

# Alcohol Addiction Symptoms: The Impact of Alcohol Use Disorder on Mental Health

Ruth Fabiana\*

Department of Internal Medicine, University of Texas Southwestern, Dallas, USA

## DESCRIPTION

Alcoholism, clinically referred to as Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), is a chronic and progressive condition characterized by compulsive alcohol consumption, loss of control over drinking and continued use despite negative consequences. As one of the most prevalent substance use disorders globally, AUD not only affects individual's physical health and mental well-being but also strains relationships, impairs work and social functioning and poses significant public health challenges. This perspective article aims to illuminate the diverse manifestations and subtle indicators of alcoholism, empowering individuals, families and communities to recognize the signs, intervene early and seek appropriate support.

## Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD)

**Diagnostic criteria:** According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), AUD is diagnosed based on a spectrum of symptoms, including:

**Impaired control:** Difficulty in limiting alcohol consumption, unsuccessful attempts to cut down or stop drinking.

**Craving:** Strong desire or urge to drink alcohol.

**Physical dependence:** Alcohol addiction symptoms (e.g. tremors, nausea, anxiety) when alcohol use is discontinued or reduced.

**Tolerance:** Needing increased amounts of alcohol to achieve desired effects or experiencing diminished effects with continued use of the same amount.

**Negative consequences:** Continued alcohol use despite awareness of its detrimental effects on physical health, mental health, relationships or work and social obligations.

## Signs and symptoms of alcoholism

The behavioral signs might be identified as follows:

**Increased frequency and quantity:** Drinking larger amounts or

more frequently than intended, binge drinking episodes (defined as consuming five or more drinks for males or four or more drinks for females, in about two hours).

**Loss of control:** Inability to stop or reduce drinking despite repeated attempts, spending a significant amount of time obtaining alcohol, drinking or recovering from its effects.

**Social and interpersonal problems:** Relationship conflicts, neglecting responsibilities at work, school or home due to alcohol use, legal issues related to drinking (e.g. Driving Under the Influence (DUI) arrests).

**Changes in priorities:** Prioritizing alcohol over hobbies, social activities or previously enjoyed interests.

The physical signs might be identified as follows:

**Tolerance and detoxification:** Developing tolerance to alcohol's effects, needing more alcohol to achieve the same effects, experiencing detoxification symptoms such as tremors, sweating, nausea and agitation when alcohol use is reduced or stopped.

**Health issues:** Chronic health problems associated with alcoholism, including liver disease (e.g. fatty liver, cirrhosis), cardiovascular complications (e.g. hypertension, cardiomyopathy), gastrointestinal disorders (e.g. gastritis, pancreatitis) and neurological impairments (e.g. memory loss, cognitive deficits).

## Psychological and emotional signs

**Mood swings:** Fluctuations in mood, irritability, agitation, anxiety, depression or emotional instability associated with alcohol use or addiction.

**Cognitive impairment:** Impaired concentration, memory lapses, difficulty with decision-making or problem-solving.

**Psychiatric comorbidities:** Co-occurring mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) often coexist with alcoholism, increasing symptoms and complicating treatment.

**Correspondence to:** Ruth Fabiana, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Texas Southwestern, Dallas, USA, Email: ruthfabiana\_9@utswmed.edu

**Received:** 28-May-2024, Manuscript No. JALDD-24-32354; **Editor assigned:** 30-May-2024, Pre QC No. JALDD-24-32354 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 14-Jun-2024, QC No. JALDD-24-32354; **Revised:** 21-Jun-2024, Manuscript No. JALDD-24-32354 (R); **Published:** 28-Jun-2024, DOI: 10.35248/2329-6488.24.12.418

**Citation:** Fabiana R (2024) Alcohol Addiction Symptoms: The Impact of Alcohol Use Disorder on Mental Health. J Alcohol Drug Depend. 12:418

**Copyright:** © 2024 Fabiana R. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

## Risk factors and vulnerabilities

**Genetic and biological factors:** Family history of alcoholism or genetic predispositions influencing alcohol metabolism and neurotransmitter systems contribute to increased susceptibility to AUD.

**Environmental influences:** Stressful life events, trauma, peer influences, cultural norms surrounding alcohol use and accessibility of alcohol play pivotal roles in shaping drinking behaviors and escalating risk for alcoholism.

**Psychosocial factors:** Low socioeconomic status, social isolation, lack of coping skills and early exposure to alcohol use increase vulnerability to developing AUD.

## Recognizing early warning signs

**Early signs in adolescents and young adults:** Experimentation with alcohol, peer pressure, changes in academic performance or social behavior, secretive behavior related to alcohol use and changes in mood or personality.

**Signs in adults:** Increased tolerance, unsuccessful attempts to control drinking, neglect of responsibilities, detoxification symptoms and interpersonal conflicts due to alcohol use.

**Signs in older adults:** Increased sensitivity to alcohol, potential interactions with medications, changes in health status increased by alcohol consumption and social isolation contributing to increased alcohol use.

## Intervention and support strategies

**Education and awareness:** Promoting awareness of the signs and symptoms of alcoholism in schools, workplaces and communities empowers individuals to recognize problematic drinking behaviors and seek early intervention.

**Screening and assessment:** Routine alcohol screening in healthcare settings facilitates early detection of AUD and enables healthcare providers to initiate discussions about alcohol use, assess severity and refer individuals to specialized treatment.

**Behavioral interventions:** Evidence-based therapies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and contingency management strategies address underlying factors contributing to alcohol use, enhance motivation for change and promote sustainable recovery.

**Support networks:** Peer support groups (e.g. Alcoholics anonymous), family therapy and community-based programs provide social support, accountability, and encouragement for individuals in recovery and their loved ones.

## CONCLUSION

Recognizing the signs of alcoholism is the first step toward promoting early intervention, facilitating access to treatment and supporting individuals on their paths to recovery. By promoting a culture of awareness, education and compassionate support, this can empower individuals, families and communities to address alcoholism proactively, reduce its impact and promote health, resilience and well-being for all.

Through collaborative efforts among healthcare providers, policymakers, community stakeholders and individuals affected by alcoholism, it can create environments that prioritize early detection, intervention and comprehensive support systems. Together, it can transform the trajectory of alcoholism, break the cycle of addiction and build healthier, more resilient communities.