

The Effects Of Hangover Lead To Less Alcohol Consumption

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Abstract

Purpose: Alcohol hangovers are believed to occur after heavy consumption of alcohol. The aim of the paper is to examine whether the effects of hangovers lead to less consumption or not. And if it does, what must be the reasons behind it? **Methods and materials:** In this study, employees of a company will be asked to fill the questionnaires evaluating the statistics of alcohol consumers, history of alcohol consumption, and the after-effects. **Classification of the subjects** will take place as those who are regular consumers of alcohol and those who just consumed it only once or twice. **Results and conclusions** will then be drawn based on the data acquired. **Assumptions:** The consumers whose first experience with alcohol was light will tend to consume more in the future, while those who took a heavy dose and suffered from a serious hangover will tend to stay away from alcoholic drinks.

Introduction

The experience of different kinds of unpleasant psychological and physiological impacts from the consumption of alcohol is known as the hangover (Stephens, 2014, p.2223). It lasts for many hours or can exceed 24 hours. According to Stephens (2014), the occurrence of hangovers is due to many biological procedures or mechanisms that are not completely comprehended. These mechanisms include the decreased concentration of blood glucose, instability in the immune system, and the metabolism of congeners (p.2223). To study whether the effects of a hangover lead to less alcohol consumption and the reasons behind it, we first need to discover what happens in a hangover that leads to less consumption of alcohol.

Alcohol is a chemical which functions as a diuretic in the body. This implies that the person consuming alcohol pees more, as a result of which dehydration occurs. Common signs and symptoms of a hangover involve drowsiness, fatigue, headache, nausea, dry mouth, dehydration, depression, etc. These changes from person to person. "A high dose of alcohol is a prerequisite for experiencing a hangover, but there are substantial individual differences in hangover responses even when alcohol exposure is controlled experimentally" (Slutske, 2014, p.1). A hangover makes one feel less focused and less concentrated. Irritability and sensitivity to light are common. Alcohol enhances the production of stomach acid and improves the process of digestion. Consequently, nausea and abdominal pain are caused. Alcoholic drinks contain contents known as congeners which provide different flavors or colors to the drink. These congeners are accountable for producing hangovers.

Apart from these after-effects of the hangovers, some studies also suggest the loss of memory is one of the impacts of the hangover. Verster (2003) conducted research to examine memory functioning as a consequence of the hangover effect (p.741). Kim (2003) performed experimental research to assess the impacts of experimentally prompted alcohol hangovers on mental functions by means of the Luria-Nebraska Neuropsychological Battery. The results indicated alcohol hangovers do have a negative impact on mental functioning, especially on the higher visual and cortical functions linked with the right posterior and left hemispheres. Due to the effects on mental processes, some researchers studied and evaluated the performance of alcohol consumers. "Although there are many methodological shortcomings in alcohol hangover research, it is evident that alcohol hangovers do have an impact on daily activities such as on-the-job performance" (Verster, 2008).

There are many risk factors related to the consumption of alcohol, such as an empty stomach leading to quick absorption of alcohol, a combination of smoking and drinking enhancing the probability of misery for the coming day, inherited problems that may occur with alcoholism, etc. "Several studies have demonstrated excess hangover in drinkers with a family history of alcoholism" (Slutske, 2014, p.1). There is no specific cure or treatment for the symptoms of hangovers other than meditation or complete abstinence (Zlotnik, 2014, p.134). "Hangover symptoms are less likely to occur if a person drinks only small, non-intoxicating amounts" (Swift, 1998, p.59). Some studies also account for personal influences to be the cause of hangovers. "Some evidence exists that increased hangover symptoms occur more often in people possessing certain personality traits, such as neuroticism, anger, and defensiveness" (Swift, 1998, p.58).

The subject of alcohol hangover has been neglected and not often researched as compared to the chronic and acute effects of alcohol hangover. However, situations have changed now, and researchers have started giving importance to it. Alcohol Hangover Research Group was established in the year 2009 in the USA and Europe (Stephens, 2014, p.2223). Less information regarding the physiology of the hangover condition is known, such as whether a hangover indicates alcohol's direct influences on the body, its aftermath, or a mixture of both (Swift, 1998, p.54). Some studies suggest that "Alcohol consumption typically leads to the development of tolerance, acquired resistance to its physiological and behavioral effects. Tolerance allows increased consumption of alcohol and is thought to be an important part of the risk for heavy drinking" (Riley, 2006, p.2). On the other hand, we have studies that suggest that "It is possible that due to higher tendency to develop hangover, "experienced" migraine sufferers voluntarily reduce their alcohol consumption, to avoid unpleasant hangover experience" (Zlotnik, 2014, p.133). These opposing views regarding alcohol hangovers lead us to research which view is the most practical one. It can also be assumed that people suffering from diseases or issues such as migraine or any other kind of mental or psychological illness will tend to suffer more from the hangover effects as compared to normal individuals. And so, those who suffer more are inclined towards less alcohol consumption in the future.

The main hypothesis of the paper can be stated as that the effects of the hangovers are too disturbing, which leads to less alcohol consumption. When a person takes a heavy dose of alcohol and also for the first time, he suffers from an extreme hangover. This bad and disturbing experience does

not allow him to consume alcohol in the future. The paper aims to prove this hypothesis through qualitative research. Research through surveys and questionnaires will be conducted to evaluate the extent of the trueness of the hypothesis. The practical implications of the research will help people become aware of the results of a heavy dosage of alcohol, the prevention of its usage may take place, and the careful handling of alcoholic drinks may be carried out.

Methods

Participants

Employees from a random company will be taken as the population for this study. Participants were treated in accordance with the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (American Psychological Association, 2002).

Instruments And Variables

The participants will be requested to fill up the surveys and questionnaires. These questionnaires will be filled out in my absence and will not comprise any perceptible data, so the collected data and information must be completely anonymous. The questionnaires will consist of the demographics, history of alcohol consumption and the hangovers, signs and symptoms of hangovers on the consumers and their severity after-effects of the hangovers observed, a number of consumers who backed off from the consumption due to the severe effects of the hangover, and the health-related conditions and habits.

Data Analysis

The existence and severity of the hangover indications will be evaluated with the help of the Hangover Symptom Scale (HSS). Slutske (2003) designed and validated this scale. 13 items were used to assess the symptoms of a hangover, which leads to less alcohol consumption. These 13 items were derived from the eight areas of concern like pain, sleep, biological patterns, constitutional, gastrointestinal, cognitive, sensory, sympathetic hyperactivity symptoms and mood. These domains were described and explained by Swift and Davidson (1998). These hangover symptoms and signs will be evaluated referring to the first-time consumption of the alcohol and then the repeated consumption if it occurred during the duration of the previous 12 months.

Statistical Analysis

Data will be examined and analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics, Version 20 software. The contrast between two groups, one consisting of regular consumers of alcohol and the other who just

had it once or twice and now avoid its consumption, will be examined using the Chi-square test.

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