

Research paper on alcohol and domestic violence how alcohol abuse has increased d...

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



Abstract

Undeniably, alcohol abuse in the current society has brought untold sufferings to many families. Worse still, the sufferings are left unmentioned thereby creating the foundations for proliferating the vice. Although many theories have been put forward to explain the relationships between alcohol abuse and domestic violence, no finger can be pointed to a particular factor as being the root cause of the increased cases of domestic violence in New York City. However, increased cases of domestic violence in New York City can be associated to the increasing rates of alcohol consumption. Due to recent financial crisis New Yorkers have turned toward alcohol to alleviate their stress . This unfortunate situation has resulted in an increased of alcohol abuse which has a significant impact on domestic violence in New York City.

This paper limits itself to the discussion of Alcohol abuse and domestic violence with particular interest to New York City. The paper analyzes and discusses the effects of alcohol abuse and domestic violence in addition to determining ways in which alcohol leads to domestic violence cases. A review of past literature is presented in this paper to give an insight of what has occurred historically and examines the theoretical approaches that were used to understand the relationship between these variables.

Introduction

Alcohol abuse is a habit that is acquired overtime. The habit entails excessive and uncontrolled consumption of alcohol, which in turn leads to

untold sufferings. Although a great set back to society in general and to individuals in particular, many people fail to acknowledge alcohol abuse as an illness. For this reason, they fail to seek help and end up suffering in silence. Instead, they turn their violent and /or aggressive behavior toward other individuals, majority of who are family members and close friends. Undoubtedly, alcoholism can be said to be hereditary in the sense that children whose parents have abused alcohol normally grow up to abuse it. Consequently, the children might adopt violent or aggressive behavior if their parents abused them. The social and environmental factors can also influence alcohol abuse, along with the economic, financial, and emotional factors.

According to statistical findings from the National Research Council, the United States leads in interpersonal violence rates among the industrialized nations. Examples of such interpersonal rates include domestic violence, high rates of violent crimes, and lethal violence from the youths.

Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO) affirmed that among the major challenges to global public health is harmful alcohol abuse and interpersonal violence cases (O'Donnell, Stueve, & Myint-U, 2009). Alcohol abuse and domestic violence poses detrimental efforts on both the abusers and the victims in addition to bringing untold complications to the society. Admittedly, victims of domestic violence usually end up being physically, psychologically, and economically affected. The children who grow up witnessing the effects of domestic violence often end up adopting and

perpetrating this type of behavior (Recognizing domestic partner abuse, 2006).

Domestic violence is among the largest social issues in New York City, as well as other parts of the globe. The vice takes a number of forms, which includes but not limited to child abuse, spouse abuse, and sibling abuse. Other types of domestic violence include physical violence, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse (Busch-Arm et al, 2010). Emotional abuse or psychological abuse involves harassment, threats, intimidation, financial abuse, or damage to goods and property. Intimate partner relationship is the most common form of domestic violence because of one of the partners-in many cases the woman ends up being a victim of domestic violence (Recognizing domestic partner abuse, 2006). Many times, women end up being victims of domestic violence simply because they are women. This is evidence by brutal cases of gender violence and inequality in many domestic violence cases. The abusers, majority of whom are men, often consider women deficient in the legal rights to freedom, power to make their own choices, and lacking the right to be respected. Worse still, the domestic violence is not only physical in nature but exhibits other types of behavior that the abuser intends to use to gain control of the victim. This might include verbal insults or assaults. Even though it is not possible to point a finger to a specific issue as being the cause of domestic violence, drug and substance abuse are among the leading causes of domestic violence in New York City (Kaisen, et al. 2008).

Often known as Alcoholism, this type of psychiatric diagnosis leads to many negative consequences due to recurring usage of the Alcohol and alcoholic

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related drugs. This pattern of drinking usually results to the damaging of an individual's health situation reduced productive capacity, and interpersonal relationships. According to Dutton (2007), alcoholism manifests itself in other different forms that include failure to meet responsibilities assigned at work or at home, drinking in situations that are considered otherwise severe such drinking while driving, fighting, breaking legal laws, or continued drinking even after health care prescriptions suggest the contrary. Alcohol abusers usually end up suffering from alcohol dependence.

Consequently, the increased use of alcohol has been associated with both long-term and short-term effects. Alcohol abuse can occur when an individual is either regularly engaged in binge drinking or driving under the influence of drugs. Examples of short-term effects of alcohol abuse include but are not limited to financial problems, social problems, physical injuries, violence, and even engaging in unprotected sex. Alcohol abuse is caused by a variety of factors, which includes peer influence, and inaccurate perceptions of what alcohol is capable of doing to the lives of the users. For instance, individuals are often tricked to use alcohol to either relax or avoid stressful situations such as tensions.

Easton, e al 2007 asserts that the ease with which individuals can access alcohol is among the major reasons why individuals find themselves abusing alcohol. Despite its availability and usage, alcohol can easily be prevented if corrective measures are put underway. Measures that have so far been implemented to curb the abuse of alcohol include increasing the prices of alcohol through taxation, imposing strict regulations in alcohol

advertisements, and the application of brief interventional measures. The latter entails the provision of education and information on the possible dangers that might occur due to increased abuse of alcoholic substances. Examples of consequences that brief interventional measures aims to prevent include unwanted pregnancies, sexual violence, unprotected sex, and transmitted diseases (Kaisen, et al. 2008).

This research study aims to establish the relationship between alcoholic abuse and domestic violence with respect to New York City. The City is known to suffer from the highest rates of drug abuse and majority of violence cases reported in the region have been linked to the abuse of alcohol. In a report presented by the Department of Human Services and Health (HHS) with respect to the involvement of individuals in drugs and alcohol, abusers were found to be 10 times more likely to be arrested than non-abusers (Field, Caetano, & Nelson, 2004). The research also found that the relationship between alcoholic abuse and domestic violence was relatively high. Many of the individuals involved in the domestic violence were found to use either alcohol or other related drugs to avoid stress related tensions and they ended being caught in domestic violence cases (Eihne 2006).

Domestic violence and alcohol abuse are two inseparable words in relation to the cause and effect of each other. A large portion of research studies have shown that alcohol abuse is a major cause of domestic violence whereas another portion shows that alcohol abuse is a contributor and/or catalyst to

domestic violence. This paper aims to establish the relationship between domestic violence and alcohol abuse in New York City.

Literature Review

Domestic violence remains a serious societal concern that traverses gender, race, age, and social economic status. Alcohol abuse is widely known as an all-too-common problem in society (Busch-Armendariz, et al., 2010) and is a major cause of domestic violence and family disabilities in the United States. The emotional, economic, and physical costs of domestic violence on the perpetrators, victims, and those surrounding them have been documented. According to Weinsheimer et al. (2005), alcohol is the mostly used and abused substance in US and the drug most commonly associated with domestic violence. The United States Department of Justice (2008) reports that nearly two thirds of domestic violence cases and intimate partner violence involved the use of alcohol. Sharps et al. (2001); Fals Stewart 2003, and Leadley et al.(2000) have consistently shown that 55- 65% of men seeking treatment for alcohol related problems have admitted to being involved in a number of domestic incidents. In US, alcohol related violence has unrelentingly been a major health problem to most public members and a considerable amount of evidence is available to show the association between assault and violence in the majority of cases and alcohol distributing outlets.

Conceptual Models

A number of conceptual models have proposed to explain the association between domestic violence and alcohol abuse . Quigley and Leonard

suggested three explanations relating to this association: the indirect effects model, the spurious model, and the proximal effect model. The indirect effects model suggests that the use of alcohol leads to negative impacts in relationships because it creates an unhappy and conflictual environment. For instance, the use of alcohol over extended periods create a conflict-conducive atmosphere and hence, creating susceptibility to violence. The spurious model suggests that alcohol abuse is related to domestic violence because alcohol and violence can be related to other things or factors that influence both violence and drinking. Finally, the proximal effects postulates that men or rather individuals who continue to engage in excessive drinking are more likely to engage in acts of domestic violence when intoxicated, they become vulnerable to commit violent acts. According to this model, alcohol reduces an individual's ability to perceive threats accurately and moderate his or her response thereby increasing his likelihood to commit violent acts.

Past Research

Over the past four decades, research in many disciplines have based their research studies in finding the root causes of domestic violence with great influence being placed on intimate partner violence (Fals-Stewart, (2003). However, no single study perspective has dominated the field majority of the research journals have focused their attention in finding the general violence and types of domestic abuse. This has led to the proliferation of “ dramatic accommodation of theoretical perspectives “ and numerous research studies that have been undertaken over the past generations. Fraternity and political

circles have focused media attention primarily on the dangers of drug abuse, rather than the relationship between drug use and violence. This has prompted to the formulation of theories that seek to establish the relationships between alcohol use and domestic violence (Field, Caetano, & Nelson, 2004).

Contemporary research studies have considered the ways in the society that has contributed to the occurrence of violent behavior being perpetrated due to the presence of alcohol substances. In defining these terms, research studies based their complex relationships on drugs and alcohol and their relevance in understanding the social contexts of the abusers.

Busch-Armendariz et al (2010) asserts that social contexts are responsible for making individuals behave because of the conditions created by the situations in which they are subjected to violent behavior and abuse of drugs.

Despite the increasing interest of these areas of research, there is no credible scientific evidence that demonstrates the existent of a significant link between the aggressive behavior of individuals and susceptibility to commit violent acts such domestic abuse (O'Donnell, Stueve, & Myint-U, 2009). This leaves enough room to provide answers to the assumption that indeed biological characteristics are not to blame for the increased cases of domestic violence in New York City but instead the increasing use of alcoholic substances provides the foundations for the research questions. Busch-Armendariz et al, (2010) claims that there exist complex interactions

among pharmacological, contextual aspects and psychological aspects of drugs-and- alcohol related violence . However they are quick to point out that there is lack of conclusive evidence to validate this assumption.

Therefore, it becomes necessary to establish the ways in which alcohol abuse affects human behavior in general in order to understand the ways it contributes to the perpetration of domestic violence.

Fals-Stewart (2003 and Fals Stewart, et al. (2005) conducted their studies based on psychological experiences in order to draw the existing relationships with respect to the behavior of individuals and drugs and alcohol use. Additionally, the studies have also attempted to establish the linkage between early exposures of individuals to alcohol use will influence their future lives as well as determining whether those individuals that were victimized as kids will emulate their characters when they become adults. Similar attempts have also been undertaken by varied scholars of many disciplines in their quests to identify and/or establish one such attempt included a study of illegal drugs and aggressive behavior. Nonetheless, these studies focused on establishing the illegality of illicit substances as opposed to finding whether relationships exist between these substances and domestic violence.

Common Solutions

Given the range of available explanations with regard to alcohol abuse and domestic violence relationships, it is logical to expect that alcohol abuse services would be integrated into policy programs and responses to the issue of domestic violence and other closely related problems. Provided the

common occurrence of alcohol abuse and domestic violence, it is also possible to think that alcohol abuse treatment programs would be concerned with addressing with domestic violence cases during such treatment programs. Practically, this does not happen because such program are designed to address one particular program, “ alcohol abuse “ without touching on domestic violence.

A number of reasons can be used to explain why majority of programs in New York City or in US fail to integrate domestic violence and alcohol abuse issues. First, the majority of correction and/or rehabilitation programs are single-problem focused. Second, the philosophies that guide domestic violence and alcohol abuse services are incompatible thereby making integration to differ. Last, both problems are complex on their own and therefore, they required different programmatic structures to address them.

In spite of the existence of these incompatibilities, some reasons must be considered in order to integrate alcohol abuse and domestic violence into one single program. This might led to better service provision or still improvement of the issues facing clients.

Directions of Current Research

For this reason, this research study aims to fill the gap that was left by the above research findings in relation to the influence of alcohol on domestic violence. Findings from the above researches were more general in nature because to examined the impacts of drugs in general and the influence of aggressive behavior. No single study has narrowed down the scope of

coverage to show the existing relationship between specific research variables such as alcohol abuse and domestic violence. This study aims to discuss the effects of alcohol in influencing violence in New York City.

Theoretical Framework

Understanding the relationships of alcohol abuse and increased domestic cases in New York City is not only an interesting factor in itself, but also very effective in enabling authorities to design effective policies to curb the menace (Easton, e al 2007).

Models are used to suggest that domestic violence has been linked to influencing the resources of women and the amount of violence directed toward them. Many times, violence is used as a mechanism for gaining resources from wives because husbands usually subject their wives to domestic violence cases in order to acquire their resources (Easton, e al 2007). This leads to the assumptions that domestic violence is caused by differences in the domestic incomes of husbands and their wives.

Consequently, in situations where the wife earns higher income, the husband resorts to domestic violence to settle their differences. The manner in which income influences the abuse of alcohol and domestic violence will determine the type of preventive policies and measures that can be implemented to find solutions to the problem (Easton, e al 2007)

A study of the nature being suggested in this research, covering more generalized topic in addition to involving large areas, calls for the formulation of specific questions to guide research procedures. Additionally,

it will aid in narrowing down the topic under study by making it easier and effective to handle the variables. It is on this basis that the following research questions are proposed to guide the entire study:

1. What accounts for the increases in domestic violence in New York City?
2. Is there any relationship between increased cases of domestic violence in New York City and the fact that there are higher rates of alcohol abuse in New York City?
3. Is there a possibility that other factors are responsible for causing increased cases of domestic violence in New York City?
4. Can the domestic violence, which has no real indicating roots, be stopped by examining the factors that are related to the abuse of alcohol?
5. Comparing the two social issues in New York City, Is there a possibility that the same factors that affect domestic violence be equally the same factors that make individuals abuse alcohol, or are there any other causal factors that provoke the same type of behaviors?
6. Are there any linkages that can be used to explain why alcohol abusers end up directing their aggressive behavior towards innocent victims such as children, family members or spouses? Still on the same issue, are children and other victims of domestic violence end up being affected by the negative consequences of domestic violence?

7. Lastly, is alcohol abuse the root cause of gender violence or is it that a catalyst to the extent of severity of domestic violence?

Hypothesis

In this research, the following hypotheses are formulated to provide answers to the above-stated research questions. Importantly, the formulation of the hypothesis was undertaken with the aim of guiding the variables applied in this research to follow a specified direction in addition to limiting findings from the research study within a definite area.

1. There is no empirically or scientifically proven cause for the increasing cases of domestic violence in New York City but rather a finger can be pointed to a number of factors such as alcohol abuse.
2. Indeed, there exists a relationship between increased cases of domestic violence in New York City and the fact that there have been increasing cases of drug use within the City.
3. Even though alcohol abuse is the major cause of domestic violence in New York City, other factors are responsible for the increased cases of domestic violence. For instance, children who were once victims of domestic violence end up copying the aggressive behaviors from their perpetrators. Simply put, victims of domestic violence are affected psychologically and they end up being abusers in their future adult lives.
4. Although alcohol is the major root cause of domestic violence in New York City, prevention of alcohol related cases might not provide the ultimate

solutions to cases of domestic violence. However, an examination of the root causes of alcohol abuse can help in the formulation of ways to reduce domestic violence cases that are related to abuse of alcohol.

5. There is little or no chance that the factors that cause domestic violence are the same factors that cause individuals to abuse alcohol, but instead one is highly likely to be a causative factor for the other. In this situation, effects of individuals who abuse alcohol often cause domestic violence.

6. Domestic violence abusers do not have varied reasons for directing their aggressive behavior to certain individuals, but one thing that stands out is that they usually resort the forces of their aggressive behavior to settle issues that might have boiled for a long time. There is also a high tendency that children who are victims of domestic violence will end up perpetrating the vice, because of psychological trauma they underwent while witnessing the excesses of domestic violence

7. Alcohol abuse is more or less the root cause of domestic violence in New York City, as well as acting as a catalyst for perpetrating the severity and impacts of domestic violence. What matters most are the factors that channel aggressiveness from the abusers thereby alcohol are undoubtedly the leading factor in this scenario?

Methods

The goal of this research study was to examine the impacts of alcohol abuse on domestic violence as well as the relationships between the two factors variables. The data collected for this study was both primary and secondary.

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The primary data was gathered through the use of survey distribution and in depth interviews with individuals. The secondary data was done through the review of literature. Data was collected based on the experiences, perceptions, pains, and trauma that the victims underwent during the ordeals.

This particular research was guided by the research question that enabled this study to apply research variables effectively by using brief interventional measures. For instance, I made inquiries to know whether the increase cases of domestic violence in New York City could be linked to the increasing rates of alcohol abuse. I wanted to know whether the domestic violence cases are heightened by alcohol abuse. Simply put, I identified the reasons whether alcohol abuse was responsible for the severity of domestic violence.

Particularly the goal of this research was to examine the relationships between higher rates of alcohol abuse and increasing cases of domestic violence in New York City. In turn, the findings in this research were used to develop ways and /or policies of minimizing the effects of alcohol abuse in causing domestic violence. It also recommended processes that should be used to minimize the risks of developing medical or alcohol-related social problem. I also found out through the examination of participants and using qualitative methods ways to bring about interventional measures. Other than finding out the interventional measures and the relationship between increased cases of domestic violence and alcohol abuse, I found out the ways of reducing dependence on alcohol abuse.

I used both qualitative and quantitative research methods involving naturalistic and interpretive approaches to the subject matter. The use of qualitative research involved the use of empirical materials such as evaluating the personal histories of participants, their observational perspectives, their historical relationships and interactions and their problematic moments with respect to domestic violence and alcohol abuse. I have conducted my research by interviewing people who are under treatment from the following agencies in New York NY: Agency of Charles Harris Heller, Alcoholics and Narcotics Help, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services NYS Office, Crystal Methodist Anonymous New York, Greenwich Alcoholism Treatment Program

The quantitative research involved statistical and numerical data that enabled us to facilitate this study. I have administered a survey where a sample of diverse individuals was chosen, majority of them being women because they are the victims of domestic violence most of the times. For this reason, a small sample of 25 residents from these agencies (Agency Charles Harris Heller, Alcoholics and Narcotics Help, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services NYS Office, Crystal Methodist Anonymous New York, Greenwich Alcoholism Treatment Program) were chosen and a selection was done on a random basis with the assumption that the sample representative of unbiased characteristics of the whole population of New York City. This comprised of 10 alcohol male users and 15 women with histories of domestic violence. Samples were selected through the random sampling method and all categories of individuals who were likely to be victims were chosen for the

study with the assumption that they represented the true characteristics of the entire population.

Data was collected using structured survey questionnaires that contained 15 structured questions into three (3) sections “ 1,” “ 2,” and “ 3”. Each section provided five (5) questions each having 5 sub-questions. Generally, two questions were designed to cover the general impacts of drug related abuse as well the influence in causing violence of any type. The rest of the questions were purely limited to the scope of the study.

Answers provided to the structured survey questionnaires were analyzed after they were grouped into tables and later rated them into percentages. All alternatives responses were analyzed and recording on their respective categories. Final analysis of the data was done using the Statistical Package for Solution Software (SPSS).

The two methods used for this study are among the best, but they also have some limitations. For instance, it may be when the researcher was carrying the qualitative research, he may have found out contradicting information about whoever it is they were studying and that would not help in solving the situation. People are different in that there were those who showed their weaknesses and there were those who did not. According to this case, the researcher would not have efficient information if the people under study had information that they were hiding. On the other hand, qualitative research can also be disadvantageous, since not all people give correct information. Like in the case of conducting a survey on women, it would

happen that the women would not want to cooperate thus not giving out sufficient information to determine how valuable the matter is. These are just the limitations which cannot be avoided when these two methods are being applied to the case in study.

Findings

Out of the 25 individuals who participated in this study, only three of them cited other factors as being the cause behind cases of domestic violence. The rest of them, including all 15 women, admitted that alcohol abuse was the major catalyst for cases of domestic violence. The women argued that their alcoholic husbands engage in excessive and uncontrolled consumption of alcohol thereby leading them to lose track of their actions. Eight men admitted that their aggressive behavior is catalyst as soon as they drink alcohol and sadly, they turn they anger to their wives and other family members. The men also regretted their actions as soon as they sobered up. Three women admitted to becoming aggressive to their husbands after drinking alcohol and during such times, they physically or emotionally abused their husbands. Only one man admitted to having been battered by her alcoholic wife. Speaking of the reasons that made individuals to abuse alcohol, majority of participants cited stress, depression, and misunderstandings between family members as being the major reasons that led them to turn to alcohol. Other reasons that were cited as to having contributed to increased cases of alcohol abuse included social and environmental factors alongside economic, financial, and emotional factors.

Coupled with findings obtained from the analysis of secondary sources and past research findings, it is evident that alcohol abuse is the leading catalyst for domestic violence. Generally, the analysis of findings revealed that alcohol abuse causes domestic violence of different forms such as spouse abuse, child abuse, physical violence, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse among others. Evidence obtained from interviewing 25 participants under treatment in the following agencies in New York NY (Agency of Charles Harris Heller, Alcoholics and Narcotics Help, Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services NYS Office, Crystal Methodist Anonymous New York, Greenwich Alcoholism Treatment Program) shows that alcohol abuse has led to increased cases of domestic violence in New York City. Sadly, many cases go unreported particularly those involving violence against men. To that purpose, Alcohol abuse and domestic violence poses detrimental effects on both the abusers and the victims in addition to bringing untold complications to the society. If proper measures are not put in place, alcohol treatment agencies and other rehabilitation programs around New York will continue registering increased cases of physically, psychologically, and economically affected individuals from alcohol abuse.

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