



Literature Review for Gambling Among the Corrections Population

09-05-07

Introduction

Oregon is home to about 23,000 pathological gamblers and many of them turn to crime to support their gambling after legal sources of funds are exhausted. Studies show that two out of three pathological gamblers commit crimes in order to pay off debts or to continue gambling (Brown, 1987). While the majority of crimes are non-violent, they affect all of us by contributing to higher insurance payments, higher taxes, and greater societal mistrust.

Many of Oregon's pathological gamblers end up in the prison system. Once in prison, pathological gamblers typically do not improve. Gambling is common in the prison culture, and is accepted as a way to alleviate boredom.

Although there is limited research and literature on incarcerated problem/pathological gamblers, the literature suggests that a significant number of inmates have problems related to gambling and many want help to stop. Unfortunately, education and treatment for gambling in the prison setting is rarely found. The prison setting could be an excellent venue for educational and/or treatment sessions pertaining to gambling addiction.

Literature Review

Nixon, G., Leigh, G., and Nowatzki, N. (2006) Impacting attitudes towards gambling: A prison gambling awareness and prevention program. *Journal of Gambling Issues*. 15, 1-15.

<http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue17/pdfs/nixon.pdf>

This study sought to develop, implement, and evaluate a gambling awareness program at the Lethbridge Correctional Facility in Alberta, Canada. Forty-nine inmates completed a six-session program over 18 months. Gambling screen results revealed a significant increase in cognitive error recognition, and attitudes towards gambling became significantly more negative. The program did not render any significant differences in math skill score, Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI) score, or past-year South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) score. Changes in the past-year frequency score approached significance. This study suggests that programs of this kind can be effective for inmate populations, particularly in changing attitudes towards gambling.

Myers, Hardy, (2006) *Organized crime in Oregon*. Salem, Oregon: Department of Justice.

Oregon has more forms of legal gambling than any other state; however, the extent of illegal gambling activities occurring within the state is currently unknown. There is some evidence of organized criminal activity in state lottery games, but most of the reported illegal gambling has involved individual cheaters instead of organized criminal groups. Law enforcement resources currently devoted to the investigation of this crime are extremely limited.

The gambling industry is growing and will continue to grow because Oregon has more forms of gambling than any other state, including Nevada. Growth will likely be in the expansion of current games and number of devices instead of the addition of new forms of gambling.

At the local and county level, current efforts to regulate and investigate suspected criminal activity are decentralized and spread thinly among many agencies. Many city prosecutors and district attorneys' offices lack sufficient expertise in local social gambling ordinances or state gambling laws to effectively advise law enforcement or the public. Some lawmakers appear to

be confused as well, as revealed by local ordinances approving fees for the house.

Internet gambling is a nationwide, if not global, issue. Regulation and enforcement at the state level will continue to be tempered by privacy issues and jurisdictional boundaries.

Williams, R.J.; Royston, J., and Hagen, B.F. (2005). Gambling and problem gambling within forensic populations: A review of the literature. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 32, 665-89.

The purpose of this article is to review what literature is available on the issue of gambling within forensic populations. It specifically reviews the rates of problem and pathological gambling among criminal offenders, rates of gambling-related crime reported by offenders, the nature and prevalence of gambling within correctional facilities, and the relevant treatment and policy implications for clinicians and administrators working with this unique population. **Twenty seven articles were reviewed from 1990-2004.**

The results of this study suggest that roughly one third of offenders are either problem or pathological gamblers, the highest prevalence rate yet found in any population. Most countries do not assess problem gambling, with the exception of New Zealand. Four recommendations have come out of this literature review: (1) more routine screening for problem gambling at intake to correctional facilities, (2) provide treatment for incarcerated populations, (3) prohibition against gambling within correctional facilities, and (4) adoption of "gambling courts".

Abbott, M. W., and McKenna, B. G. (2005). Gambling and problem gambling among recently sentenced women in New Zealand prisons. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 21 (4), 559.

This article reports on the findings from women prisoners interviewed to assess aspects of their gambling involvement, problem gambling and relationships between gambling and criminal offending. **94 women prisoners in three women's prison in New Zealand.**

One-third of women, based on their SOG-R scores, were assessed as lifetime probable pathological gamblers and less than a quarter were probable

pathological gamblers during the six months prior to imprisonment. The preferred game was non-casino gaming machines and housies. Problem gamblers experiences higher rates of childhood conduct disorder and current non-psychotic mental disorder. Just over a quarter of prisoners and a half of the problem gamblers had committed a crime to obtain money to gamble.

Aborn, Richard and Bennett, John. (May 2005). *Gambling: Who's really at risk? The connection between gambling and crime.* Constantine & Aborn Advisory Services: New York, NY

This report was commissioned to determine if New York State should consider permitting gambling in Sullivan County. This report examines the impact on crime experienced by other communities that have permitted gambling by reviewing many reports and studies from other states and communities. National studies, impact of crime from gambling in communities and surrounding areas, and impact of crime were casinos are established.

In a major academic study by the University of Illinois and the University of Georgia reviewed crime data from across the country between 1977 and 1996 to ascertain if the introduction of casino gambling into a community had an impact on crime both within the community and in surrounding areas. It concluded that crime increases over time in casino counties, and that casinos do not just shift crime from neighboring regions, but create crime. The study also shows that casino-related crime is not confined to the community in which the casino is located. Ultimately, the research determined that 10.3% of violent crime and 7.7% of property crime in communities with casinos is linked to gambling.

A year 2000 University of Illinois report using data from every US county concluded that rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and auto theft increased as a result of casinos. A Wisconsin study found an average of 5,300 additional major crimes a year due to the presence of casinos in that state. They also attributed an additional 17,100 arrests for less-serious crimes each year to the existence of casino gambling.

In sum, across the nation, the result is the same over and over; communities with casino gambling experience more crime than communities without. This is confirmed by a U.S. News & World Report analysis that found

average national crime rates in casino communities to be 84% higher than communities without casinos.

Smith, Garry, Wynne, Harold, and Hartnagel, Tim. (March 2003)

Examining police records to assess gambling impacts: A study of gambling-related crime in the city of Edmonton. Alberta Gaming Research Institute: Alberta, Canada.

<http://www.ncalg.org/Library/Studies%20and%20White%20Papers/Crime%20and%20Corruption/albertagamblingcrime.pdf>

Several goals guided this inquiry: First, to capture as much of the gambling related crime as possible that occurred in a major Canadian urban center (Edmonton, Alberta) over a twenty-month period; secondly, to learn how law enforcement agencies and the gambling industry contend with gambling-related crime; and thirdly, to employ novel research strategies to broaden and deepen our knowledge of the purported relationship between readily accessible legal gambling and certain types of criminal activity. The study was conducted over the time period of January 1, 2001 through August 31, 2002,

Of the 11,198 EPS files considered for the year 2001, 338 (234 observed and 104 projected) for a total of 2.7% were gambling-related. The majority of gambling-related crimes in the EPS files are non-violent; that is, two-thirds of the occurrences are crimes such as passing counterfeit currency and frauds, versus one-third of the crimes (family disputes, robbery, and suicide) which are more violent in nature. None of the occurrences in the most violent crime categories (murder, attempted murder or manslaughter) were identified as gambling-related.

In terms of economic impact, the gambling-related crimes most costly to society are the various types of fraud (e.g. credit card, forgery, embezzlement, etc.). Many of the cases reported in the EPS files were for more than \$20,000 and several exceed the \$100,000 mark. These are often situations where an innocent party is victimized by an addicted gambler.

Fast-paced, continuous gambling formats such as VLTs and slot machines are most closely associated with problem gambling; therefore, by extension, the crimes commonly associated with problem gambling (fraud, domestic violence, theft, and suicide) are linked to the gambling formats with the highest addictive potency.

Large gambling venues that attract sizable crowds (e.g. casinos and racetrack) were found to be more susceptible to crime occurrences such as counterfeit currency, credit card crimes, thefts, assaults and disruptive behavior, and money laundering.

Abbott, M. W., McKenna, B. G., & Giles, L. C. (2000). *Gambling and problem gambling among recently sentenced males in four New Zealand prisons*. New Zealand: Department of Internal Affairs.

This report presents the major findings from a survey of gambling and problem gambling among recently sentenced male inmates in four New Zealand prisons. The main objective of the survey was to assess the nature of gambling and problem gambling among recently incarcerated male prisoners and to examine relationships between gambling and criminal offending. **357 male inmates in four prisons in New Zealand were surveyed.**

On the basis of their SOGS scores, 21% were classified as lifetime probable pathological gamblers and 16% were classified as probable pathological gamblers during the six months prior to imprisonment. 10% were classified as lifetime problem gamblers, and 7% were classified as current problem gamblers. In other words, 31% of the men were assessed as having experienced significant gambling problems at some stage in their lives and 23% had problems at the time of their current imprisonment.

15% reported having committed a crime to obtain money to gamble or to pay gambling debts. 9% indicated that they had been convicted for a gambling-related crime and over half of these men reported five or more convictions of this type.

Of the 50 men who themselves considered that they had at some time had a problem with gambling, 37 (74%) had at some time wanted help to stop gambling. 11 of these men had tried to get help. 12 of the 50 men had sought help for a gambling problem while they were in prison.

Abbott, M. W. & McKenna, B. G. (2000). *Gambling and problem gambling among recently sentenced women prisoners in New Zealand*. New Zealand: Department of Internal Affairs.

This report presents the major findings from a survey of gambling and problem gambling among recently sentenced female inmates in three New Zealand prisons. The main objective of the survey was to assess the nature of gambling and problem gambling among recently incarcerated women prisoners and to examine relationships between gambling and criminal offending. **94 female inmates in three prisons in New Zealand were surveyed.**

31% of the prisoners were classified on the basis of the South Oaks Gambling Screen as lifetime probable pathological gamblers and 22% were assessed as being probable pathological gamblers during the six month prior to imprisonment. Additionally 12% were classified as lifetime problem gamblers during the six-month prior to imprisonment. In other words, 45% had significant gambling problems at some stage in life and 34% had problems at the time of their current imprisonment. These women had very high SOGS and Fisher Screen scores, which are more typical of people who present to problem gambling services for counseling or treatment.

38% of problem gamblers (16 women) reported that they had been in trouble with the law because of activities related to gambling. 12 of the 20 women who reported that they were personally aware of their problems with gambling had wanted help to stop gambling and three of these women had tried to get help to stop gambling.

In conclusion, the findings were that probable pathological and problem gambling have high chronicity among women prisoners.

Addiction and criminal involvement 1: Differential prevalence; and Addiction and criminal involvement 2: A model. (2000, January 18 & 25). *The Wager*, 5, (3 & 4).

A review of the research provided by German researchers Gerhard Meyer and Michael Stadler. Their study had two objectives: 1) examine patterns of criminal behavior among pathological and non-pathological gamblers and 2) build a model to explain crime's relationship to the addictions. The sample

was 300 pathological gambler currently in treatment and the non-program sample consisted of 274 high and low frequency gamblers. The study found that pathological gamblers are more likely to have had involvement with the criminal justice system. Most common offenses were fraud, theft and embezzlement or crimes associated with the immediate procurement of funds necessary to continue gambling. This is one of the first studies to examine the difference between non-problem gamblers and pathological gamblers, thus this study considers the relationship between addiction and crime rather than gambling and crime.

Meyer, G. & Stadler, M. A. (1999). Criminal behavior associated with pathological gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 13, 29-43.

The objective of this study was to investigate if criminal behavior associated with pathological gambling is the result of addictive gambling behavior. 300 pathological gamblers from in- and outpatient treatment centers and self-help groups, along 274 high or low frequency gamblers from casinos, gaming arcades and pubs in numerous German cities were voluntarily surveyed with a comprehensive questionnaire that assessed social attachment, personality, pathological gambling and criminal behavior variables. All those that survey were males.

The results of the survey found that of the pathological gamblers, 89.3% admitted having committed at least one crime during their lifetime, compared to 51.8% of the other group; 59.3% of the pathological gamblers admitted to having committed a crime during the last 12 months of gambling compared to 22.3 of the comparative group. Additionally, 35.3% of pathological gamblers stated that they often or very often obtain money for gambling purposes by means of illegal acts, compared to 8.2% of the other group.

What could be concluded from this survey was that addictive gambling behavior is an important criminogenic factor, however this factor alone cannot sufficiently explain criminal behavior associated with pathological gambling.

Anderson, Dennis. (1999). Problem gambling among incarcerated male felons. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 29, 113-127.

Study of **223 male inmates in four midwest state correction facilities** prerelease classes were administered an expanded version of the South Oaks Gambling Screen. The scale consisted of 20 questions, in which if the respondent answered “yes” to 1-4 of the 20 items they are regarded as having “some problem” concerning gambling. If the respondent answered “yes” to 5 or more, they are considered to be a “probably pathological gambler.” 35% show “some problem” with gambling and 38% scored in the range that suggest they are probably pathological gamblers. Research suggests that a significant number of inmates have problems related to gambling. Consideration should be given to including the topic of gambling in treatment and release programs.

Shaffer, H. J., Hall, M. H., & Vander Bilt, J. (1999). Estimating the prevalence of disordered gambling behavior in the United States and Canada: A research synthesis. *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(9), 1369-1376.

A single study to identify every existing study of the prevalence of disordered gambling conducted in the U.S. or Canada. Of the 134 relevant studies identified in this study, 73.9% were derived from studies conducted in the U.S and 26.1% were derived from studies conducted in Canada. The prevalence studies were classified into the following 4 population groups: general population, adolescents, college students, and adults in prison or in treatment for psychiatric or substance abuse disorders. The study found that the treatment/prison population evidenced the highest prevalence of disordered gambling among all the population groups studied. Suggests that membership in youth, college, treatment, or prison populations must be considered a significant risk factor for experiencing gambling-related disorders.

Reynolds, Kelly. (1999, March). Problem gambling prevention program for prison inmates. *Beyond the Odds*. Retrieved May 4, 2004, from <http://www.miph.org/gambling/bto/mar99/1.html>

Implementation of a problem gambling awareness and prevention program to inmates at **three Minnesota prisons (one for women and two for men)**

and two Federal prison facilities. The program was developed to be integrated as a component of the chemical dependency treatment prisoners were already receiving. Many of the inmates had previous histories of gambling on the outside prior to incarceration or were incarcerated prior to the availability of casino gambling, racetracks and lotteries. Components of the program included: (1) review of the history of gambling in Minnesota, (2) characteristic of low-risk gambling, (3) sign and symptoms of a gambling problem, and (4) resources for problem gambling assessment, treatment and aftercare support. Evaluation results indicated 84% were satisfied with program, 86% understood the risks associated with gambling, 89% understood signs of a problem gambler, and 92% knew where to get help.

National Gambling Impact Study Commission. (1999, June). *Gambling impact and behavior study*. National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

The National Opinion Research Council (NORC) conducted a nationally representative telephone survey of **2,417 adults from 100 communities** regarding gambling behavior, attitudes and related factors. The study found that pathological gamblers had higher arrest and imprisonment rates than non-pathological gamblers. A third of problem and pathological gamblers had been arrested, compared to 10% of low-risk gamblers and 4% of non-gamblers. About 23 % of pathological gamblers have been imprisoned and so had 13 percent of problem gamblers. The results of this survey were presented to the National Gambling Impact Study Commission.

One subcategory of this report is crime and gambling. In the report a survey of nearly **400 Gamblers Anonymous members** was conducted and 57% admitted stealing to finance their gambling. Those with gambling problems tend to commit more white-collar crimes, such as fraud, credit card and employee theft.

The commission recommends that Congress direct NIJ, BJS or other appropriate agencies to add gambling components to ongoing studies of federal prison inmates, parolees and probationers who manifest disorders that frequently coexist with pathological gambling.

Walters, G. D., & Contri, D. (1998). Outcome expectancies for gambling: empirical modeling of a memory network in federal prison inmates. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 14, 173-191.

316 male inmates in a medium security federal facility in Pennsylvania were surveyed using the South Oaks Gambling Screen and the Gambling Expectancy Effects Questionnaire (GEEQ). From the results of the survey, four groups were constructed: 62 inmates were non-gamblers, 94 were non-problem gambling participants, 103 were possible problem gambling inmates and 57 were probable pathological gamblers. All four groups perceived greater arousal from gambling than sedation, but the probable pathological gamblers differed in their appraisal of more positive consequences to gambling than negative consequences, as other three groups attributed more negative consequences to gambling than positive consequences. The present findings suggest the prospect of a relationship between gambling expectancies and wagering behavior, However this data does not tell us whether positive, negative, and arousing expectancies cause gambling problems or gambling problems promote the growth of positive, negative, and arousing expectancies.

Bond, Peter. (1998). The development of good practices and treatment in the rehabilitation of alcoholic and drug-addicted inmates in her majesty's prisons. *Alcohol & Alcoholism*, 33, 83-88.

Overview paper on implementation of 12-week rolling treatment program for **inmates in a Britain prison**. The program treats inmates where chronic alcohol, drug and gambling addictions have been a major contributor to their offending history. The treatment program consists of (1) introduction, (2) community group, (3) group therapy, (4) one-to-one counseling, (5) goals group, (6) assignments, (7) relapse support group, (8) peer-evaluation group, (9) aftercare group, (10) peer supporters, (11) families, and (12) continuum of care. Due to the treatment program voluntary positive UA tests dropped from 98 to 8% and disciplinary incidents within the prison fell in proportion. Results of aftercare follow-up questionnaire found that one returned to criminal activity, none have appeared in court, almost half had found employment, and improved relationships with spouse/partner and families.

Walters, Glenn. (1997). Problem gambling in a federal prison population: Results from the South Oaks Gambling Screen. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 13, 7-24.

The goal of this study was to ascertain the frequency of gambling involvement and the prevalence of problem gambling in a medium security prison population. **363 inmates in a federal prison located in Pennsylvania** were interviewed with the South Parks Gambling Screen, with 5.2% of the sample achieving SOGS scores greater than 4 (probable pathological gambling) and another 7.4% attaining scores of 3 or 4 (problem gambling). The results are three to four times higher than the norm for the general population. With subjects achieving scores of 1 to 2 on the SOGS reported a 60% rate of spontaneous remission, subjects with scores of 3 or 4 reported a rate of 44% and subjects scoring above 4 reported a rate of 21%. Only 5 of the 93 subjects who scored above 0 on the SOGS had ever been in treatment or attended a self-help group for gambling. Findings indicate that offenders are an underserved population when it comes to gambling intervention and attention to both gambling and related difficulties needs to be addressed.

Templer, D. I., Kaiser, G., & Sicsoe, K. (1993). Correlates of pathological gambling propensity in prison inmates. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 35, 347-351.

This study is the first to relate pathological gambling propensity to psychometric variables in prison inmates. The South Oaks Gambling Inventory was administered, in addition to two psychometrical instruments of the MMPI and the Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices, to **136** consecutively **admitted inmates in an all male medium-security prison in Nevada**. 22.79% of these inmates had some problem and 26% were probably pathological gamblers. It was found that higher gambling score is associated with more unfavorable scores on the two psychometric instruments and inmates with higher gambling scores tended to function on a lower intellectual level. In conclusion, a substantial percentage of inmates appear to have gambling problems, and pathological gambling propensity is apparently associated with other psychiatric and behavioral problems.

References

Brown, R. (1987). Pathological gambling and associated patterns of crime: Comparisons with alcohol and other drug addictions. *Journal of Gambling Behaviour*, 98-114.