

My father was addicted to a Korean-style game called "Go Stop"

We were a middle-class family living in Korea with five family members.

In 1997, a year before I graduated from Uni and got married, I found out my father was experiencing problems from gambling. It's been more than 20 years, but I remember it as vividly as if it was yesterday.

We found out when the bank called to inform us that it would be putting our house up for auction. My father had taken a significant loan, using the mortgage as collateral and had not paid the late interest.

Only then did we learn that my dad had borrowed about NZ \$600,000 using the house as collateral over two to three years so he would have money to gamble.

My father was addicted to a Korean-style game called "Go Stop", and eventually lost a lot of money after being tricked by a professional gambler, Tazza.

My mum said that dad was so addicted to gambling that he would stay up all night gambling and didn't even come to the hospital when my mother had surgery.

As a child, I remember my father enjoyed small-scale gambling with his brothers.

My mum had to pay off their gambling debts to the bank by selling farmland in our hometown. All our family members were in financial hardship because of my father's gambling. Back then, I had a job but my younger siblings were still college students.

Before long, our parents separated. We all remained in the same house, but our parents stayed in separate rooms. My mother said the reason she didn't get divorced was to protect our family.

My father started drinking alcohol, which he usually couldn't drink, and his health got worse.

We were a seemingly peaceful family, but in reality, my family was no longer harmonious.

My father's gambling was not over. He gambled using credit card loans and my mother had to pay off the debt.

In the end, my father was only able to quit gambling after two harsh wake-up calls.

I don't know if he stopped gambling; I just assumed he would have given up, as did my other family members. My parents did not reconcile just before he died of a heart attack in 2014.

Even now, my mum says she will never forget the time she suffered from having the burden of all my father's gambling debts. Our family know all too well how much harm one person's gambling problems can cause to family members. Unfortunately, gambling does not simply impact the individual. It affects all the loved ones too.