

# Prison gambling associated with crime, substance abuse when offenders re-enter community

September 16 2009

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Parolees with a gambling habit may resort to criminal activities and substance abuse when they are released from prison if there are few community supports to help them re-integrate, a University of Alberta study has concluded.

Gambling is prevalent in prisons and the study found that even inmates not habituated to the pastime before incarceration can acquire a taste for it they're unable to shake when released. It's a fact that has worrisome consequences often associated with the commission of crime and substance abuse as parolees try to re-integrate into society.

Research conducted by leisure researchers D.J. Williams and Gordon Walker, in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, examined the perceptions of 15 correctional officers in the states of Nevada, a [gambling](#) state, and Utah, where gambling is illegal, on offender gambling and its impacts on offender re-entry.

Williams, who completed his doctorate in [physical education](#) and recreation prior to a post doctoral fellowship in gambling studies at the U of A, is the paper's lead author. He and Walker found there are insufficient practical resources to help problem gambler offenders integrate successfully into the community.

Correctional officers reported a lack of readily available resources and

said it was often assumed that other forms of treatment would address gambling problems, however the findings show that isn't necessarily the case.

Researchers found that gambling often complicates offenders' efforts to live crime-free and say this problem urgently needs to be addressed if parolees are to transition successfully from [prison](#) to community.

Their findings are published in the *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*.

Source: University of Alberta ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Prison gambling associated with crime, substance abuse when offenders re-enter community (2009, September 16) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-09-prison-gambling-crime-substance-abuse.html>

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