

Participant communication summary

Formative investigation of the links between gambling (including problem gambling) and crime in New Zealand

Project conducted by:	Gambling and Addictions Research Centre, National Institute for Public Health and Mental Health Research, AUT University and Centre for Gambling Studies, University of Auckland
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Background

This project was a pilot investigation of the links between gambling and crime in order to develop a better understanding of the nature of those links.

Summary of key findings

- ◆ Gamblers and significant others believe that a relationship exists between gambling and crime. The relationship is complex and may be two-way.
- ◆ Sometimes crimes are committed to gamble/pay gambling-related debts (i.e. gambling causes the crime)
- ◆ In other cases, crimes are the cause for gambling, or study participants gambled instead of committing a crime.
- ◆ There may be two types of crime-committing gamblers.
 - Some commence criminal behaviour before becoming problem gamblers in the course of their criminal careers
 - Others are gamblers who engage in crimes, mainly to support their gambling.
- ◆ There is substantial unreported crime, a large proportion of which is likely to be related to gambling.
- ◆ There is a large range of crimes committed in relation to gambling, and not just financial crimes.
- ◆ Thus there may be significant economic and social costs associated with gambling due to unreported crime committed by gamblers that has not previously been considered in economic and social impact analyses of gambling.
- ◆ Gamblers appear to recognise the extent of the harmful impacts that their gambling and offending has on others.

Limitations

The study was a pilot with a small self-selected/convenience sample of participants (33 gamblers, seven significant others) so findings cannot be generalised and should be treated with caution.

Thank you to all participants. Without your informed consent in such research we would not be able to do this work.

If you would like to find out more about the research, contact Dr Maria Bellringer by Email: maria.bellringer@aut.ac.nz or by telephone: 09 921 9999 extn 7232.