

The harmful affects of alcohol

Business



Alcohol plays too significant a role in society today and should be an after thought as opposed to the most essential addition to any social event.

Alcohol creates numerous social, economic, and health problems that could very easily be stopped if it played a less influential role in every day events. The use of alcohol is prominent in, but not limited to three social circles that include students, family groups, and religious gatherings. Experts have much to say about alcohol use and abuse in these three categories, including all of the negative aspects of drinking. Social drinking is a common occurrence around America. Whether it is after work or after a football game, white collar or blue, two-thirds of the American population sit down at least once a week to enjoy an alcoholic beverage. Many of these people do not realize that drinking is what leads to uncontrolled behavior, drunk driving, and in the long run, addiction.

They are thinking only of the short-term effects, not the negative long-term consequences. People who regularly turn to alcohol eventually begin to neglect their families and other responsibilities, consequently wrecking the lives of loved ones and their own as well. While the lasting negative effects of alcohol use are spewed daily through the media, the problems will not stop until society completely understands how alcohol can indeed pose a serious threat to the nations social welfare. Alcohol has an adverse effect on the economy. The consequences of alcohol abuse and dependence cost the nation an estimated \$99 billion each year.

It is tax money that pays for alcoholics who both live on the street and are barely getting by or who are in government-funded hospitals and

institutions. The United States should either find an alternative way to take care of these people or perhaps raise liquor taxes. Either one of these options would conceivably minimize the economical problems caused by alcoholic beverages. It is not the responsibility of the people as a whole to take care of the homeless people who have fallen prey to the lure of alcohol related problems. As of 1991, about 14 million Americans met medical diagnostic criteria for alcohol abuse or alcoholism.

There are numerous health problems that are linked to drinking. For instance, if alcohol is consumed during pregnancy, birth defects may result, worse, the baby could be born addicted to alcohol. High doses of alcohol have also been found to delay puberty in females and slow bone growth and result in weaker bones. One of the main risks of drinking alcoholic beverages is having a stroke. A review of epidemiological evidence concludes that moderate alcohol consumption increases the potential risk of strokes caused by bleeding. Another medical problem that involves alcohol is the use of prescription medications.

Alcohol may interact harmfully with more than 100 medications, including some sold over the counter. The effects of alcohol are especially augmented by medications that depress the function of the central nervous system, such as sleeping pills, sedatives, and antidepressants, and certain painkillers. Upon understanding the risks of drinking, some people would surely stop. Better health is a good reason to do so. One of the main groups of alcohol users is high school and college students. Despite a legal drinking age of 21, many young people in the United States consume alcohol.

There are several factors that put youth at risk for drinking and for alcohol-related problems and also several consequences of their drinking. Thirteen- to fourteen- year-olds are at high risk to begin drinking. This is a confusing stage in their life and they are easily pressured into doing things they would not normally do. Also at high risk are twins and adopted children. Studies of these two groups demonstrate that genetic factors influence an individual's vulnerability to alcoholism. Children of alcoholics are more likely than children of nonalcoholics to imitate drinking during adolescence and develop alcoholism, but the relative influence of environment and genetics have not been determined and vary among people.

Advertising has also been found to play an influencing role in adolescents' decision to drink. Research has assessed the effects of alcohol advertising awareness on intentions to drink. In a study of fifth- and sixth-graders' awareness measured by the ability to identify products in commercials with the product name blocked out awareness had a small but statistically significant relationship to positive expectancies about alcohol and intention to drink as adults. Although there are many risk factors inviting youths to drink, one of the most prevalent is peer drinking and acceptance of drinking. If one minor sees another drinking he would most likely find it acceptable and join his friend. If all of these risk factors were reduced, say, less advertising of alcohol where children will likely be influenced, children would not find it as acceptable to drink and would probably not start off so young or abstain wholly.

Though the prevalence of binge drinking varies among campuses, the overall statistics are alarming. A 1993 survey by 18, 000 students at 140 colleges in <https://assignbuster.com/the-harmful-affects-of-alcohol/>

40 states found that 44% of the students drank heavily. In an effort to curb students thirst for alcoholic beverages, many schools are trying to come up with alternatives to promoting social events that involve alcohol. Colby University has come up with a new program that offers students an alternative to getting 'sloshed.' Faculty and students there have formed a committee that will recommend a reorganization of social functions. One of their recommendations was that the student association spend at least 50% of their funds exclusively alcohol free events.

The other 50% of the funds may be used for entertainment, decorations, or refreshments, but may not be used for the purchase of alcohol. More schools should take part in this kind of rehabilitation, not only does it give the school a positive reputation, but it gives the students more time to concentrate on the reason that they are there which is to learn. Serving food, non-alcoholic drinks, offering activities and entertainment such as games and music, and ceasing to give alcohol two hours before the end of the party are all ideas that will promote safe social scenes and responsible parties. One way to deter younger drinkers from becoming addicts is to step up the punishment for law-breakers who have a blood alcohol concentration indicating public intoxication. Whether it is as minor as carrying a fake identification card or as major as a drunk driving accident, offenders who break the law while legally intoxicated should be punished to the full extent of the law.

Alcohol abusers, these risk takers and law-breakers, may realize after being punished once or twice that this is not the path they should take. Sobriety is a great thing, and the choice to be sober is one that should have positive connotations as opposed to the negative ones that go with drinking and

being drunk. Learning at a young age that alcohol is not the great thing that everyone makes it out to be is a step in the right direction. We really should start now on a program that gives every child from kindergarten to college factual, unbiased training about alcohol. Then in a couple of generations we'd see fewer problems. Most people would have learned to drink responsibly.

The earlier people learn, the best it will be for them and society in general.