

Psychological effects of alcohol on behavior



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When people think of the negative effects alcohol has on the body, many times people may think of the damage it does to the internal organs. Some of the areas that are affected by alcohol are the liver, the stomach and pancreas, and the kidneys. These are all vital organs that need to remain healthy in order for our bodies to function properly. The effects of alcohol on these organs differ for each person due to the fact that we all have different bodies. Some can consume greater amounts of alcohol with little effects due to the size variation in our bodies. However, the one organ that I believe is affected the same amongst all people would be the brain. Once alcohol starts to effect regions of your brain, you will begin to experience numerous psychological and neurological issues. There are many different psychological and neurological effects that alcohol has on the brain, thus affecting the rest of your body. Anytime you voluntarily or involuntarily alter your psychological or neurological state, you begin to change your feelings and emotions. Negative Feelings that manifest from alcohol use include nightmares, overwhelming fears, discontent, and restlessness, not to mention the internal damage that is being done during consumption. Personality changes are another component of alcohol abuse. Alcohol can make substantial personality changes that may not be recognized to the naked eye. Once a person is intoxicated, personality traits that can usually be noticed on a regular day-to-day basis have now changed and often take a turn for the worst when alcohol consumption is excessive. There have been many proven cases and studies conducted that yield the effects of alcohol and the results can be very detrimental to one's life.

Amongst all of the side-effects associated with alcohol, depression is one of the most common and well known effects your mind and body may experience. Alcohol is considered to be a central nervous system depressant. As we have discussed before, the central nervous system, which consists of the brain, spinal cord and the retina, coordinates the activity of all parts of the body. When alcohol is consumed in large quantities and then circulates throughout the body, it diminishes or slows down the activity within the brain thus affecting the activity of the rest of the body. Regarding depression, alcohol has been shown to lower the level of norepinephrine and serotonin in the brain. These two chemicals give you your feeling of well being and they help you to feel “ normal”. Without the appropriate amount of these chemicals, you will experience spells of depression. Tests have been conducted to show that after a long period of alcohol free drinking, many have shown improved depression scores. However, those that continue to drink may trigger even more feelings of depression, which in turn causes a person to drink even more, to suppress the feelings of the depression. This is a vicious cycle that could continue on until professional help is sought. Many people that drink alcohol feel that the alcohol will make all of their problems go away, but this is not true at all, if anything alcohol abuse eventually will make things worse in the long run. Not only are your problems still there, but now you also have an addiction to the alcohol and the depression you suffer from becomes more prominent and lasts longer than before.

Anxiety is another disease that can sometimes be directly connected with alcohol abuse. When people consume large amounts of alcohol they have a tendency to become stressed from the impact of the alcohol, causing many

situations that arise to become blown out of proportion. The long term effects that alcohol has on the nervous system and the problems that the body faces during the alcohol use can sometimes be life threatening. Many people feel that if they drink and just get a buzz off of the alcohol then it's alright and no harm is done, but in actuality,

the short term satisfaction that one receives from alcohol will give way to a series of stresses on your system that will manifest psychologically. People who abuse alcohol may become selfish or angry about their surroundings and just life in general. Aggression and mood swings are some of the more common traits that are also associated with alcohol abuse. These changes in behavior are brought on by the alcohol's effect on serotonin levels in your body which can trigger a person's emotions to spiral out of control causing them to become irate or even combative at times. People who abuse alcohol have a disregard for others feelings and well being. As alcohol affects the body, the brain's circuitry decreases as well as the thinking and reasoning process of the brain, which is a common side effect of alcohol abuse. Often times when people are intoxicated, they are willing to do or say anything without any recollection later on what was said or done. Their deductive and inductive reasoning becomes clouded by the alcohol.

Those who drink large amounts of alcohol go through a number of denial issues just as you would expect in any other drug addict to go through. People who abuse alcohol will not even notice the fact that they are becoming more and more intoxicated on an everyday basis. Many people may not be able to see what their alcohol dependency is actually doing to them the way someone else can, but the reality of the matter is, it is a

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progressive illness that worsens over time. The longer a person drinks and the more alcohol that is consumed, the more pronounced the effects will be on their system (Wechsler et al., 1994). These psychological effects of alcohol and the effects it has on one's behavior can be felt over and over again, not just by the person consuming the alcohol but by their family and loved ones as well. There are hangovers felt the morning after and not to mention just the feeling of not knowing what you did after you became intoxicated.

For this paper, I researched many experiments conducted which attempted to illustrate or prove the effects alcohol has on one's behavior. Each experiment differs in the research, but all serve the same purpose in the identification of the psychological and neurological effects alcohol has on a person thus affecting their behavior. In the research articles that were conducted, a comparison was completed between people who had been affected by alcoholism and people who had not. The reason for each experiment was to see if alcohol had any effect on an individual's behavior or not. In the first study which was conducted by Wright et. al, a test was conducted to see if adolescents of alcoholics who were college students differ from nonclinical college students on substance abuse, perceived social support, problem solving, and suicidal ideation. They concluded that there was no difference between the two groups.(Wright et. al, 1992). Another study that was conducted by Cooper et. al was given to see if individual therapy in short-term groups would help to improve test scores (Cooper et. al, 1992). Members of the adolescents of alcoholics also known as ACA's support group and ACA college students were compared by Lashubeck et. al,

to see if there was a difference in social support, psychological distress, and hardness among ACA's. From the comparison the study brought forth, it was predicted that there would be some differentiation (Lashubeck et. al, 1992). Also there was a research study conducted by Hall et. al, ACA's and traumatic experience also known as TE groups. They compared the ACA and TE groups to each other. They compared the ACA and the TE groups with a control group; the control group involved people who have sought professional help for their addiction. The study also concentrated on the differences in grade point averages (GPAs) and adults who had been exposed to traumatic events during their childhood (Wechsler et al., 1994). It was concluded that adults with childhood traumatic experiences were more likely to encounter difficulties during childhood as well as later in life. The study concluded that there was no difference between the GPAs and the hypothesis that was tested turned out to be true (Hall et. al, 1994). A study was done by Cornelius et. al, to show which of the two control groups had the higher drinking rate. This study was conducted in order to compare the parental drinking among adolescents and adults. The rates of binge drinking and heavy drinking were highest among the teenage group. When tested, adults had a significantly higher average on a daily basis of alcohol prior to pregnancy than adolescents, but the teenagers held the highest rate once they became pregnant (Cornelius et. al, 1994). Winokur et. al conducted a survey, of college students during their first and second year of college in order to observe the development of alcohol usage and their behavior in college. When the study was finished it suggested that every college student who used alcohol during the first year continued to do so during their second year as well. The results suggested that heavy alcohol use is not a main

behavior characteristic, but that it is learned in college (Winokur et. al, 1993). In each one of these articles, the researchers used a different variety of tests and surveys either to confirm or negate their hypothesis. The hypothesis' that were given in the articles were all supportive to the research except the ones given by Cornelius et al., and Winokur et al. Based on the information given in these articles, alcohol will affect everyone who abuses it in some way shape or form. Another study was taken that, in my opinion, displayed two results. This study would illustrate the effects alcohol has on ones behavior regarding math and grammar, but also see if alcohol effects one type of group more then another.

Rationale:

Does having a bias opinion to alcohol have a greater or lesser effect on a student's math and grammar skills.

Hypothesis:

One glass of alcohol will have a lesser effect on those students from families of alcoholic parents. (Cornelius et. al, 1994).

Subjects:

A total of 12 students participated in the experiment, including six students from families with parents who are alcoholics which were the dependent variable and six students not from families with parents who are considered to be alcoholics, and they are the independent variable.

Method:

Consent to participate was given to all students to sign. Materials that were used in the survey were administered individually to all students who

participated. All students were interviewed individually in their dorm rooms. They were unaware of the groups that they were being placed in for the study.

Students in this survey were given a glass of alcohol. They drank enough alcohol in order to blow a 0.01 on a reath Alizer machine for the beginning of this experiment.

Students were administered a pre-test in grammar and mathematics. The mathematics test will consist of the four basic components of arithmetic which include addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, to assure that nothing else will be measured. The grammar test will consist of a sentence completion test. The verb in each sentence will be left out and the student must use the correct verb and present or past tense of the verb.

Students then returned a week later to perform the same steps. (Drink enough alcohol in order to blow a 0.01 then take another math and grammar test.

Result:

The results of this study were analyzed by using the T-test. The scores were analyzed to see if having a predisposition to alcohol has a greater effect on ones mathematics was 95 and the mean score for non-alcoholic parents was 91.67. The data for the independent T test were $T = -.21$ ($SD = 8783.3$), with a standard error of 18.74, $DF = 10$, and $P < .05$ results were not significant. The number of students in each group was eight. For the participants who did not come from parents of alcoholic parents the means score for grammar was 80. The data from the Independent T test were $T = 0$, <https://assignbuster.com/psychological-effects-of-alcohol-on-behavior/>

with standard error 16.1 (SD= 6466.66), DF= 10 and P*.05, results were not significant. Discussion: The hypothesis was not supported One glass of alcohol does not have a lesser effect on those students from families of alcoholic parents. A total of 12 students participated in the experiment, including six students from families with parents who were alcoholics and six students not from families with parents who were alcoholics.

In researching this topic and reviewing the various experiments conducted, I found that it is somewhat difficult to predict the extent to which alcohol will have on a particular individual. However, one fact remains, that you can be sure that neurological and psychological effects are evident amongst people who drink alcohol. The amount of alcohol consumed and the consistency of consumption will determine the extent of the neurological and psychological effects. Sometimes the effects are not noticeable by just looking at a person's outer appearance but a deeper look into a person's psychological state following a few drinks may tell a different story.