Wrongful conviction and imprisonment refer to cases in which individuals are found guilty of and imprisoned for crimes that they did not commit. It is estimated that 1% to 5% of people currently in prison for serious felonies are innocent of those crimes (Gross, 2013), which translates to 9,000 - 45,000 people. Further, Gross, O’Brien, Hu, and Kennedy (2014) estimated that approximately 4% of those on death row were wrongfully convicted, which translates to over 100 individuals.

Exonerees face social, psychological, health, financial, and practical challenges (Campbell & Denov, 2004; Cook, Westervelt, & Maruna, 2014; Denov & Campbell, 2005; Grounds, 2004; Westervelt & Cook, 2012; Wildeman, Costelloe, & Schehr, 2011), yet few supports exist for them. This study explores the the range of postrelease experiences of individuals who were wrongfully convicted and imprisoned, including seeking and receiving compensation.

**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

**Theme 1: Reintegration is fraught with challenges**
- Release planning was non-existent (less than 24 hours to 6 days notice).
- Everyday situations such as navigating neighborhoods and cities, recognizing people, and shopping presented problems.
- Ongoing problems included finances, housing, socializing, and obtaining affordable health care.
- Different forms of technology including computers and cell phones, as well as social media, were a mystery.

**Sub-theme: Psychological consequences**
- Maladaptive behaviors that were necessary in prison, such as aggression, distrust, and withdrawing, were difficult to change.
- Participants worried about being wrongly accused and convicted again.
- Ten participants had been diagnosed with PTSD, or were symptomatic but had not seen a mental health professional.

**Theme 2: Our due**
At a minimum, participants believe they should receive health care/insurance, mental health care, housing assistance, immediate and long-term financial compensation, restitution for legal expenses and court fees, and an apology.

**Theme 3: Wrongful conviction is pervasive**
- Wrongful conviction can happen to anyone.
- People serving time for crimes they did not commit is not a rare occurrence.

**Theme 4: Compensation is unguaranteed justice**
- State agents attempted to prevent participants from petitioning the state for compensation.
- Eligibility criteria for state compensation are prohibitive.
- Civil suits are sometimes more promising than statutory compensation.

**REFERENCES**