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Alberta Gambling Research Institute

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Research reveals ... : an update on gambling research in Alberta, Vol 1, 2001-2002

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research reveals...

an update on gambling research in ALBERTA

About The Alberta Gaming Research Institute

The Alberta Gaming Research Institute is a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge. Its primary purpose is to support and promote research into gaming and gambling in the province. The Institute's identified research domains include bio-psychological and health care, socio-cultural, economic, and government and industry policy and practice. The Institute aims to achieve international recognition in gaming-related research. It is coordinated by a Board of Directors working in collaboration with the Alberta Gaming Research Council. The Ministry of Alberta Gaming provides funding to the Institute.

OUR MISSION:

To significantly improve Albertans' knowledge of how gambling affects society

Your comments and queries are welcome either by e-mail abgaming@ualberta.ca or phone (780) 492-2856.



We wish our readers greetings of the season, and a new year that's filled with peace and prosperity



Recovering from problem gambling

Dr. David Hodgins studies gambling addiction and recovery to determine the best way to help



WHEN DAVID HODGINS was doing graduate work in clinical psychology at Queen's University, he was involved in a project at Kingston Penitentiary which focused on developing treatment programs for recovery from addictions to drugs and alcohol. His interest in the complex problem of addiction and recovery was piqued, and since that time, he has been involved with and become a national authority on addiction research. David completed his Master's and PhD degrees at Queen's, and spent two years as a clinical psychologist in Nova Scotia. He then moved west to join the team developing the Addiction Centre in Calgary, where he worked as a clinician and researcher focusing on co-occurring addictions and psychiatric problems.

As the availability of gambling opportunities – more casinos and video lottery terminals, for example – became more prevalent in Alberta and other provinces in the mid-1990s, David's research turned more towards the process of recovery from gambling problems. Through both his clinical practice and his research, he had noticed a correlation between addiction to drugs, alcohol and gambling, and in the recovery process from each as well.

On 1 July 2001 David joined the Department of Psychology at the University of Calgary in a faculty position supported by funds provided by the Alberta Gaming Research Institute as part of its capacity-building mandate. He also assumed the role of Institute Node Coordinator for the University.

The concept of self-help is a focal point of David's research; he notes that many problem gamblers – perhaps the majority – actually overcome their addiction without formal recovery or intervention programs. His current research projects look at preventing relapse in people who have recovered from their addiction. Though self-help is obviously important, David points out that people who have overcome their problems also do better in support groups. Many, however, don't want to participate in such groups, so David's current research aims at developing a model for those people.

People who have recovered recently are being recruited for a study, and are randomly enrolled in one of two intervention programs. The first group receives an intervention 'bulletin' only once, while the other group members receive bulletins monthly. The study is intended to determine which is more effective in preventing or reducing the possibility of relapse.

David says that his research is driven by his curiosity as to why people with gambling problems know they're harming themselves and yet find it difficult – in some cases extremely difficult – to stop. He also wants to learn more about why, of those who quit, most do so without any formal intervention. About half of those who have been successful said they quit because they faced a crisis of some sort. For the others, he says, it really was a matter of everything crystallizing for them-they realized

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that they were seriously jeopardizing themselves, their families and friends. Determining why this is so can help shape future approaches to problem gambling and its treatment.

David sees the Alberta Gaming Research Institute's presence as a significant step forward in dealing with the many aspects of gambling. The funds it provides are being used to develop specific lines of research and to build continuity. Research at the University of Calgary, for example, involves such disciplines as management, law, psychiatry, psychology, addictions, sociology, social work, economics and community health services. At the U of C, a post-doctoral fellow has been appointed in Psychiatry with Institute funding; David teaches a number of gaming-related courses and he is supervising half a dozen students, both undergraduate and graduate, in gambling-related topics. He also provides community education presentations on a regular basis.

David Hodgins is encouraged that the Alberta Gaming Research Institute is supporting academics such as him for research, capacity building, networking and building partnerships nationally and internationally. With gaming becoming a more important part of the Province's social and economic fabric, it is clear to David and his colleagues that such activities are important, so that society can cope with the challenges that gambling brings.

Recent Publications (David Hodgins)

- Hodgins, D.C. (2001). *Processes of changing gambling behavior*. *Addictive Behaviors*, 26(1), 121-128.
- Hodgins, D.C., Currie, S. & el-Guebaly, N. (2001). *Motivational enhancement and self-help treatments for problem gambling*. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 69(1), 50-57.
- Diskin, K. & Hodgins, D.C. (2001). *Narrowed focus and dissociative experiences in a community sample of experienced video lottery gamblers*. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, 33(1), 58-64.
- Hodgins, D.C. & el-Guebaly, N. (2000). *Natural and treatment-assisted recovery from gambling problems: a comparison of resolved and active gamblers*. *Addiction*, 95(5), 777-789.

2001-02 Research Grants

THE FOLLOWING RESEARCH grants have been awarded for funding during the 2001-02 year. Each project title is listed, along with the name of the contact investigator(s). Further details about each of the research projects listed above, including the names of all principal and co-investigators, can be found on the Institute website: www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca.

- Impact of statistical knowledge on gambling attitudes and behaviour of university students. Dr. Dennis Connolly, University of Lethbridge
- Functional magnetic resonance imaging of pathological gamblers. Dr. David Crockford, University of Calgary
- Casino patrons, travel behavior, place attachment and motivations: A study of Alberta residents. Dr. Tom Hinch, University of Alberta
- Psychophysiological and subjective responses in video lottery gamblers. Dr. David Hodgins, University of Calgary
- Effects of a motivational interview on problem gambling behaviour. Dr. David Hodgins, University of Calgary
- Alberta retirees who gamble: Entertainment or problem. Dr. Brenda Munro, University of Alberta
- Seniors and gambling: Towards a better understanding. Dr. Gary Nixon, University of Lethbridge
- Understanding how gamblers really think: Psychological and cultural aspects that motivate gamblers. Dr. Virginia McGowan, Dr. Gary Nixon, University of Lethbridge
- High Quality aging or gambling with health? The lifestyles of elders who play bingo: Supplementary study. Dr. Sandra O'Brien Cousins, University of Alberta
- Opportunistic screening and intervention strategies for problem gamblers in the emergency department: an exploratory study. Prof. Donna L. Smith, Dr. Sharon Anne Warren, University of Alberta
- A preliminary analysis of video lottery terminal gambling in Alberta. Dr. Garry J. Smith, University of Alberta
- Using police files to assess gambling impacts. Dr. Garry J. Smith, University of Alberta
- Proportion of gaming revenue derived from problem versus nonproblem gamblers. Dr. Robert Williams, Dr. Robert Wood, University of Lethbridge

Check the website for further details about ...

www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca

Conference on Gambling, law enforcement and justice system issues: sponsored by the Institute and University of Alberta's Node, **March 8-9, 2002** at the Timms Centre, University of Alberta. Full information is available on the web. Early registration deadline is 15 January 2002.

Annual Report, 2000-01: The Institute's Annual Report is now available, and can be viewed and downloaded (PDF) from the website.

2000-01 Research Grant Updates: Reports and status of current Institute research grants (as of 15 October 2001) are posted on the website. Updates are posted twice a year.

Library Information: Looking for resources relating to gambling? Whether you are doing in-depth research or just needing a few quick facts, don't hesitate to include the Alberta Gaming Research Institute library in your search process. Resources available include books, journal & newspaper articles, government reports, videos, audiotapes, conference proceedings, annual reports, and bibliographies. You can keep up-to-date with gambling and gaming issues by reading summaries of articles that have appeared in Alberta newspapers. As well, a Library 'Weblog' provides an interesting compilation of online resources related to gambling that is updated daily. Institute Librarian Rhys Stevens (403-329-5176 or by email rhys.stevens@uleth.ca) is always pleased to be of assistance with any reference requests. You can access all of this information by clicking on the 'Library Resources' section of the institute's website.

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