The Massachusetts Gambling Impact Cohort (MAGIC) Study:

An Overview of Research Goals, Design, and Significance

February 17, 2015

Type of Study

- MAGIC is a **longitudinal cohort study**, that involves:
  - Collecting a kind of *"moving picture"* by collecting data from a group of people at designated time points
  - Following *the same group* of people over a period of time

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Research Goals

1. **Determine the incidence of problem gambling in Massachusetts**

2. Develop an etiological model of problem gambling

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What is incidence?

- Incidence is the # of *new* cases in the population

- It includes people who go from not having a condition to having a condition

- In terms of the MAGIC study, incidence is the raw # of new problem gamblers in MA
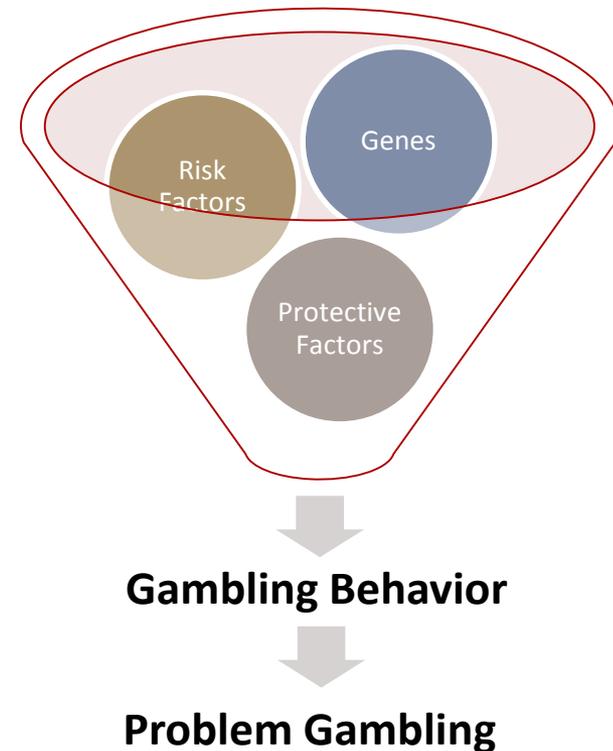
Research Questions: Incidence

- What is the incidence of problem gambling in MA prior to the introduction of the 4 new gambling venues?

- What is the incidence of problem gambling in MA immediately after the introduction of the 4 new gambling venues?

- Does the incidence of problem gambling decrease after several years of these venues being open?

- What is the raw number of new problem gamblers each year?

- What are the normal patterns of continuity and discontinuity in gambling and problem gambling behavior over time?

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What is etiology?

- The study of causation, or what causes a particular condition

- The study of how a condition, in this case problem gambling, develops over time

Gambling Behavior

Problem Gambling

Research Questions: Etiology

- What individual, social, and environmental variables are most predictive of, and mediate the development of future gambling and problem gambling?

- What variables are most predictive of recovery from problem gambling?

- What is the best way of using findings from the previous questions to optimize prevention and treatment services in MA?

- Are there 'safe levels' of gambling involvement that do not lead to problem gambling?

- What characteristics differentiate problem gamblers who seek treatment from those who do not?

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How can we apply what we learn?

Raw # of New Problem Gamblers	• Target how resources for prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery support are allocated
Risk Factors	• Target prevention campaigns • Target intervention, treatment, & recovery support
Protective Factors	• Target intervention, treatment, & recovery support
Safe Levels of Gambling	• Develop guidelines for awareness & prevention • Make safe levels the default
Treatment-Seeking Characteristics	• Target interventions • Ensure availability of services & recovery supports

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