SINGAPORE: An International Advisory Panel (IAP) has been set up to advise Singapore on issues related to problem gambling and addictions.

The panel members will share their expertise with the National Addictions Management Centre (NAMC) and the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG).

Among its tasks is to review and advise on prevention and control strategies required to address problem gambling and other addictions such as drug, alcohol and behavioural addictions.

The IAP will be co-chaired by Professor Goh Chee Leok, senior consultant at the Office of Director of Medical Services and the National Skin Centre, and Professor David Chan, interim dean of the School of Social Sciences and professor of psychology at the Singapore Management University.

Prof Chan is also the chairman of the NCPG's Research Sub-Committee.

The eight overseas panel members are:

1. Dr Alex Blaszczynski, University of Sydney, Australia
2. Dr Jeffery Derevensky, McGill University, Canada
3. Dr Gracemary Leung, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
4. Dr Lori Rugle, Veterans Affairs Medical Centre, USA
5. Professor Dwayne Simpson, Texas Christian University, USA
6. Professor John Strang, King's College, London
7. Dr Samson Tse, University of Auckland, New Zealand
8. Dr Rachel Volberg, Gemini Research Ltd, USA

They were appointed because of their vast experience and expertise in high-risk behaviours like problem gambling.

The IAP will convene in Singapore from 5 to 7 December. During the meeting, the panel members will share insights on global trends and highlight critical issues in measures to address problem gambling and harmful addictions.

They will also advise on research areas on problem gambling and addictions, as well as the infrastructural, manpower and clinical development of the proposed National Addictions Management Centre.

The panel will submit their recommendations to the Health Ministry and the NCPG by the end of this year.

Prof Chan said: “We see that it is an important time to synergise all these different efforts. These panel experts have expertise in different areas so this would be a good time to bring them all under one advisory panel so that we can have more integrated strategies and advisory plans.”