

# Alcohol effects on women essay



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High levels of alcohol consumption among women have been on the rise in this century. Most of the reasons that lead to this are the desire to minimize on their stress levels, the high cost of living, family issues, and just for entertainment, especially among teenagers. The perceived long term effects of such excessive alcohol consumption among women range from identified possible benefits in line with their health for extremely low alcohol consumption levels to severe and extreme detrimental effects that occur in the cases of chronic alcohol abuse. A strong correlation has always existed between the ' high levels' of women alcohol consumption and their increased risks of having complications with their cardiovascular system, endocrine system as well as their immune system.

## Endocrine System

### The Pituitary-gonadal Axis

Excessive consumption of alcohol is commonly deemed to vehemently down-regulate a woman's pituitary-gonadal axis, which eventually results in massive reduction in serum levels that the body may have. Others affected include the renowned luteinizing hormone, the follicle stimulating hormone, and eventually the gonadal atrophy. In case a decrease in one's serum levels of their sex hormones is experienced, such changes may eventually lead to little libido levels and, hence, infertility. In most women, this pituitary-gonadal dysfunction mainly leads to many menstrual irregularities.

Hyperoestrogenisation always occurs in all alcoholic liver diseases and is clinically manifested by any spider naevi which occurs in both men and their women (Charness & Perides, 2011).

## The HPA Axis

This one is mainly activated and aggravated by any heavy consumption, misuse, and even long-term use of alcohol. The main physiological, as well as psychological, stress that is always induced by their consumption of alcohol and eventual withdrawal may clearly transiently bring up activities associated with HPA (Abel & Sokol, 2012). However, this responsiveness is deemed temporarily dampened in case one withdraws from the consumption of alcohol. As any alcohol-dependent woman cycles through many periods of intoxication, excessive abuse and withdrawal, such activities lead to the development of HPA cycles into hyper- and hypo-activity. Any high level of alcohol-induced pattern that comes about in cycles and any deranged periods of the corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF), as well as cortisol, may eventually induce various states of pathological extents. These levels may elicit the development of hyper-cortisolism, which eventually exacerbates hypertension, osteoporosis, impaired growth and diabetes mellitus in women (Charness & Perides, 2011).

## Glucose Metabolism

The view that alcohol consumption may elicit glucose intolerance, commonly known as pre-diabetes, is extremely frequent among many chronic alcohol misusers. The rate, according to many researchers, settles at 40% of all alcohol-dependent women. Alcohol and its ever first and only metabolite acetaldehyde are known to both inhibit an glucose-induced levels of insulin secretion in a given dose-dependent manner and relation. Alcohol metabolites in women have also been credited to greatly increase the basal

glucagon secretion. This is a case that happens mostly among women. These high levels of alcohol consumption have also been associated with the peripheral resistance of insulin in women. There are many other detrimental effects of this consumption of alcohol on women which base on glucose metabolism. They are mainly mediated by any alcohol-induced increases and levels in corticosteroids (Brennan & Lyttle, 2012).

Hypoglycaemia, a common effect of alcohol consumption in women, is associated with any depleted hepatic and glycogen stores. The inhibition of that hepatic gluconeogenesis and also deranged glucocorticoid levels and secretion may affect women and lead them to the presentation with dire hypoglycaemia. Women suffering from this disease are usually malnourished and are prone to many episodes of the ketoacidosis which, if clearly compounded with starvation and vomiting, can lead to death.

### Adipose Tissue

The white adipose tissue is an extreme highly active tissue of the metabolic system and also an important endocrine organ that produces many adipokines. It is adversely affected and influenced by any long-term alcohol misuse by women. This may affect the normal functioning of the body. Women may be affected by this fact, which will eventually lead to their loss of immunity against diseases. Any subsequent alterations that may exist in the women's serum levels of leptin, adiponectin, and resistin are always evident in vast arrays of women endocrine abnormalities (Brennan & Lyttle, 2012).

### Effects on the Immune System

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Women are always under severe exposure to germs and bacteria in their daily chores and endeavors. Luckily for them, all their immune systems are well placed to tackle any diseases and eventualities. Excessive consumption of alcohol always weakens the women's immune system, making their body an easier target for any disease or virus. It is necessary that all women understand the effect excessive alcohol consumption has on their immune system in order to allow them to make decisions concerning the rates of alcohol consumption.

Alcohol consumption clearly suppresses both the women's innate as well as their adaptive immune systems. This means that it has adverse effects on the lives of women. Unless they take great care of themselves, this addiction will interfere with their healthful living. Any chronic alcohol consumption greatly reduces the ability of women's white blood cells to engulf at a fast rate and to swallow any harmful bacteria that may pose a challenge to them. Those women who consume a lot of alcohol have to be aware of the fact that it also disrupts their bodies' production of cytokines, which causes the latter to either start producing too much or even not enough of the needed chemical messengers. There is need for a balance between the amounts of cytokines in the body as an abundance of them can severely damage tissues. On the other hand, any lack of the cytokines can leave a woman open to many infections that may affect them (Keshavarzian & Iber, 2011).

In addition, chronic alcohol use is also known to suppress the good development of the T-cells and may impair the perceived ability of any NK cells to fully attack tumor cells. This may have a severe impact on the health

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of women. The reduction in body functioning makes women more vulnerable to any bacteria and viruses; thus, the immune system becomes less capable of destroying cancerous cells that one may have (Abel & Sokol, 2012).

With such a compromised women's immune system, chronic drinkers are always liable to contract many diseases easier, like pneumonia and tuberculosis, than those women who are not perennial alcohol consumers. Research has proven that alcohol can damage women's immune system and eventually cause them to have increased susceptibility to easily contracting HIV infection (Leon & McCambridge, 2012). This virus tends to develop faster in many chronic consumers who had already contracted the virus. Excessive consumption of alcohol on a given single occasion can also compromise one's immune system. If a woman reaches intoxication levels of alcohol, this can eventually slow her body's ability to continue producing the necessary cytokines that always ward off infections in the body by causing many inflammations. Without those inflammatory responses, her body's ability to continue defending itself against bacteria will definitely be significantly reduced (Leon & McCambridge, 2012).

### Cardiovascular System

In this particular system, alcohol may have both positive as well as negative impacts on the lives of women and people in general. However, the extent to which the consumption will affect one's body depends on the level of alcohol consumption. The time of intake, history of drinking, physical status and genetics are the main determinants of the alcohol consumption's influence on women (Abel & Sokol, 2012). A woman who has had no history of any

cardiovascular disease may survive any attack if she takes a small amount of alcohol. Alcohol modifies the cardiovascular function by interfering with the modulation of all blood concentrations of the high and low density, commonly known as lipoproteins. If one has extremely low or even moderate consumption levels of alcohol, this helps to balance and maintain the optimal concentration of lipoproteins. The final implication is diminishing all the chances that the arterial plaque in its formation stage may have; such circumstances usually lead to coronary artery disease (Abel & Sokol, 2012).

Women who consume a lot of alcohol may end up having severe diseases and issues relating to their health. Perennial alcohol consumers risk their immune system whereby the white blood cells are affected and, thus, their bodies become vulnerable to any virus and other communicable diseases. Their cardiovascular system cannot be overlooked as their history with alcohol comes in handy in assessing any further complications they may develop in their quest to satisfy their desire of consuming alcohol. The women's endocrine system is also put at great risk if one does not observe her levels of consumption.