

Alcohol and its consequences: dealing with multiple concepts

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Preface

The question about how to react to alcohol, to the alcoholic beverage industry and to the problem of alcoholics is an arbitrary position which is imposed on families, cities, and nations. The creation of multiple factor intervention measures that define the following desires are:

- *a culture of abstinence or a society whose ideal is to be free from substances that cause dependence;*
- *an ambivalent culture or a society where alcohol consumption is an exceptional ritual;*
- *a permissive culture or a society that ensures individual rights and arbitrariness;*
- *a functionally disturbed culture or a society that destroys itself through alcohol.*

Heckmann & Silveira¹

1 Heckmann W, Silveira C. Alcohol dependence: clinical aspects and diagnosis. In: Andrade AG, Anthony JC (eds.). Alcohol and its consequences: dealing with multiple concepts. Barueri: Manole/Minha Editora, 2009. p.81-102.

Abstinence, license or something in between, these are the choices that each society must make based on the state of scientific knowledge and the moral compass of the society. This highly important, well edited book helps to tackle some of these vexing questions by presenting the relevant scientific evidence without any bias. This volume presents an impressive overview of the challenges posed by alcohol to individuals and their societies. It does so by presenting empirical evidence leaving the conclusions for the reader to make.

The introductory chapter is by Anthony J. C., an internationally renowned epidemiologist from Michigan State University, and encompasses the current concepts in alcohol use epidemiology and global patterns of consumption. The author also delineates important considerations regarding the global burden of disease and the social costs associated with alcohol consumption, as well as the influence of the demographic profile of population on this consumption based on recent reports from the World Mental Health Surveys Consortium, projecting its consequences in an unprecedented way, 20 years from now.

Within a redefinition of the concepts concerning alcohol use epidemiology, the author traces, in a exemplary fashion, considerations on the current definition of alcohol use disorders (AUD), drug use disorders (DUD) and Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), in order to estimate the true impact of alcohol use to the individual and society as whole, which seems to be currently in need of an update.

Ahlstrom's comprehensive report on the findings of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Others Drugs (ESPAD) underlines the impact of specific cultures and their social norms on adolescent drinking behaviour. It also identifies age specific gender influences. These findings should prove helpful and relevant to all concerned with the development of prevention and education strategies geared towards both youth, their families and their significant others. The culturally diverse needs underline the fact that no cookie-cutter strategy can be applied in the fields of education and prevention.

The chapter by Heckmann W and Silveira C.M. provides a comprehensive overview of the history diagnosis and current practice. It also provides an important discussion on the pharmacology of alcohol, its consequent pathologies, and its impact

on the human body. This review provides the necessary backdrop to the authors' discussion of treatment strategies and models. Their analysis of the available evidence leaves the reader better prepared to consider the impact of the current state of knowledge on practice and policies, and raises a number of important issues for continuing study.

Andrade A.G. and Oliveira L.G. bravely tackle the question of long-term consequences of moderate consumption of alcohol – perhaps one of the more controversial issues this book attempts to tackle. They point out the difficulties caused by a lack of a common definition for the word “moderate”. The authors points out that not only do the definitions vary from country to country but also within the borders of each country. They further caution that the findings point to individual differences caused by experience, tolerance, metabolism genetic vulnerability, lifestyle and period of time in which the consumption is realized. This unresolved state of affairs frequently can lead to exaggerated claims and misperceptions concerning the enduring health benefits of “moderate drinking”, often causing people to expose themselves to short or longer term negative relevant consequences.

The chapter further examines the impact on the diseases associated with the consumption of alcohol of both causal and aggravating on the one hand and beneficial on the other. The authors caution against generalizing from the current state of knowledge but conclude that while the heavy use of alcohol has negatively impacted public health, evidence indicates that there may be benefits associated with moderate alcohol use. The article concludes with identify the needs for further research. In the mean time, the authors urge that public health authorities and the media interpret and inform clearly and objectively the population of the research findings concerning the beneficial effects of moderate drinking, explaining the possible benefits and thus stimulating healthy practices of consumption. It is clear, that until a common definition can be arrived at for the concept of moderate drinking, the controversy will continue and the wisdom of the disseminations of information by the public sector on potential health benefits of moderate consumption will be hotly debated.

No such controversy surrounds the problems due to heavy drinking explored in the chapter by Andrade L.H. *et al.* In the Latin American and Caribbean regions 10% of

death and disability are attributable to alcohol. In Brazil alcohol is reported to be the leading risk factor for disease burden accounting for 11.4% adjusted life years. They cite a study conducted in 1992 and curiously published only in 1999 that in the USA, the direct and indirect costs of alcohol and other drug use was a staggering 200 billion dollars per year, with direct cost mostly attributable to treatment! While much of the chapter focuses on conditions in Brazil, the authors also review general research, alcohols association with medical problems and psychiatric co-morbidity, with very strong associations to both. The report on studies showing that 50% of patients with severe mental disorder will develop alcohol use related problems and that many psychiatric disorders are related to alcohol abuse/dependence.

The chapter by Malbergier A. and Cardoso L. on the consumptions of alcohol and its relationship to HIV/AIDS is equally significant. They report that people who drink have twice the chance of contracting HIV than those who don't due to the wide use of alcohol as a disinhibitor during sex, by reducing the ability to discern the risks associated with HIV infection. They cite examples of Sub Saharan Africa, Russia, India and Brazil as places where the acquisition of HIV is directly linked to drinking. In these countries, even non-frequent, moderate drinking leads to sex without condoms. They also point out that alcohol is frequently associated with early initiation into unsafe sexual activities by adolescents across the cultures. They cite a World Health Organization (WHO) report that 53% of seropositive individuals taking part in the study were drinking one month prior to the survey, resulting not only in the continuing practice of unprotected sex but in non compliance with their medical treatment programs. The authors conclude that brief intervention, motivational interviews, behavior, or cognitive behavior therapies are all effective in both reducing alcohol consumption and promoting participations and compliance in HIV treatment program.

In the chapter titled "Alcohol abuse in pregnancy" Grinfeld H. paints a cautionary picture. He cites evidence that drinking during pregnancy is the most common cause of birth defects of children with developmental delays and fetus malformation in the Western Hemisphere. Excessive drinking during pregnancy significantly increases the risk of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) with at 75% chance of reoccurrence in individu-

als that have previously exposed a fetus to alcohol. The article also provides a detailed discussion of the mechanism and research surrounding FAS.

This book is a valuable work whether read cover to cover or a chapter at a time. Each article is well considered, objective, well documented and referenced. It should prove to be a very useful tool for educators, students of the addictions and policy makers alike. It provides concise and clear discussions of each subject with helpful references of primary sources. It left me feeling that one cannot over state the risks associated with alcohol consumption nor can we however underestimate the significance of the historic culture of alcohol in our everyday lives. The challenges to education and prevention are enormous. The history of attempting to control consumption through legislation and law enforcement is littered with failed examples. The cost both in human and financial terms has been staggering. It is only true evidence based policies that we can hope to deal with the challenges that we face. Volumes like this will help move us in that direction.

Dr. Peter A. Vamos

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Objetivo: O consumo de álcool e tabaco, comum em estudantes universitários, poderá acarretar futuros problemas sociais e de saúde. Assim, pretende-se identificar os fatores associados a estes consumos entre estudantes universitários. Método: Foi realizada uma revisão da literatura segundo as recomendações PRISMA. Os estudos foram pesquisados através da PubMed e Scopus. Através dos critérios de inclusão e exclusão, os estudos foram selecionados e os dados foram analisados através de uma meta-análise. Resultados: Vinte estudos foram incluídos para a análise. O consumo de tabaco associou-se com t-Principais consequências em longo prazo relacionadas ao consumo moderado de álcool [Main long-term consequences related to moderate alcohol consumption]. In Andrade AG, Antony JC, Silveira CM. Álcool e suas consequências: uma abordagem multiconceitual. Minha Editora (2009). 24. Barroso AT., et al. três volumes, cobre toda a Física. Física: Uma Abordagem Estratégica. 3: Elétric Física Para Cientistas E Engenheiros - Volume 2: Oscilações, Ondas E Termodinâmica. Uma Abordagem Estratégica. 2: Termodinâmica, Óptica. 322 Pages·2009·58.12 MB·1,842 Downloads·Portuguese·New! volumes, cobre toda a Física. Física. Uma Abordagem Estratégica. 2: Termodinâmica Fundamentos de física, V.2 8ED - gravitação, ondas: termodinâmica. 314 Pages·2009·103.75 MB·964 Downloads·German·New! Fundamentos de física, V.2 8ED - gravitação, ondas: termodinâmica robert resnick|david hallid Redes de Computadores e a Internet: uma abordagem top-down. 658 Pages·2016·22.13 MB·2,996 Downloads·Portuguese·New!