming and how these can be mitigated. In a Strategic Plan for Services to Mitigate the Harms Associated with Gambling in Massachusetts, a key stakeholder is quoted on the lack of culturally appropriate services: “There are not many providers that are trained [with] cultural competence and the language skills to work with [diverse populations]...[It’s] hard to find information and even harder to find treatment in Asian languages.” (Department of Public Health & MA Gaming Commission 2016). In particular, it was noted, community-level interventions are needed that will aid development of evidence-based pro-grams for delivery of preventive education and treatment services (Boston Public Health Commission, 2013).

The sampling strategy used in the SEIGMA study did not produce a subgroup of Asian Americans large enough to generate meaningful data about the prevalence of problem gambling. Thirty-five percent of Asian Americans in Massachusetts have limited English proficiency, reporting that they speak English less than well; however, the survey was not administered in any Asian languages. Accuracy of data on Asian Americans was further reduced because it was not disaggregated into ethnic subgroups. Despite these limitations, the SEIGMA findings concerning the influence of socio-economic disadvantage provide a useful departure point for designing

specialized research on Asian Americans and other vulnerable populations. In particular, the SEIGMA study found that individuals with a high school education or less are more than twice as likely to be at-risk gamblers compared to those with a college degree; in addition, individuals with annual incomes less than \$15,000 are nearly twice as likely to be at-risk gamblers compared to those with incomes of \$50,000 or more” (Volberg et al, 2015). Our one-year pilot intervention focused on an economically disadvantaged segment of the ethnic Chinese population in Massachusetts. In Massachusetts, there were 131,846 persons who identified as Chinese (alone or in any combination with other categories) and 349,768 persons who identified with one or more Asian subgroups in the 2010 census. Hereafter, the term “ethnic Chinese” or “Chinese” refers to the subpopulation of persons who identify either as Chinese or Chinese Americans including the foreign born and U.S. born persons and spanning multiple generations of immigrants and their descendants.

Part II: Research Approach

A team of academic researchers closely collaborated with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) in each phase of the project. This academic-community partnership combined the multi-faceted expertise of a professional counselor experienced in treating gambling problems among low-wage Chinese workers, the director of family services at the BCNC, a university-based social scientist, and a team of community health educators with deep roots in Chinatown.

For research on the sensitive subject of gambling, it is difficult to recruit and interview members of our study population, who are low-wage workers both vulnerable to gambling problems and hard-to-reach. As a result, we refined our methods through iterative discussion and evaluation. The first step was to assemble a qualified research team. Second, we engaged the entire research team in the development of our interview questions and protocol. Third, we refined the protocol to ensure adherence to ethical standards for research with human subjects, receiving approval of the protocol from the University of Massachusetts Boston Institutional Review Board. The fourth step was to develop a recruitment strategy, which evolved in phases as initial plans were tried, evaluated, and revised. Fifth, we analyzed the interview transcripts.

Our recruitment methods were designed to reach out to prospective participants in a private and discreet manner, and to ensure confidentiality in the method of initial contact, the process of obtaining informed consent, and in the interview and reporting process. We did not use flyers or posters so that our researchers in the field could keep a very low profile. Persons interested in participating could talk to them, but the absence of public advertisements would lessen the chance that bystanders or family members who might overhear the conversation between researcher and prospective participants would know that research on gambling was being discussed. Rather than distributing a flyer, we distributed recruitment cards in sealed envelopes at bus stops and at community agencies and through their networks. Our research team members briefly explained that this was a research study and asked people who took the envelope to open and read it. To answer questions and discuss participation, the prospective participant was asked to call a phone number and not give their name. Prospective participants were screened over the phone for eligibility, which required going to a casino at least once in the past 60 days. We did not ask for names or phone numbers; thus, our team did not know the name of any participant. Informed consent was obtained verbally on the phone.

A cash incentive of \$100 was given to each interview participant if they completed the entire interview, and each participant did finish the interview. The amount of the cash incentive was chosen in consideration of the value of time spent by individuals in the population segment, considering that most restaurant workers in this community have typically only one off-day each week after working 10 hours a day for 6 days under demanding physical conditions. Cash payment was chosen instead of a gift coupon because many participants in low-income immigrant communities may not make purchases with gift coupons on otherwise popular online sites, such as Amazon, or buy at a store allowing redemption, such as Target.

Approximately 40 sealed envelopes were distributed at bus stops and only one person provided an interview from this venue. Our estimate is that approximately 90 percent of persons waiting for the busses were not interested in taking the sealed invitation. Our research assistant had his cellphone in receive-mode from 9 am to 5 p.m. most days and from 9 am until midnight on the several days after we distributed invitations at bus stops. We did not ask for callers to leave phone numbers on voice mail for return calls because this would likely reveal their identity to us. As a result, we estimate that we missed about four calls. Approximately 70 sealed invitations were distributed at agencies and community associations. After encountering little interest in participation at the bus stops compared to relatively more success at a community agency in the first months of recruitment, we turned to focus only on outreach through social service agency and community association networks. We do not have an estimate of how many people would not take the invitation if contacted through networks of the community agencies, but among those who took the invitation, we estimate that the participation rate was about 40 percent.

The research team. We designed qualitative research methods that would enable everyday residents and workers to describe and reflect on their own or family member's gambling experience in their own words. We ensured they could use their preferred dialect. We carefully recorded and transcribed their spoken word to Chinese text to capture nuances of language idioms. We aimed to conduct the interviews in a private and relaxed setting, giving participants due time to let a conversation unfold. Prior to developing our research approach, we consulted archived records of a survey and focus groups from a 2008 study of gambling at the BCNC, led by Chien-chi Huang, who had coordinated community outreach for Asian Americans at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

We employed male and female Chinatown-based research assistants with extensive experience in community engaged research and professional experience in community health education. The team included a health navigator at a local hospital in Chinatown, a community-based bilingual education teacher, and social service professionals experienced in working with the elderly, youth, and working age clients. We planned to draw from our experience in outreach and interviewing methods to develop recommendations for how researchers might reach out to larger samples of people in this population and others. We also expected that our findings might shed light on what types of community-based preventive education projects could be effective.

The community educators had diverse age backgrounds, ranging from the late 20s to 60s, and were assisted by college students from China and Taiwan. This age and gender diversity on the team helped our recruitment of research participants from various age groups and increased our flexibility in assigning interviewers whose language-dialect and experience best fit the different experiences, perceptions of gambling, and communication styles. Finding younger and middle-aged workers was more difficult due to their limited free time.

Writing of interview questions. We asked individuals to describe their own history of gambling, their motivations, and the effects of gambling on themselves and family members in their own words. Some Chinese expressions can be translated in one of several ways into English. Multiple consultations took place among our translators about meanings, which can change according to the place of origin and immigrant experience of the speaker. We were careful to recognize the internal diversity of even a small Chinatown neighborhood in Boston.

Multiple language dialects, age and generational backgrounds affect use of language. In general, workers in Chinatown live not only in Chinatown but also in Quincy, Malden, Charlestown, and other areas in the metropolitan Boston area. They are part of a heterogeneous and dispersed ethnic population whose members may identify more or less strongly with the historical experience of Chinese in the U.S. dating from the 19th century, subsequent immigrant waves, or with the Chinese homeland.

We used a collaborative process led by the family counselor and principal investigator to write interview questions. The questions may be found in the Appendix. The professional family counselor trained the interviewers to elicit information and comments about gambling behavior that placed the individual's experience in the context of a life story. This required experienced interviewers or family counselors familiar with the population. Members of the research team held multiple discussions to identify terms hard to translate from Chinese to English because of cultural and historical contextual meanings, and how their usage may have changed over time and context. For example, there are nuanced meanings of Chinese terms for "luck" as it relates to gambling, and concepts of emotional well-being and stress differ between the Chinese and English languages.

Educational component. We provided brief information on healthy gambling practices in the form of a three to five minute presentation as an educational benefit at the start of the interview. This helped the interviewer break the ice and explain our research purpose. Initially, we considered recruiting participants by inviting them to small group presentations on healthy gambling and arranging interviews individually with participants after this session. However, all participants preferred to meet individually, and we inferred this was because of their desire to preserve their privacy. In choosing to include this educational component we considered the possibility that the interviewer's early introduction of basic concepts and terms to describe problem gambling may have influenced participant responses in a manner that introduced bias. Although such bias may have been present in some responses, such as in answers to short screening questions, our analysis of interviews took this potential problem into account and focused on thematic material that emerged from life stories and narratives of specific experiences. We weighed the potential disadvantages against the benefits of starting a conversation by providing useful health information, which could assure the research participant in the professionalism of the research project and also break the ice on a difficult subject.

Analysis of interviews. We qualitatively analyzed the interviews using in vivo coding to identify major themes. This process entailed line-by-line examination of each transcript to identify patterns in the responses and consider individual responses in the context of the whole interview. For each of the transcripts, at least two coders performed this line-by-line examination, identifying categories of expressed information and questions about ambiguous or uncertain meanings so that the team could discuss interpretation. The coding was performed in the language of the interview. Since all Chinese transcripts were translated to English and two translators consulted on the translation, a different research assistant was able to perform a separate coding of the English version. The themes identified by coders were discussed by four different team members, including those who had conducted the interviews. In addition, the transcripts were examined by staff representatives at the BCNC, who also assisted in research design and provided comments on the proposed themes and additional insights. This iterative

process produced the list of themes and illustrative interview excerpts reported in the next section.

Part III: Interview Findings

This section reports the findings from our interviews. Section A consists of profiles of selected participants, including three recreational gamblers, who are low-wage immigrant workers; three at-risk or problem gamblers, who are low-wage immigrant workers; two college educated professionals, whose risk level is not identified.

Section B describes and illustrates themes from the interviews: One set of themes focus on social-level risk factors: stressors from low income, difficult jobs, and social-linguistic isolation. A second set of themes concerns risk from exposure to casino business practices: targeted marketing and factors in the casino environment that make it difficult for casino patrons to maintain self-control of their gambling. A third set of themes describe participant's emotional and psychological relationship to gambling, and their efforts to cope or maintain self-control. A fourth set of themes focused on the effect of gambling on families. Family members provide crucial support for members with gambling problems, sometimes going to great lengths to monitor the spouse's behavior. The interviews described instances of devastating financial loss, family strife, and deceptive behavior. Finally, we describe themes that emerged from participants' comments on how cultural factors may influence gambling, views on the opening of a new casino in Everett, and participant recommendations on prevention.

A. Profiles of Selected Participants

Three Recreational Gamblers, Low-wage Immigrant Workers

We classified three interview participants, participant 6, participant 20, and participant 10, as recreational gamblers because they said they engaged in casual gambling activities at the casinos and had their gambling under control. Their visits to casinos in Connecticut were primarily for leisure or social purposes, and each answered all four questions on the NODS-PERC brief screen in the negative. They enjoyed the Chinese food, shopping areas, and found the environment conducive to socializing with friends.

- Participant 6 is a young adult immigrant from Southern China who came to the U.S. two and a half years ago. She works at a restaurant and is a high school graduate.

If you go with \$200 and gamble it and you have time before the bus comes back, what do you do?

It takes about 2 hours to get there, then you have 3 hours there. When we get there, we don't gamble right away. We walk around, sit and chat, play a couple of rounds, eat buffet. If I have \$200, I save \$50. I won't bet it. We don't go to gamble, just to have fun, be happy. We spend \$200, at least we get free buffet and have some fun. They have stores at Mohegan Sun.

- Participant 20 is a middle aged woman, born in Southern China, where she received a high school education. She has lived in the U.S several years and said “*I don’t know English, I haven’t fully adjusted yet. Don’t know about schools, what the teachers are saying*”. She works in food service and lives in Quincy. In response to the third question in the brief NODS-PERC screen:

“Has there ever been a period when, if you lost money gambling one day, you would return another day to get even? ”

No, there’s no time for it. I have to take care of the kids. We might go twice a year. I’ve only gone a few times since I came.

What do you play if you gamble?

Slot machines. One time I played 21, but it wasn’t fun. I lost dozens of dollars, so we walked around the stores, ate and left.

- Participant 10 is a middle aged man, originally from Southern China. He lives in Chinatown and works in a kitchen. He has lived in the U.S. for a little more than 10 years, a length of time he says is “Oh, not new, but not that long. I’m used to it now, but don’t know English.”

Let’s talk about gambling.

I don’t gamble much. I’ve only gone a few times since I came here. I bet 2 or 3 hundred. If I lose, so what. I don’t expect to win. It’s just to try it and see. I play mah jong too, but only on my day off. I buy scratch tickets too, but not all the time, only if I have a little extra pocket money, then I’ll buy one. Win or lose, it’s fine. I won’t buy more.

Three At Risk or Problem Gamblers, Low-wage Immigrant Workers

Several individuals are likely at risk or problem gamblers from the responses they gave in the interviews, although we did not conduct a clinical assessment. Three persons illustrate difficulties they had in getting control of a known gambling problem. The average age of the three persons who answered negatively to all four NODS-PERC screening questions was younger than the average age of others who answered with at least 1 positive answer to the four screening questions. It is useful to notice this age-related pattern in our small sample, where younger workers in food-service occupations appeared to be at less risk for problem gambling than older workers in similar occupations. The older workers may be at higher risk as a result of longer lifetime exposure to the stress of low-wage, difficult jobs, and social isolation. However, we cannot generalize about the effects of age because the sample is small and not representative of the community population as a whole.

- Participant 17 is a middle aged woman from Southern China where she graduated from middle school. She immigrated to the U.S. 20 years ago, lives in Charlestown, and works in a restaurant. She identified her limited education and poverty as factors when talking about why she gambles:

Tell me about your educational background?

You can say that I graduated from middle school... I’m not a good student. I like to gamble. We were poor, wanted to go work and earn money.

How do you feel when you're gambling? Are you really happy?

Yes, I forget everything.

How do you know about casinos and how to go?

My friends took me. When you're a new immigrant, people take you to the casinos. In China, there's Macau, but we couldn't go there. At home, with family and friends, we played, but couldn't go to Macau or Hong Kong. It's too far, no money to go. When I came here, friends said, we'll take you to the casino, so I was very excited. That's how I started.

So you generally go with friends.

Yeah, but I've gone alone by bus before too. Sometimes, there's something bothering me and I don't want to go to work, I've thought about going to the casino. I know it's wrong, but it's hard. (Chinese saying) It's like this if you're sick and you gamble, then you become very alert. A lot of people say that.

Have you lost a lot of money and borrowed money to continue?

Yes, with friends. You brought an amount like \$2000 and lost, so you borrow. I've used my (credit) card and I've borrowed from friends. Not a lot, just a thousand something. When I get home, I pay them back.

Have you experienced that you weren't able to pay them back?

No, not yet.

Are there other things to do, besides gambling at the casinos?

No, you go you want to win money. That's what everyone wants, is to win money. Some people say they go, but not gamble, just watch. Who can just go to watch. Of course you have to gamble. I know that some people go and walk around, but I never do that. I want to gamble. I can't help it. If you go and don't gamble, why go?

Do you sometimes forget to eat?

Yes, that happens. You get into the gambling. If I run out of money, then I have no choice. I have to stop. If you're winning, you're happy and want to win more. If you're losing, you want to win back the loses.

What do you usually play at the casino?

Mostly 21, blackjack. I tried playing pai gau. I've also played baccarat, but I'm better at 21. It's fast. You bet \$50 and count the points. Baccarat, the people do this and do that and you have to think about the cards. Pai Gau too. 21 is fast.

- Participant 14 is an elderly man, who came to the U.S. over 10 years ago. He works in a restaurant, formerly in construction and other jobs, and described his English as limited.

When did you start going to casinos?

It wasn't until I came back to Boston. I went with friends. I started with the slot machines, then big/small. I started out betting small, but as I played more, I bet bigger.

So you went with your restaurant co-workers?

No, I didn't work in a restaurant then. I went with my construction workers friends.

Did you gamble in China? Did you go to Macau?

No, I didn't even gamble in New York. I never went to Macau. You start small, but if you lose, you want to get the money back, so you bet bigger. If you lose, you usually feel

defiant about it and you want to get the money back, so you bet bigger. The type of mentality people has when going to casino is that you want to at least win a little Of course, you don't want to lose. If you lose, of course you feel upset. The more you lose, the more upset you get.

Have you won more or lost more?

Overall, I've lost more. If you win today, you'll lose it all again tomorrow.

So you've lost more then you've won.

Yeah, 98% of people lose more.

Now, how does your wife look at it?

She's very angry. She doesn't like it. When I'm off, she has to go with me. She just let me play the slots, not the other games.

Have the 2 of you argued about it?

Yeah, what woman likes her husband to gamble? No one likes it.

Have you ever tried to listen to her and not gamble?

I tried for a while. We went together. If I lost \$50, I got another hundred and lost it too. I thought I could win it back by gambling few more times, yet I lost even more.

When did you realize that it was a problem?

You start small for fun, and as you play more, you bet more. The bigger you bet, the more you lost. If you lose, you usually feel defiant about it and you want to get the money back, so you bet bigger. The type of mentality people have when going to casino is that you want to at least win a little. Of course, you don't want to lose. If you lose, of course you feel pissed off. The more you lose, the more pissed-off you get.

- Participant 3 is a middle aged woman who has lived in US for more than 25 years. She lives in Chinatown and works part time. Participant 3 answered "yes" to all four questions in the NODS-PERC brief screen.

Why do you go so much?

First, I don't have much else to do. My part time work isn't regular. Some is regular, but at night. They call me when they need me. Otherwise, I go to community meetings ... I only get called to work maybe once or twice a week, so I have time and my friends ask me to go, so I go. If I stay at home, it's useless. It's a cheap ticket to go, cheaper than eating buffet. I went with them the first time and then I started going regularly. At first, I told them I'd go if I had time and I went maybe once a week. Now I go 2 or 3 times a week.

Why do you go so much?

First, I don't have much else to do. My part time work isn't regular.

If there were other things for you to do, would you still go so often?

It depends on what it is. It has to be something I'm really interested in, something that really makes me happy. The most important thing is to be happy.

What kinds of things would make you happy?

If there's a trip, I would go. If there's some volunteer opportunity. You have to give back to the community. You should help people. After a few decades, your attitude changes, you become more Americanized.

What languages do you speak? *Cantonese. English? I can get by. Mandarin? I can get by.*

NODS-PERC Question 2: Have you ever gambled as a way to escape from personal problems?

Yes, before, but not now. Maybe because I've retired, there's less pressure and my son is older. Before, it was like, yeah let's go gamble and I don't have to deal with everything. I don't really have problems now. My only problem now is not to eat so much, I'm too fat. Now I go with friends, pass the time, eat buffet.

So do you try to eat less and do you exercise?

Yes, I go to the YMCA to swim, but it's not enough to offset what I eat.

NODS-PERC Question 3: You already said this before that if you lost, you wanted to win back the money.

Yeah, I couldn't accept losing. I needed money for expenses. Jobs aren't necessarily stable. You can be laid-off anytime. My son was young and needed my support. Now, my finances are stable. My son supports himself. Now I don't have that pressure. If I lose, I lose. Before, I had to win it back. If I won, I was greedy and wanted to win more. Now, I'm older, my attitude is different. If I lose, I lose. If I win, I eat more.

NODS-PERC Question 4: Has your gambling ever caused serious or repeated problems in your relationships with any of your family members or friends?:

Yes, my friends too. We went together and it happened to all of us. You lose, you're not happy. If you're not happy, you make mistakes at work and get yelled at. You can get depressed and not be able to sleep.

When you go, what do you play?

Slot machines, sometime baccarat, sometimes, big/small, sometimes roulette. There are a lot of things to play there. There's a lot of people at the casino. If they're playing big stakes, I don't want to play. If they're playing small stakes, there are a lot of people and you can't get in.

On gambling causing serious or repeated problems in relationships with family members or friends (NODS-PERC 4)

*Yes, my friends too.
We went together and it happened to all of us.*

You lose, you're not happy. If you're not happy, you make mistakes at work and get yelled at.

You can get depressed and not be able to sleep.

College Educated Professionals, U.S. Born, Risk Level Not Identified

- Participant 23, a young adult, is male, born near Boston Chinatown, and completed a college degree. His preferred language is English but speaks some Cantonese. His answer to the NODS-PERC and interview questions suggest that he might be at some risk for problem gambling, but he describes success in controlling his gambling.

NODS-PERC, question 1: Have there ever been periods lasting 2 weeks or longer when you spent a lot of time thinking about your gambling experiences or planning out future gambling ventures or bets?

Sometimes, but I try to stop at my limit of \$200.

NODS-PERC, question 2: Have you ever gambled as a way to escape from personal problems?

No

NODS-PERC, question 3: Has there ever been a period when, if you lost money gambling one day, you would return another day to get even?

Yes, but I set a limit.

NOD-PERC, question 4: Has your gambling ever caused serious or repeated problems in your relationships with any of your family members or friends?

No, but yes for my dad.

When did you start gambling?

I was 18 and there was a casino on a cruise I went on. I liked it for the thrill and, I guess, the greed.

How often do you go to casinos?

I go to Foxwoods three times a year. I've been to Twin Rivers, but not Mohegan Sun. I go with my friends. I'm tempted to go to Wynn when it opens. It's so close, so convenient, but I can control it. I set a limit and I stop even if my friends continue.

When you don't go to the casino, what do you do for fun?

I do investments in stocks. I play safe. It's safer than gambling.

- Participant 1, a young female adult, was born in Boston. She grew up speaking mostly Cantonese, attended bilingual education classes in elementary school and later gained a good command of English in high school. She has a college degree, a professional occupation, and spoke English for the interview.

When did you start going to the casino?

Probably when I was 15. We go after midnight and they don't really check IDs. It's pretty bad. I went with friends, they were older. We worked in the same restaurant. After work, we said, "Oh, what do you want to do?" "Oh, let's visit a friend in Connecticut, so you always end up in a casino and we just forgot about the friend and spent all the time in the casino. Yeah, sometimes, we'd be there until morning. Like we would go on the weekend, we would go on Saturday until Sunday, then we'd come back. I was a waitress. I was 15 and \$100 a night was a lot of money, so that's what happened, it went to the casino.

How often do you go?

Now, not so much anymore, maybe once a month. It depends too, we go to New York, we like to stop by along the way or on the way back. ...I used to go a lot. Yeah, I miss it, all the time. Well, now I look at stocks. I look at it all the time. It's still a form of gambling. Safer? Stocks, it depend on if you play options or not. I'm starting to learn. I don't go overboard. I always set a limit and I always stick to it, so if I lose, I don't feel too bad. I don't lose a thousand dollars. I lose like a hundred, two hundred versus like some people's limit is like a thousand dollars

Lose a lot?

Yeah, I did. My twenty-first birthday actually.

Yeah, after that I always stick to my limit.

A problem?

No it won't become a problem because I have friends who have a problem with gambling. I saw what it did to them. Still can't help him now. His parent shipped him back to China to go to school because in China, gambling is illegal. So like if you're not a local, you would never be able to find the place, but he came back and he still does it. It's really bad. I don't think he found a way to gamble in China. He was occupied. I think he was scared because if you lose a lot of money in China, there can be a lot of problems. I think he was OK, but when he came back, he was tempted again. He'd work the whole week, the weekend, he'd just disappear.

His parent shipped him back to China to go to school because in China, gambling is illegal. So like if you're not a local, you would never be able to find the place, but he came back and he still does it. It's really bad.

I don't think he found a way to gamble in China.

B. Themes from the Interviews

1. At Risk From Low Income, Job Stress, and Social-Linguistic Isolation

Many restaurant workers in Chinatown work long hours with little time. For example, it is commonplace for many to work 10 hours a day with one day off per week, without legal avenues to advocate for labor rights or fair treatment. Traveling to a casino is low cost, admission is free, and areas designated for Chinese-themed game tables can provide a culturally accessible environment, staffed by Chinese speaking dealers, alongside Chinese buffet or fast food offerings. The Chinese-style ambience in sections of the casinos and at times performances by Chinese performers attract Chinese customers who can play together in groups as a form of social entertainment.

The presence of many Chinese patrons is apparent in any large casino accessible to Chinese immigrants from cities throughout the U.S. Less obvious to the casual observer are the conditions of work and everyday living of the low-wage workers from Chinatown; their work is often hard and physically grueling. Several individuals said they chose to go to casinos to gamble because they have a perception that there are no other entertainment opportunities they can enjoy in Chinatown, although they may not recognize the many existing opportunities to be active and civically engaged in

Why do you think Chinese people like to go to casinos?

Because people of lower class, whether they work or not, don't know English. People speak Taishanese and Northern dialects such as Mandarin. Where can people go?

And they want to make more money. At first, they think they could use the money won from the casino to earn more money. Then, when they lose, they start using their own money to gamble.

Chinatown. Understanding this perception means recognizing that casino gambling not only provides something to do, but also provides something that distracts them from the drudgery of their daily life in which they may be mistreated by bosses, may argue with their spouse, or may face discrimination and other complex societal challenges.

Some respondents said they may have played games such as Mahjong in small private settings as a social pastime in China before immigrating to the U.S., but now they were more likely to get bored or feel socially isolated, risk factors for mental health problems and reasons they gave to go regularly to the casino in the U.S.

1.1. Difficult, Low-wage Jobs

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 17 :

Why do you think so many Chinese get into gambling after coming to the US?

Maybe because they work so hard and make so little. They go to the casino and sit and relax, where they can eat something and gamble. You win or you lose. Someone who's lucky might win over \$10,000, but someone who's not lucky will lose. However, most of those who lost never think of the consequence, about where the money comes from, how to repay the money. I want to go too. Our jobs are hard and we make little after working for more than 10 hours daily. We have to take a lot of flak. You go to the casino, you get to gamble and get a free meal. It's enjoyment.

Why do you think you are having this problem? You tried to quit once.

I tried many times. Gambling has taken place for thousands of years.

Why is gambling attractive?

Its attraction comes from the fact that people want to make money without working hard. Particularly, lower middle class workers who don't really speak English think of it this way. Even if you just win a couple dozen dollars. It's still better than working so hard. This is particularly what the restaurant workers would think.

1.2. Language Isolation

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 14:

Why do you think Chinese people like to go to casinos?

Because people of lower class, whether they work or not, don't know English. People speak Taishanese and Northern dialects such as Mandarin. Where can people go? And they want to make more money. At first, they think they could use the money won

Why do you think so many Chinese get into gambling after coming to the US?

Maybe because they work so hard and make so little...

Our jobs are hard and we make little after working for more than 10 hours daily. We have to take a lot of flak.

You go to the casino, you get to gamble and get a free meal.

It's enjoyment.

from the casino to earn more money. Then, when they lose, they start using their own money to gamble. They lose again, the more they lose, the more they want to get it back. Some ladies bet over a thousand at a time without blinking like they've lost their mind.

Are there any advantages with a new casino?

Yes. First of all, it provides a place for shopping. I think the stores at the casinos get the latest fashion faster. If you're not addicted to gambling, going to casino for recreational gambling offers a comfort for the mind. If you just go for two to three times a year, spend two to three hundred dollars, it is pretty good. If you win, nice, go have fun, eat, and shop. If you lose, it is not a big deal. It helps to release pressure and distract you.

1.3. No other Entertainment Opportunities: Fewer in Boston Chinatown than in China

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 5:

If you go with friends, do you come back together too?

Yeah, my friends aren't problem gamblers either. Some people are addicted, but I don't go with them. I think maybe the other people, in 40s, 50s, might be addicted. They were here longer with no other recreation, so they gamble more.

If there are more other recreational activities for Chinese people, do you think they would gamble less?

Yes, like in China. Not many people are addicted. Here, there are really a lot. They just work in a restaurant with no recreational activities available. We need more other things like stores, buffet, hot pot, Chinese movie theaters, dim sum. People can go eat, shop and have no time to go to casinos. There are places like that in China and Hong Kong. You can spend a lot of time there. You have to take the bus a couple of hours to the casino, it's tiring.

Are there casinos in China?

No, people go to Macau In China, friends get together to gamble. A lot of times, people work together against a new person. Those are really dangerous. You think you've become a friend and before you know it, you've lost everything you have. I have never participated in that.

Is gambling fun?

It depends on how you see it. If it's a recreation, then yes. But if you're addicted and just want to gamble for money, then no. Not everyone is like that. How many people can gamble for a living? 99 out of 100 can't. Recreational gambling isn't a problem, You work in a restaurant 6 days a week, just 1 day off. There's no time to go. Older people, in their 40s, 50s gamble more, less so younger people.

If there are more other recreational activities for Chinese people, do you think they would gamble less?

Yes, like in China. Not many people are addicted. Here, there are really a lot.

They just work in a restaurant with no recreational activities available. We need more other things like stores, buffet, hot pot, Chinese movie theaters, dim sum. People can go eat, shop and have no time to go to casinos. There are places like that in China and Hong Kong.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 17:

So do you generally go with friends?

Yeah, but I've gone alone by bus before too. Sometimes, there's something bothering me and I don't want to go to work, I've thought about going to the casino. I know it's wrong, but it's hard.

2. At Risk from Exposure to Targeted Casino Marketing and Casino Environment

One of the most common themes in our interviews noted the popularity of casino incentives; namely, free coupons that can be used to gamble or for meals as incentives that were factors making casino gambling attractive. The winning of VIP status, which affords benefits such as free bus rides, was valued to frequent gamblers. A couple interviewees noted that once they enter the casino there are factors in the physical design that make it hard not to gamble a little. There are not seats for relaxing away from the slot machines and the table games have no seats for people to rest away from the game. One interviewee noted that the whole atmosphere was conducive to an intense gambling experience, including something he suspected was "in the air".

2.1. Incentives: Cash coupons, Meal Coupons

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 6:

Do you often see Chinese people at the casinos?

Yes, a lot, I see a lot of Chinese people. Here, casinos give out cash coupons or buffet coupons that entice people into the casino. They don't offer those coupons in Macau. That's why I often see a lot of the uncles and aunties going to casino. They usually leave for the casino at night.

2.2. VIP Status -- hard to control

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 14:

I have tried not to gamble for a month. I'm already a VIP. With the VIP card, I don't have to pay for the bus, just a \$2 tip. I usually give \$3 or \$5. ... With the \$40 coupon, you can play the slot machines. If you know how to pick the machine,

Do you often see Chinese people at the casinos?

Yes, a lot, I see a lot of Chinese people.

Here, casinos give out cash coupons or buffet coupons that entice people into the casino.

They don't offer those coupons in Macau. That's why I often see a lot of the uncles and aunties going to casino. They usually leave for the casino at night.

Is there anything else you can do there when you go?

No, there's nothing else to do. There's not even a place to sit down. If you want to sit, you sit at the slot machines.

Do you gamble too?

Yes, once you go in, the atmosphere, it's hard not to gamble. You might hang around 1 hour, 2 hours, but by the 3rd hour, you'll gamble.

generally, you can make \$15 daily in average. One time I didn't gamble for a month, and I just played the slots using the free coupons. Sometimes I could win up to \$100, and the lowest at least \$20 worth....However, not everyone has my luck and my skills. You have to control yourself. Even with what I just said, I've actually lost too, but not as much as some people. I've lost all the money that I made from work. That is, about 13 years ago, I lost all my money. I consider it as my patronage to the casino for these past 20 years, but I didn't owe anyone money, not even a penny.

2.3. Ambience Inside Casino, No Seats

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

Is there anything else you can do there when you go?

No, there's nothing else to do. There's not even a place to sit down. If you want to sit, you sit at the slot machines.

Do you gamble too?

Yes, once you go in, the atmosphere, it's hard not to gamble. You might hang around 1 hour, 2 hours, but by the 3rd hour, you'll gamble.

- Quotes from participant 14:

It controls you. There is something particular about the ambience of the casino that once you go inside, it makes you go crazy. It makes you a different person that you lose control of yourself when you are inside, even though once you come out you are back to normal. I suspect that they might put something in the air inside casinos. You wouldn't know it if you have not been in the casino. You would see it once you go inside that everyone just seems to become foolishly insane and cannot escape from it.

It controls you.

There is something particular about the ambience of the casino that once you go inside, it makes you go crazy.

It makes you a different person that you lose control of yourself when you are inside, even though once you come out you are back to normal.

2.4. Risk From Exposure to Targeted Casino Marketing and Casino Environment

One interview participant, participant 19, was married and employed in a private business and had received a college education in China and post graduate education in the U.S. in the field of education. He had immigrated to the U.S about twenty years ago and worked in a restaurant before. He never went to a casino in China.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

So if you continue to play, you eventually could lose everything. This is a law of gambling. Many people know why there is no winner. 97% of the people here are losing, but why are so many people still going to casinos? It's because the casino will give you a chance to win first, but many people could not control themselves, you could not leave right away and take the

Because in the United States, I didn't know English at the beginning, what kinds of entertainment were there?

There was no entertainment

money home. Eventually you may lose everything. I have heard so many stories like this.

- Quotes from participant 4:

Because in the United States, I didn't know English at the beginning, what kinds of entertainment were there? There was no entertainment.

2.4.1. Proximity of Casino.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

Would you go to the new casino?

I definitely will go, probably go there several times a week. It will only take me a few minutes to drive from my home to the new casino, and my wife will not be able to control me. She would not even be aware that I went. The only thing that she can do, perhaps set a spending limit on my credit card.

2.4.2. Predatory Lending by Loan Sharks.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

The bus has a fixed schedule; how would you spend the rest of the time if you lost all the money you had at the beginning?

If I took the evening bus to casino at 12 midnight, and then came back during the day, there are about 4 hours wait time for the next bus, it is possible that I may lose all in the first half an hour, the casino has loan sharks available.

How do loan sharks work? Do casinos in CT have this kind of service?

Yes, they do. You borrow money from them for 3 days with 10% interest rate.

Is there any loan collateral?

No, these loan sharks are operated by Chinese. We all know each other, and they know my home address, I won't run away. For example, if I borrowed \$1,000, I have to return the money in 3 days, plus 10% interest.

Have you used loan shark before?

I used to, not now. What do I do if I lost all my cash in the first half an hour, and reached limit of my credit card? There are loan sharks. If you want to continue to play, you can borrow from them. There are many people who hold fantasies and feel that they can win back the money. I also had similar experience. I borrowed \$1000, spent another half an hour in casino and won back. After I paid back \$1100 to loan shark and I still have some money left. This is the case when you are lucky.

3. Participants' Self-Described Emotional and Psychological Relationship to Gambling

In Sections B.1 and B.2, respectively, we have described participants' description of exposure to social stressors and business practices of the casinos. In this section B.3, we describe themes from our participant's self-described emotions and psychological factors related to their gambling. These included expressions of magical thinking, such as belief that one has

special powers to win while minimizing the reality of losing; a belief that gambling can solve problems or make the gambler “alert”; an appreciative feeling that casino staff respect the gambling patron, an attitude not necessarily present in other parts of his/her life; feeling excitement from gambling; the fantasy of being the next big winner when watching another person in the casino win despite very low odds of winning; excitement; and loneliness. Participants also described efforts to self-limit their gambling.

Interestingly, none of our interview participants specifically mentioned belief in numerology or Feng-shui. However, one of our community educators who works with older Chinese immigrants in Chinatown noted that belief in “lucky numbers” is often mentioned in informal conversations about gambling in this sector of the Chinatown population.

3.1. Magical Thinking – Exaggerating Skillfulness in Beating the Casino

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:
...To play lottery may cost you about \$20-30, and rarely people will spend \$10,000 to buy lottery tickets. But in casinos you may have someone next to you spending \$10,000 to \$20,000 to play. Besides that, the casino created the illusion that their games were really fair, or that the dealer does not have any advantages, and that I have a better chance of winning. A lot people feel that they are very smart. They can beat casinos. If I know I can't beat you, I definitely will not go there.
- Excerpts from transcript of participant 14:
I bet quite a lot as compared to other women, but I haven't gotten to the point of owing too much money. I'm lucky, and I've got good gambling skills. When I play the game, for example, I would win 9 times out of 10 times. Even just a single loss would be terrible for me because I don't like to lose. I have to continue to play until I win.

3.2. Believe Gambling is a Cure for Problems

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 17:
So do you generally go with friends?
Yeah, but I've gone alone by bus before too. Sometimes, there's something bothering me and I don't want to go to work, I've thought about going to the casino. I know it's wrong, but it's hard. A Chinese saying goes: gambling can cure hundreds of diseases. A lot of people say that. It's like this if you're sick and you gamble, then you become very alert.

3.3. Feeling Respected in the Casino

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

My last question, you have been to many casinos. You also mentioned that you enjoyed the casino. It sounded like that you have to spend some money every month at casinos. Are you going with this attitude, spending some money there for enjoyment?

I enjoyed the casino environment very much; I feel very good in there. The staff there also treat me very well. And still I have the feeling that I am smart, and if I got lucky I may win.

3.4. Fantasy – I Will be the Next Winner

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

The uncertainty of the game is like buying lotteries. Everyone knows that, my kids buy them too. I used to spend \$20-40 a week on lotteries. When Powerball accumulated to a huge number of prizes, the whole country was buying. And then my kids told me not to buy, they told me it's impossible to win, they knew that most of time my \$30, \$40 were wasted. But many people still hold the fantasy thinking they may win one day. The casino gives you the same fantasy. When you go to the casino just for a look, there are always a few people who win. This makes you think that you could be the next winner.

3.5. Excitement

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 16:

Why do you want to go gambling?

Because I sleep very little at home, I can sleep in the car for 3-4 hours. I am happier when I go to the casino. The casino is exciting, and I am more excited.

3.6. Feeling Lonely, or Just Wanting Fun. Cycle of Losing Control

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 14:

Did any of your friends or family tell you to stop?

When you feel lonely and want to go have fun for a bit, but if you lose, even if it is just for fun to begin with, it will become a nonstop cycle.

3.7. Trying to Improve Self-Control

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 14:

But now, we look at it differently. It is just for fun. Whether winning or losing, I stop chasing. That said, I still want to win when I go inside. Not that I want to make money out of the casino, I want to win back my money. People are naturally like that. In a way, it taps into that kind of mentality, and it becomes a cycle. If you don't win in the beginning, it's OK, but once you win, you would become a regular. Now I've learned my lesson. If I lose, I just look at it as a trip. Even now I'm still losing.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 3:

In the United States, when I have money, I would lend money to not only my wife, but also my friends if they ask. Money alone is not a priority for me. Gambling is not good for most people. There are very few reasonable people, and I'm one of the few reasonable ones. I gamble whenever I want. If I don't feel like going, I don't go, and I go to play chess instead.

What makes you decide to go or not to go?

If I win, I would go every day. If I lose, I would stop going for 2-3 days. If I have been losing for a week, I would stop for two to three day.

Depend on the luck?

Luck is peculiar. Luck is fate, it just doesn't let you win.

Who is him (it)?

I've used all my wisdom, and sometimes I still lose.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 17:

Some people can control themselves.

Yes, I was almost addicted, but I'm able to control it...You never get sick of gambling. At work, when the boss starts to yell at you, at home, husband and wife argue with each other, your kids don't listen, your job is hard, what can you do to get excitement and stress-relief in life, gambling is first thing that comes to mind.

How do you feel when you lose?

When I lost money? Just a little? Some people can't sleep if they lose because they feel bothered by it. Those people might go borrow money so they can go to gamble, only to lose it all again. When I lose, I also feel bothered, and I would try to think of different strategy to win it back.,,In the past, when I had a chance I just chased it, whenever I had time, whenever I got my pay, I'd go to try to get it back, because I felt defiant about my losing. Nowadays I've changed my attitude/mentality: when I lose, I just treat it as if I was taking a trip. If I go back again, I only bet small amounts; I go with \$500 or \$300. If I lose, I would stop to chase it back. It's less harmful. Based on my calculation, I might break even, but not lose...

3.8. Belief that Efforts to Increase Self-Control Undermined by Paid Ringer

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 14:

You went recently. Aren't you afraid of being like before?

I have a way to control myself. I go with \$350 cash in one pocket and a bank card that has a withdrawal limit of \$500 in another. If I lose \$300, I take out \$500. If I break even, I stop and leave. At most, I won't lose more than \$800.

4. Effects on Family Members

From Perspective of Gambler:

4.1. Family Strife

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 21:

Do you always go to the casino to gamble?

Now, no, I don't go anymore. I haven't gone in about 10 years. After I got married and had kids, I needed money.

So you lost more than you won?

Of course! I lost so much, I can't stand it.

You haven't gone to the casino for many years, do you feel like you want to go?

Yes, I always want to go, but I'm afraid to go and lose money. Now, I have 2 sons to support. I have to suppress the feelings. Before, when I was younger, friends asked me to go, so I went. We took the bus.

When you want to go to the casino, how do you suppress the feeling?

Of course I want to go, but I'm afraid I'll lose. I have to control myself. I gambled for 10 years. I lost a lot of money. I even lost a house.

So it affected not just you, but your whole family.

Did you borrow money to gamble?

No, I didn't borrow, but I did use my wife's money. Oh, I did borrow from friends and my wife repaid them for me.

Your wife paid off your debts, how did she feel about it?

Of course, she yelled at me. She worked hard for the money and had to use it for my debts. Of course she had something to say about it.

Did people get angry at you or...?

Of course, family was definitely angry. I sneaked off to the casino. People in the family, such as parents, were definitely angry. They would yell at me because I lost so much money.

Why don't you go (to the casino) anymore?

Because of my kids. They're older now.

I want to go, but I have to work and take care of them. Even if you don't eat, they have to eat.

In the past, I didn't like to work, and all I could think was to go there. But then after giving birth to kids, I don't want them to know that I gamble.

I don't want them to follow my path.

4.2. Desire to Protect Children

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 17:

Why don't you go?

Because of my kids. They're older now. I want to go, but I have to work and take care of them. Even if you don't eat, they have to eat. In the past, I didn't like to work, and all I could think was to go there. But then after giving birth to kids, I don't want them to know that I gamble. I don't want them to follow my path. It's not good. I hold it in. You know, you go, and you sit there all day and don't have to work. It's really awesome.

...My gambling habits caused me to owe so much money. I don't want my kids to follow in my footsteps. I'm scared. I don't want them to pick up any vice, such as gambling, drinking, and drugs. Every parent would think the same.

From Perspective of the Spouse of Persons Who Gamble in Casinos:

4.3 Monitoring Spouse's Gambling Problem

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

What do you think about gambling, is it fun?

It's fun while I'm gambling. I don't really want to go, but I have to go with my husband to control him. My friends said that they see him at the bus. There's several buses every day. He stands by the bus and wants to get on. If he goes alone, he loses track of time. For my job, sometimes, I have to stay overnight. That's when he sneaks out to go to the casino. I told him not to go alone, that I'd go with him on the weekend.

And you go every week.

Every Saturday.

Have you ever lost a lot of money?

No, but my husband has. That's why I have to go and watch him.

If you have time and don't go to the casino, do you have other recreational things to do?

Yes, I work hard 5 days, so I can sleep later on Saturday, clean the house, go have dim sum and that's already a day.

What about your husband? He's free every day.

I tried to get him to go to the senior center. It's \$3.00 for lunch, then you can do other things, play ping-pong, ... But after he eats at Hong Luck House, he goes to the bus with his friends. They eat at 11:30 a.m. and there's a bus at 11 something, 5 minute walk from Hong Luck House. If the casino is farther away, then he can't go. Twin River is close. They give you a \$40 coupon. My husband stands by the bus and if there's a seat, he goes. To him, to lose \$100, \$200, it's nothing. Too many people gamble, too many Chinese people gamble.

Why do you think it's like that?

There's no recreation. Immigrants don't know English, like my husband. If you tell him to take a bus farther away, he's afraid to.

Why do you think it's like that?

There's no recreation. Immigrants don't know English, like my husband. If you tell him to take a bus farther away, he's afraid to.

What if there are other recreational activities? What kinds?

More movies, Chinese movies.

- Quotes from participant 8:

I don't like it anyway, I don't like him going, but he sometimes wants to go with friends, I don't care and he doesn't tell me.

4.4. Self-limits

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 8:

Some people, anyway, when I am going, some people, when they go to the casino, it seems to be, because they look young, bet big money. I feel like it is very horrifying. They place the bets by dozens and dozens. It seems that they are losing their minds. I don't know. Anyway, I am not going to do the same. just looking. Play very little.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

When you go with your husband (to the casino), you can control yourself?

Yes, I plan it before I go. I'm still awake when I leave. I have a budget of \$300. If it's gone, then that's it, even if it's not time for the bus yet. I sit and wait.

No, If I win, of course I'm happy, but I won't continue to try to win more.

I work hard, 10 hours and earn a little more than \$100. You play one round and it's all gone. It's not so easy to earn that money.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

No, If I win, of course I'm happy, but I won't continue to try to win more. I work hard, 9-10 hours and earn a little more than \$100. You play one round and it's all gone. It's not so easy to earn that money.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

But your chances of losing are more than winning. The casinos have to make money.

Once you walk in, you can't help it. I'm not addicted, but when I walk in I want to gamble. If I sit at the slot machine, waiting to leave and see someone win, I think maybe I can win at that machine too. You pull out \$20, then another \$20 and before you know it all the money is gone.

4.6. Martial Strife, Evasion, Deception

4.6.1. Loss of home and financial stability.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 4:

I had no idea when we first met, and it didn't take long before I learned about it. I learned about it when he sold his house. He lost more than one million Renminbi (RMB). I have been in the United States for 11 years. It was about 11-12 years ago when he lost more than one million RMB. It could have scared someone to death, if you think about it, when I heard about it I almost fainted. Someone couldn't even make that much money for their whole life, He borrowed money to a point that he'd lost friends and relatives. After we met, he started to borrow money from me. I didn't think about it much at the time. It scared me when I heard that he owed more than one million RMB, and I thought, better to pay it off. In end, I sold my house.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 4:
During that time, I became homeless ... I lived in the shelter with my daughter. Gambling has caused me to lose everything...

4.6.2. Hiding gambling from family members.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:
He can go after I leave and come back before I get home and I won't even know he went.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 13:
The family doctor let him to see a psychiatrist, but that can't help at all. The psychiatrist, just talk to him, useless, ultimately it is about the problem of money.

Short term is money. What about long term?

[We] always fight, want to divorce. Sometimes I didn't know he went to gamble and he said he didn't go. Later on, someone came here and asked me for money, saying if I don't give him the money he owed, he will kill him (her husband). Recently five or six years, we started to go to church and we did not gamble at all. We were at church two times a week.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 13:
Sometimes we drive ourselves, sometimes go by bus, everyone gambles. I bet on mine he bet his (Bacarat). I was curious at the age of 21, and later someone came to ask for debts. I know that he didn't want me to know because, you know, no marriage anymore -- if I know.

Finally?

He paid back the money ...I'm a little emotional. I saw a psychiatrist, 1-2 times, talking about unhappy things. Emotional, not good...

The family doctor let him to see a psychiatrist, but that can't help at all. The psychiatrist, just talk to him, useless, ultimately it is about the problem of money.

... [We] always fight, want to divorce. Sometimes I didn't know he went to gamble and he said he didn't go.

Later on, someone came here and asked me for money, saying if I don't give him the money he owed, he will kill him (her husband).

Recently five or six years, we started to go to church and we did not gamble at all. We were at church two times a week.

5. Contesting Cultural Stereotypes and Myths

Our interview participants did not volunteer the opinion or express any support for the notion that Chinese as a group are “born to gamble” or even “like to gamble”. Instead, comments on cultural influences suggested a complex mix of cultural influences come into play in shaping popular views on gambling. Games of chance and skill are often played at home as a social past-time not equivalent to gambling in the commercialized casino environment. Some Chinese immigrants adhere to an interpretation of traditional moral values that disapproves of gambling, a viewpoint voice by participant 19. We do not know to what system of values Participant 19

referred in this interview, but it is reported that Confucius (551-479 B.C.) considered gambling “unproductive” and as “violating filial duty” (Wu, 2015). Interestingly, none of our interview participants specifically mentioned belief in numerology or Feng-shui. However, one of our community educators who works with older Chinese immigrants in Chinatown noted that belief in “lucky numbers” is often mentioned in informal conversations about gambling in this sector of the Chinatown population.

5.1. Popularity of social games, such as Mahjong

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 5, 30+ years old, man:

How did you start gambling?

Oh, I was young, a long time ago. You know, Chinese people, for New Year, we get together and play cards. A lot of people get together for New Year, we have some fun, play for a little money.

Are any of the people serious gamblers?

No, not really, we just play for fun. It's not time to eat yet, so we play a couple of rounds.

So you lied to family about going to casino back then?

I still do, because Chinese traditional culture considered gambling is bad.

5.2. Disapproval of gambling in traditional Chinese culture.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

So you lied to family about going to casino back then?

I still do, because Chinese traditional culture considered gambling is bad. When it comes about going to the casino, it's not a very good sign for most Chinese.

They said that gambling is in our blood.

Most of the people in casino are Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, but rarely Japanese, Japanese are not interested in casinos.

5.3. Chinese not born as gamblers.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 8:

Why do you think this is the case? You just said that white people are able to control themselves on gambling but, Chinese people could not? Based on your personal experience, why is that?

They said that gambling is in our blood I do not think that we are born as gamblers. I feel like I enjoy being in the casino when I go there. It is a very comfortable environment, the dealer who are working there are very nice and respectful to me. I knew I was losing money, while we are engaging conversations and laughing. We know that 97% of the people are losing money, and maybe three people are winning. Once you got there, things seem to be changed. it's like smoking marijuana and doing drugs. It is very difficult to get rid of them. I think gambling is a bit similar as drug addiction. Your central nervous system is being numbed in here.

I do not think that we are born as gamblers.

6. Thoughts on Opening of New Casino in Everett

In response to our question about seeking their viewpoint about advantages and disadvantages of opening a new casino close to Chinatown, several of our interviewees readily offered their opinions. A common theme: the new casinos are good because they provide jobs and tax income, but are bad for people who are addicted or problem gamblers. The likely negative impact of increasing risk for problem or addicted gamblers is acute, some individuals remarked, because the casino was going to be so close to where they lived. It would be easy to take public transportation, rather than take a longer bus ride to Connecticut. Opinions varied on whether the disadvantages outweighed the advantages.

Is it good or bad to have casinos?

Casinos are good for people to have jobs, but there's more bad than good.

People lose their hard-earned money and have nothing. People who don't gamble can save money to buy a house, buy cars for their kids.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 22 (who was introduced to gambling in China through illegal gambling, and gambled in the U.S after friends took him):

I gambled a lot. I've lost about \$80,000 over 20 years. My wife yells at me, tells me to stop, my friends tell me to stop too.

Do you know about the new casino opening in Everett next year?

Yes, but I'm afraid to go. I have no more money. I've lost it all. I've borrowed money and lost it, then I have to ask friends to let me work for them a few days so I can repay what I borrowed because I'm retired,

Is it good or bad to have casinos?

Casinos are good for people to have jobs, but there's more bad than good. People lose their hard-earned money and have nothing. People who don't gamble can save money to buy a house, buy cars for their kids.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 10:

Do you think the new casino opening in Everett next year will affect the Chinese people?

I think it's ridiculous. It's too close. If there are advantages, then there are disadvantages. They open the casino to make money, they won't open a losing business. That's their advantage. Of course it'll affect us. You have to have control and not go every day and become addicted.

Are the disadvantages more than the advantages?

Mmm, I don't know. If people become addicted, that's a disadvantage, but there is an advantage for me. It's a place where I can go to relax, then it'll be easier for me to do my job. It's doesn't matter to me, individually, if they open a few more because I won't go every day. I don't go to make money, just to relax. I work for my money. My boss makes money and can pay me, I'm happy.

Do you think some Chinese people will want to work there?

Yes, then everyone will have a job.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 7:

Next year, a new casino will open in Everett....

Oh, when they open, I'll go take a look, walk around. No way I'll become like I was again.

Do you think more people will go from Chinatown?

I think so, but let's see if they offer any benefits. People don't have to go so far. Twin River is an hour away. Foxwood, Mohegan Sun are 2 hours away. This one is only a little more than 10 minutes away. They save a lot of time.

Will more people become addicted?

Oh, that's hard to say. If they offer more benefits, people will go more often.

Are there any Advantages?

Advantage? There's advantages for the government. For the people, there's no advantage. For those addicted, they can just come back and get more money and go back again. It so close. It's a disadvantage. Foxwood, Mohegan Sun, they can't just come back to get more money.

What if there are no Casinos?

Then the government won't have income. Other sources don't bring in as much money. The government gets a lot of taxes from them. They've thought it through. They thought about residential safety and a lot of things. That's why they have to have a vote before it can open. People who don't gamble oppose it. Residential safety is affected in a big way.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 15:

Will you go to Everett when the new casino opens there?

Yes, I will go gamble even more, it's so close, my friends will too.

Is it good to have more casinos?

No, it's not good to open more casinos. It's for the boss and good to get taxes. People can get jobs to work there, but you have to know English, but if you work there, you want to gamble too. But if you work there, you can't gamble there. You have to go to another casino to gamble.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 4:

In response to a question about the impact of her husband's gambling on her daughter, part of her response included a comment about opening of the casino very near her home:

Even if it is built, one of the advantages is that there are more job opportunities. If you don't build it, everyone will go to Connecticut. The money from gambling flows out, and from an economic point of view, it's an advantage. If the casino isn't built, is it possible to limit how often people visit the casino? In fact, I personally think that it is most useful to encourage people to not get so deep into gambling that they become lost in it. It is not useful to discuss whether or not to build the casino, but to talk about the effects it will have, and to remind everyone that you are going to gamble. You are going there for entertainment. It's the most important thing to not let your family get hurt by playing. When the family is hurt, really, many things can't be salvaged.

7. Participant Recommendations for Prevention

Our interview protocol did not use specific language referring to “protective factors” when asking participants to reflect on how they started gambling, what may have helped them gain control once at risk for gambling problems, or what “can be done” to improve the situation where too many community residents become addicted to gambling. From their responses on these topics, we extract several themes:

7.1. Family-based Support Systems

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 3:
Have your husband and son told you not to gamble?
Yes, it helped me. I was addicted before, but not now.

Research indicates that the involvement of family members in addiction treatment may be much more important in Asian American addicts than others (Zhu et al., 2002); it would stand to reason then that whole family engagement would make prevention efforts more effective as well. Approximately 10% of respondents to our research study were the spouse of a problem gambler, rather than a gambler themselves.

Research indicates that the involvement of family members in addiction treatment may be much more important in Asian American addicts than others (Zhu et al., 2002); it would stand to reason then that whole family engagement would make prevention efforts more effective as well.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 17:
Why don't you go?
Because of my kids. They're older now. I want to go, but I have to work and take care of them. Even if you don't eat, they have to eat.

Researchers also consider that in Asian cultures, the concept of doing it for the benefit of one's family may be more powerful than the common American concept of the strong-willed individual overcoming their challenges alone. To address the issues of addiction among the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), Fong and Tsuang (2007) have suggested “working with the families...will also help to identify and reduce enabling and codependency behaviors that can be difficult for AAPI families to break because family harmony and acting as one are more familiar concepts than direct confrontation.”

7.2. Community Education

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 4:
Then what do you think can be done to educate more people about self-control, gambling only for entertainment, but not become addicted to gambling?
I think it could be like the method done by the church. The church gives out flyers. Or it could be made into a pamphlet, and sent to everyone, or it can be posted/left at a place for people to read, or something like that. I think the effect may be bigger through the format of advertisement. There is no way to stop people from gambling. Everyone is an adult...

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

The Chinese population is not small, but at my job I work with South Americans... and more of them vote than us. It doesn't require many people. Put it on the internet, pass out leaflets in Chinatown for people who don't use computers. There must be a way. You people are smart. Do your best.

Even widespread addiction can be impacted by a coordinated and well-planned public education campaign, as shown by success of widespread education on smoking. While numerous factors have likely contributed to a decrease in smoking rates in this country over the last 50 years, a remaking of the public image of smoking has also played a role. Regarding the significance of the public education campaign, Cummings (2016) has argued: “The shift in public perceptions is important because perception and the social pressure that comes along with it have been the driving force behind the decline of smoking over the last half century. Once consider a rite of passage into adulthood, the majority of teenagers today have never smoked and don’t intend to.”

A robust marketing campaign about the dangers of gambling addiction could be an important component of preventing increases in rates of problem gambling in the future. Moreover, a linguistically-appropriate and culturally-competent campaign directed at Chinese and other Asian communities would be a necessary part of this strategy, as the motivations for gambling are quite different, as we have shown in this report.

You people with power have to do something, not like us, who have no money, no power.

You elect someone, they should do something. You educated people should do something. Help other people's kids. They are the real victims.

7.3. Facilitate Civic Engagement

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 2:

You people with power have to do something, not like us, who have no money, no power. You elect someone, they should do something. You educated people should do something. Help other people's kids. They are the real victims.

- Excerpts from transcript of participant 19:

What do you think the government is going to do? Perhaps to provide some counseling on gambling issues?

How do you counsel? I don't know how the government could help. The government has brought the casino here. How can they counsel their residents and advise them not to go? This is contradictory in itself. If no one is going to casinos, that will hurt the government revenue. If the government encourage you to go, it may bring many social problems. I can predict the crime rate will increase after the Boston casino opens next year. Because gamblers may lost their money, I am expecting larceny and theft may occur more often, The government allowed the casino open through legislation, and then it asked everyone not to gamble? This makes no sense?

A common theme in the answers of some participants was that powerful people want a casino in the region for the benefits to society – such as jobs, increased tax revenue, appeal to tourists – but that poor people would bear the brunt of the negative outcomes. A greater sense of empowerment for the Asian immigrant community would help some of these community members feel more in-control of the impact of the casino on themselves and their community. Some of this work can be led by community-based organizations, and other parts of this could be achieved with more articulated transparency from bodies such as the Mass Gaming Commission.

Many respondents are very aware of the potential harm that comes from addiction, but feel powerless to even begin to address it. Working on developing a sense of responsibility and power over the problem could help communities develop more resilience.

7.4. More Recreational Options

Several people pointed to the lack of recreational opportunities in Chinatown, as noted earlier in our discussion of Risk Factors. These comments suggest that availability of adequate recreational opportunities in people’s own neighborhoods, near their home or workplace would give them an alternative to gambling or seeking socializing outlets in casinos; thus, making recreational alternatives available in communities would act as a protective factor.

- As participant 19 commented, excerpts from transcript:
Most of time, Chinese do not know how to plan their life, when you are in China, you may have other hobbies, such as watching ball games, or playing Go. There is no such thing in the United States. It’s hard to find anyone to hang out with you. Besides, people are very busy here, and everyone's schedule is different. You could get very bored and depressed here, nothing to do on your off days.

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Section IV: Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

It is widely acknowledged among public health professionals that culturally relevant mental health services for gambling problems in low-income Asian American communities are critically needed but hard to find. The importance of funding research and services is largely underestimated or neglected because of the social marginalization of these immigrant communities. Our interviews confirmed the existence of a serious service-treatment gap.

However, community participants went much further to talk about deeper roots of gambling problems, not focusing on supposed Chinese cultural preferences to gamble or not gamble, but rather pointing to social determinants that shape gambling behavior: the desire to relieve stress of low-wage jobs, the dream of winning “easy” money in the hope of escaping

poverty, the lack of other recreational options in Chinatown, and factors such as the proximity of casinos, low cost and frequent bus rides, and inducements in the form of coupons and opportunities for Chinese meals and shopping. The factors that contribute to problem gambling in this community are numerous, and the community-based infrastructure to counter them is not yet well-developed. These comments and opinions of our research participants about why they take part in casino gambling clearly point to a critical need: it will be important to devote public health and community mitigation resources from casino revenues to prevention as well as treatment.

Recommendations

Effective problem gambling prevention and treatment require development and careful evaluation of evidence-based practices that are closely attuned to risk factors affecting individuals, families and communities. For residents and workers in Chinatown, effective preventive and treatment interventions require cultural tailoring to the complex mix of risk factors affecting individuals, families and communities. Our research indicates that in low-income Chinese immigrant communities with concentrations of at-risk members, prevention and treatment need to address social stressors arising from work conditions, low-pay, social-linguistic isolation, and cultural influences that make people unwilling to seek help outside families for mental health problems. From the earliest stages of designing and pilot testing interventions to later stages of implementation and evaluation, it is necessary to build and sustain close collaborations between health professionals, educators, and community organizations. These partnerships will leverage diverse expertise and efforts to devise novel and effective methods of prevention, screening, referral systems, and treatment sensitive to social context and cultural factors. The factors include economic disadvantage, family dynamics, concepts of “face”, gender, acculturation in multi- and inter-generational communities, age differences, styles of recreation, and culturally-influenced concepts of healthful living.

Concurrent development of prevention and services: To be effective, the provision of culturally appropriate gambling counseling services needs to occur **concurrently** with the culturally tailored public health campaign. In general, individuals will not become more open to seeking services without culturally appropriate education and assurance that help is available. But if individuals are persuaded to initially explore counseling or other forms of help and no bilingual and culturally proficient counselors are available, individuals will be discouraged from seeking help in the future and the credibility of community-wide prevention and treatment efforts will likely be harmed.

Development and delivery of culturally appropriate interventions will be successful only if **community-based organizations** can develop the necessary **institutional capacity** at a pace commensurate with heightened exposure to risk in vulnerable neighborhoods, especially those near or easily accessible by public transportation to new casino businesses.

We recommend a **multi-pronged** program of action.

Culturally Appropriate Prevention and Services

1. **Public Health Campaign:** Support for culturally appropriate public health campaigns on problem gambling. The messages should be tailored to for different youth and adult age groups. Scholars and family counselors in Chinatown frequently note that clients are very reluctant to seek gambling counseling. Even if clients do attend an initial counseling interview it is hard to sustain participation. A major barrier is a cultural norm that discourages talking about mental health problems and any family problems outside the family for fear of losing “face”. Thus, there is an urgent need to develop innovative ways

to gradually open up conversation in both private and more public settings about gambling problems, explaining differences between benign recreational and problematic gambling. A first step will be to disseminate the knowledge gained from this project, *Talking About Casino Gambling: Community Voices from Boston Chinatown*, to everyday Chinatown residents and gather community comments in a series of workshops. These conversations will inform a second step, which entails development of a series of age-appropriate educational pamphlets and videos. The third step is to develop and implement strategies to use the educational pamphlets in existing social service settings and a series of workshops in diverse community settings.

2. **Support for Provision of Culturally Appropriate Services:** There are virtually **no culturally appropriate gambling counseling services available** for Chinese immigrants, including in Chinatown or outside of Chinatown. A critical first step will be to integrate vastly expanded services into existing family counseling and youth programs in agencies and clinics. Training alone of existing staff in standard screening and treatment approaches has not yielded satisfactory levels and quality of services in the past. Rather, there is a need to expand service capacity and develop tools for the staff to conduct culturally appropriate education, screening and counseling models for the Chinese low-income population. Provision of more counseling focused solely on gambling issues alone will not be effective. Gambling addiction typically leads to multiple negative consequences, both emotional and material. When individuals are affected they need not just counseling to control gambling problems and address related problems, but also social assistance to manage daily living, stabilize families, and stabilize finances disrupted by gambling problems.
3. **Preventive Education and Services for Casino Workers:** Development of a prevention campaign and culturally appropriate services for Asian American casino employees. A large proportion of casino employees at the Encore Boston Harbor casino are Asian American. Since it is known that casino employees are at heightened risk for gambling problem, targeted prevention and treatment services are required for this population.
4. **State-supported Reimbursement** for community-based treatment program in health clinics and social agencies is vitally needed. Even limited services for treating gambling problems in community clinics that are not at this time culturally tailored do not receive such support.
5. **Professional Training.** The local pool of culturally trained counselors needs to be greatly expanded. With heightened concern about gambling problems in Chinatown, there is an urgent need for development of a professional certification program on cultural competence in problem gambling counseling for Asian Americans.

Participatory Deliberation in Regulatory Process

6. **Regulatory Goal Setting:** Engagement of community-based organizations and professionals knowledgeable about Asian American communities in **goal-setting for reducing the negative impact of legalized gaming** on the low-income Asian population. The purpose is to ensure **representation of stakeholders in** communication among representatives of the gaming industry, community organizations, and professionals working to counter the harm caused by the casino industry itself
7. **Community Engagement in Public Policy:** Work with leaders in the Asian community to **engage community-members in public presentations** about the public uses of casino revenue, and how their communities can be further engaged in influencing those decisions;
8. **Ethics Review of Targeted Ethnic Advertising and Marketing Practices:** Establish an advisory committee to review the **ethics of targeted advertising and other marketing practices** aimed at vulnerable populations, including low-income, immigrant, and racial-ethnic minority communities. Advertising includes promotional communication in varied formats, including web-based marketing, signage, social media, and printed formats. The advisory committee will include community leaders and public health professionals with necessary linguistic and ethnic-cultural expertise.

Expanded Scope of Collaboration and Services

9. **Regional Resource Sharing and Learning:** Support for a **co-learning and mutual support pan-Asian coalition** of community-based organizations that provide family support and wellness programs for immigrant and refugee communities in the region.
10. **Healthy Recreational Alternatives:** Support community-based efforts to provide **healthy and culturally appropriate recreational alternatives** to casino gambling in local neighborhoods. To be effective, prevention cannot be limited to educational campaigns and interventions alone but must also address resource inequities that limit alternative entertainment options in Chinatown and in other low-income Asian American communities.

Research Agenda—Support for a five-year **research** agenda to develop:

11. **Increased understanding of the impact of legalized casino gaming on diverse Asian Americans communities**, including Cambodian, Korean, Vietnamese, and South Asian ethnic groups. This pilot study focused on a sample of residents and workers in Chinatown who are casino customers. A larger study of more broadly representative ethnic Asian American populations is needed.

- 12. Culturally appropriate prevention and treatment interventions** require tailoring for **both youth and adults, understanding of intergenerational community and family dynamics.** It is critical to integrate understanding of the effects of migration and immigrant transitions, war and refugee experiences in homelands, cultural perspectives on mental health and wellbeing in prevention messages and counseling or alternative therapy approaches.
- 13. Methods to obtain representative samples for hard to reach Asian American populations.** Our research experience underscores the important role of community organizations in aiding researchers construct sampling lists of prospective survey or interview respondents from their membership or client base. In a small community with dense social ties, it is vital to take careful measures to preserve confidentiality, not making it known who participated in a research project by inadvertent exposure of identities.
- 14. Expansion of Research to Multiple Asian American communities.** We began this research with the expectation that Chinatown would be an important starting point for studying gambling among members of other Asian American communities. We recommend placing priority for next steps on study of gambling problems, prevention, and treatment for low-income Vietnamese and Cambodians residing in Dorchester, Quincy, Lowell, Malden, and Worcester, where communities are at risk for problem gambling because of social stressors arising from the refugee experience, low-income, social and linguistic isolation, and a lack of problem gambling services.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Interview Question for Persons Who Gambles

- 1) When did you start (a. to gamble b. going to the casino?)
- 2) How often do you go to the casino?
- 3) When you don't go to the casino, where else do you do for fun?
- 4) How do you know this information about the casino?
- 5) What do you think about gambling? What does it do to you?
- 6) Does your family know about this? How do they feel about it?

Family Members

- 1) How did you find out about the gambling of your family member?
- 2) What are the signs that make you aware that your family is gambling?
- 3) Have you tried to stop him/her from gambling? If not, why? If yes, what did you do?
- 4) What do you think why he/she goes to gamble? (the purpose of gambling)

Additional questions for All Participants

1. When the new casino opens, will you go check it out?
2. When the casino is opened close to Boston, do you think it will affect a lot of Chinese people?
3. Are there advantages or disadvantages of opening the new casino? Which is greater, the advantages or disadvantages?
4. For people who indicated they have trouble controlling their gambling: Do you know about people or programs who help you quit? If you want to see a counselor, can we help you find one ?
5. Do you have anything you would like to add?