Abstract

The current research project is an exploratory field study of Chinese problem gamblers in Hong Kong who were seeking treatment from two organizations. The first is a qualitative exploration of their rock-bottom experience profiles in order to shed light on possible culture-specific reasons that motivate them to quit gambling. The second exploration is of the difference between those who stayed and those who dropped out from the group after a half-year period. The last aim of the research is to explore individual and relational factors that predict drop out, attendance in the group, and gambling expenditure after half a year. Five factors were postulated as important predictors: negative emotional arousal to a past "rock-bottom" experience brought about by gambling, level of initial motivation to change; cognitive evaluation in weighing the pros and cons in controlling gambling; religiosity in terms of religious observance and spiritual belief in control by a higher power; and the social influence from a significant other. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were utilized in the investigation. It was found that the participants were marked and influenced by financial and social distress in their rock-bottom experience. Relational, motivational factors and self-stigmatization predict expenditure in gambling; cognitive factor predict drop-outs; religious factor predict relapse. The study was one of the first to explore support group intervention in a cultural setting different from

the Western gambling research tradition. It sheds light on factors to attract help

seeking, to promote higher involvement in therapy, and to prevent drop out in support

groups.