

New study identifies factors which contribute to prisoners getting involved in the illicit economy in prisons

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Dr Emily Glorney from Royal Holloway's School of Law, has found prisoners who are susceptible to the influence of others and who have low levels of assertiveness and willpower are most likely to get involved in the pervasive illicit economy in prisons.

The research was conducted in collaboration with Professor Jane Ogden and Alan Hammill from the University of Surrey.

The illicit economy in prisons involves trading of banned goods, including new psychoactive substances. These sell for several times the street value and buyers have strict time-limits within which to re-pay any debt or the amount owed soars way beyond the means of most [prisoners](#).

The researchers surveyed 71 male prisoners across four prisons and found that engaging in the illicit economy had a detrimental impact on mental and [physical health](#). Prisoners who engaged with the illicit economy tended to find it difficult to resist influence to join in and, subsequently, found it hard to leave. Getting into debt was problematic and could lead to violence between prisoners as a way of resolving conflict or as a means for the debtor to be moved to a different wing or a different prison.

Dr Emily Glorney, said: "Addressing factors that have a negative impact on health and well-being in prison are likely to improve safety and

promote engagement with rehabilitation efforts. As the research demonstrates, developing an understanding of the experiences of people in prison is an important part of this process"

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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