

MAGIC WEBINAR 2021

Q&A

Why was MAGIC terminated? It was intended to continue.

State procurement rules as well as the availability of funding prohibited further extension of the MAGIC study. As with SEIGMA's Baseline General Population Survey, the upcoming SEIGMA Follow-up General Population Survey will include consenting respondents to participate in future research to allow for the possibility of a future cohort study.

What is the impact of this data on PG and RG services?

To date these results have not been operationalized. However, the MAGIC research team presented several prevention and treatment implications stemming from the cohort study results. For example, introducing educational efforts to promote knowledge, motivations, and attitudes conducive to responsible gambling could help to prevent future gambling problems. Screening for gambling problems in individuals who present with substance abuse and/or mood disorders as well as the effective treatment of these disorders could also help reduce future incidence of problem gambling.

What is the race breakout for the lower socioeconomic neighborhoods, groups?

We assume that lower socioeconomic neighborhoods have higher proportions of people of color but this question was not part of the MAGIC investigation. In a related effort, the SEIGMA research team has been investigating gambling-related harms among regular gamblers. In a recently published [report¹](#), Hispanic and Black regular gamblers were much more likely to endorse gambling-related harms compared to those who identified as another racial/ethnic group.

¹ Volberg, R.A., Evans, V., Zorn, M., Williams, R.J. (2020). Gambling Harms in Massachusetts: Evidence from the BGPS and BOPS. Amherst, MA: School of Public Health and Health Sciences, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Are there any examples of advertising campaigns used for other types of addictions (such as substance) which have been proven effective in changing behavior?

This is an important question although the issue of the impact of advertising was not a topic of investigation in MAGIC. Campaigns to change some health behaviors, such as reducing salt intake to prevent cardiac disease or getting tested for HIV or COVID-19, have been effective at changing behaviors. There has also been some research that examines the effectiveness (more precisely the ineffectiveness) of awareness messaging about gambling. This evidence through 2010 is summarized in a report on problem gambling prevention by [Williams, West and Simpson](#) (2012; pp. 15-20).² The authors conclude that gambling information campaigns can work but only when (1) the information is personally relevant, (2) the consequences of not changing the behavior are significant, and (3) changing the behavior is relatively easy. An earlier report by [Abbott, Volberg, Bellringer and Reith](#) (2004)³ contains a chapter reviewing the effectiveness of gambling prevention campaigns internationally through 2000. Additionally, the U.K. Gambling Commission recently contracted with the Gambling Research Exchange of Ontario (GREO) to conduct a systematic review of the effectiveness of responsible gambling messaging campaigns. This report is expected to be published later in 2021.

Will you be doing a baseline study as pertains to Online Gambling before legalization and baseline advertising levels?

We are conducting a Follow-up General Population Survey which will begin in September 2021 and will include questions about sports betting and online gambling.

What is/or is there a risk for PG watching other gamblers, watching videos of gamblers, or movies of gamblers?

Questions about watching other gamblers, gambling movies, or videos were not asked of MAGIC participants. However, it is known from other studies that any reminders of gambling can be a precipitator for relapse in individuals with gambling problems due the cravings that are evoked.

Did the study include generational gamblers? also, did it include gambling habits within families?

Due to the nature of the sampling procedure, only one household member responded to the survey for each wave of the study. With respect to the first question, we are not completely clear on what is meant by the term “generational gamblers.” If this term refers to second and third generations of gamblers within families, then we can confirm that MAGIC participants were asked about family members who gambled although their specific family relationships

² Williams, R.J., West, B.L., & Simpson, R.I. (2012). Prevention of Problem Gambling: A Comprehensive Review of the Evidence, and Identified Best Practices. Report prepared for the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. October 1, 2012. <http://hdl.handle.net/10133/3121>

³ A Review of Research on Aspects of Problem Gambling Gambling Research Centre, Auckland University of Technology Final Report October 2004.

were not explored. The second question about gambling habits within families is somewhat easier to answer. MAGIC participants were asked about the proportion of close friends or family who gambled and then asked to specify the nature of the family relationship. As a result, there is some information about gambling habits within families in the MAGIC dataset that could be explored by interested researchers.

You've talked about sports wagering being a predictor of past and future PG. What do you recommend be done in advance of the potential legalization of sports wagering here in Mass?

There are several programs already in place, such as [GameSense](#) and [PlayMyWay](#), which empower gamblers to gamble responsibly and seek help, when needed, that will continue and could potentially be expanded with the passing of sports betting legislation in Massachusetts. Many of the results and recommendations from the MAGIC study will also be relevant with the addition of a new form of gambling to the state, such as increasing education efforts around promoting knowledge, motivations, and attitudes conducive to responsible gambling, reducing gambling advertising and marketing, increasing the availability of self-help materials, and encouraging treatment seeking. Such recommendations will become especially important with the introduction of sports betting to Massachusetts.

Is screening linked to referrals to community based resources?

Unfortunately, the MAGIC study tells us very little about screening for gambling problems and even less about links between screening and referrals to community-based resources. We recommend that you contact the [Office of Problem Gambling Services](#) to find out what is currently being done with respect to screening and subsequent referrals to community resources.

Are any of the policies that were recommended in the findings slides in place now? Is there opportunity to review and potentially implement if not?

Increasing the availability of self-help materials and access to treatment can be achieved by implementing new and innovative strategies to reach those who might not be aware of such programs through traditional marketing and treatment-seeking approaches. Hopefully, stakeholders throughout Massachusetts will look to these recommendations to expand existing programs or consider new approaches to mitigating the effects of underlying factors which contribute to gambling problems and associated harms.