



Alcoholism: Psychological Damage to Their Own Children

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Male alcoholism presents social characteristics and antisocial problems, while female alcoholism presents psychological characteristics and pathological symptoms. Both damage their own children. From the data collected, it results that children (male and female) of alcoholic mothers develop inward behaviour such as depression and withdrawal, whereas children (male and female) of alcoholic fathers develop outgoing behaviour such as hyperactivity, destructiveness and aggression [1,2].

In fact, alcoholic women are more prone to depression and inclined to suicide; - they suffer more for anxiety symptoms: they tend to drink small quantities of alcohol and to use tranquillisers and sedatives more frequently; - they have more alcohol correlated family history; - they have more psychological concomitance; - they drink alone. In previous work alcohol correlated women, psychiatric women who were not addicted to substances, women with medical problems and female students experimentally underwent MMPI. Alcohol correlated women were found to be similar to psychiatric patients and different from the other two groups; it confirms the accompanying psychopathology of alcoholic women [3,4]. Women that consume more alcohol tend to be more extroverse, carefree and sociable; women that somatise tend to present alcohol abuse in the pre-menstrual period; it underlines a psychosomatic symptomatology relevance [5].

In our paper, [6] we evaluated the effect of the condition on the social and psychological adjustment of both the alcoholic woman and the alcoholic man. We used the semi structured PAIS interview (Psychological Adjustment to Illness Scales): a questionnaire to evaluate psychosocial adjustment to the chronic illness. The interview was carried out on a sample of 30 men and women aged between 30 and 50. It resulted that alcoholic women are less worried about their own health, fit in more with their working environment. (because they do not usually work outside of the house), and that alcoholics' wives have a greater discomfort level in their working environment than the alcoholic men. Discomfort in sexual relationships, on the other hand, is greater in wives and less in alcoholic men and women. The psychological discomfort level is greatest in alcoholic women, then men. In agreement with literature, the alcoholic men show greater social maladjustment, whereas alcoholic women show greater psychological maladjustment. It is interesting that the alcoholic's wife shows greater social maladjustment, whereas alcoholic men show greater psychological maladjustment than their wives.

Accordingly, we appraised the identification of the culturally prescribed male and female roles and, then, we administered both members of the couples the BSRI (Bem Sex Role Inventory) [7]. The results of the test point out that: - all the alcoholic subjects and their wives are sexually well directed; - partners' choice doesn't correspond to pre-established categories either in men and in women. The psychosocial investigation underlines that these patients assumed an alcoholic behaviour: - when they were with friends, because they were happier and felt more at ease in relationships with the opposite sex; - when they had begun national service and have had their first sexual relationship after drinking. For what about sexual desire - pleasure - sexual practices, both men and women said that they desired more sexual relationships, that they got more pleasure and that they were

more disposed towards sexual practices when they drink. Women, however, said that they were less satisfied than men.

In regard of consequences about the intelligence and the personality evaluation of the children, [8-10] we carry out a study above the intellectual levels and personality development of children of both alcoholic mothers and of alcoholic fathers. The cognitive consequences depend on the length of time of the exposure to alcohol during the period of conception and pregnancy. The consequences are reduced efficiency of the cognitive system with a short-term memory deficiency and pre-scholastic, pre-mathematic and reading activity deficiency. In order to evaluate the cognitive systems, we carried out a psychometric research (WISC-R) [8] to obtain quantitative evaluation of the intelligence and a psycho-protective research (MRO) [9] to obtain a qualitative personality development of two groups of adolescents. The first investigation was carried out on a sample of children not addicted to alcohol, aged between 10 and 16 who were alcoholics' children. Results showed that the total I.Q. of the teetotal children of alcoholics is lower than that of the control group. A further analysis of the WISC-R sub-tests (spatial visualisation, sensory motor co-ordination and short-term memory), showed that alcoholics' children present considerably lower values than those of the control sample. Alcoholics' children, therefore, have short-term memory problems and motor co-ordination disturbances.

The second investigation was carried out on a sample consisting of a group of 15 boys aged between 15 and 18. They were students at a secondary school in the province of Bari, with an average alcohol consumption of about 1/2 litre of beer and 1/2 of spirits a day (group A) and a control group with the same characteristics but that were not addicted to alcohol (group B). These students underwent the projective test for the Model of Objection Relationships (MRO). An analysis of the data collected from the test showed that the use of abusive substances increases with age. Moreover, the group A boys show a significantly negative lived experience of the ego, an increase in the level of aggression, of passivity and addicted behaviour. No significant differences were found between the groups, either in terms of avoiding the relationship, or in terms of replies not given, whereas a great difference was found in the "relational pathology" area, with a large tendency in the group A boys towards destructive behavioural explosions, extreme regression, unproductive hyperactivity and isolation of the Self which vary between extremely underestimated and

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Received: October 04, 2014; Accepted: February 12, 2015; Published: February 16, 2015

Citation: Carone AR (2015) Alcoholism: Psychological Damage to Their Own Children. J Alcohol Drug Depend 3: 188. doi: [10.4172/2329-6488.1000188](https://doi.org/10.4172/2329-6488.1000188)

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overestimated lived experiences. Therefore, we are able to conclude that adolescents that are subject to alcoholism show an overall model of the significant relationships connoted by an internal experience characterized by regression and isolation of the self, and by an external experience characterized by a tendency to destructive explosive behaviour, unproductive hyperactivity and ambivalent research for interpersonal relationships.

As the data of literature exists a neuropsychological comorbidities in the absence or in the presence of learning disorders in subjects alcohol related [11].

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