

# 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference and Exhibition on **Addiction Research & Therapy**

August 04-06, 2014 Hilton-Chicago/Northbrook, Chicago, USA

## Relapse in electronic gaming machine gambling: “Gambling sense”

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This paper summarizes findings of a qualitative study about predictors, protective factors and processes involved in relapse with focus on two separate types of cognitions leading to a gambling urge and relapse. The first are well recognized in the literature where erroneous cognitions for example, about outcomes of gambling increased the risk of relapse. Little importance has been given in the literature to the second type of cognitions identified by participants as “Gambling Sense”. Purposive sample selection was used from problem-gamblers (PGs), significant others, and workers with direct experience of relapse. The first phase used 5 focus groups (N=35) to obtain an initial description. The second phase, in-depth interviews (N=19) provided a deeper understanding. The fidelity of methodology and analytic process was reviewed by an external auditor. It was established “Gambling Sense” facilitated erroneous logic such as permission giving, reality denying, memory defying and excuses after gambling losses. These cognitions acted upon critical thought and capacity for self-observation resulting in time and moral judgment becoming distorted. At this time, anxiety about spending money when unable to afford it was quietened. These permission-giving cognitions justified gambling money needed for other purposes or that did not belong to the PG. In this state of mind PGs simply had a hope to win and repay the money. Once these erroneous cognitions were initiated they counteracted the ‘pull’ away from relapse, enabling the urge to emerge fully without sanction from previous harm. These findings have provided insight into therapeutic approaches for problem gamblers.

### Biography

Jane Oakes is an experienced mental health professional with a PhD candidacy and a Masters of Mental Health Sciences degree in CBT with 15 years experience in the assessment and treatment of Problem Gambling, Anxiety and Depression. She is a Lecturer at Flinders University in the School of Medicine and a senior CBT therapist and training coordinator at the Statewide Gambling Therapy Service at Flinders Medical Centre South Australia. In her academic role, she teaches and supervises students in CBT and conducts research primarily in the area of problem gambling and relapse.

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