

# A Report on the Adoption of Exercise Habits and Coping with Alcohol in People with Alcoholic Parents in Japan: A Comparison Before and After the Spread of COVID-19

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to clarify how the working environment of people with alcoholic parents who work in companies changed before and after the spread of the new corona infection, and how their attitudes toward alcohol changed as their working environment changed. The method used was a case study of a parent with an alcoholic parent who had been continuously supported by an occupational health nurse as a post-medical checkup measure. Changes in the working environment and lifestyle were interviewed by the occupational health nurse, and the case was discussed.

The results showed that those with alcoholic parents were able to abstain from alcohol by introducing an exercise routine and drinking strongly carbonated water when their work environment changed from a sales job to telecommuting. They were also able to continue their sobriety because of the change in their jobs to telecommuting.

**Keywords:** Alcoholism; Change in working environment; COVID-19

## INTRODUCTION

The 2019 outbreak of novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19) is caused by infection in humans; by July 2022, the cumulative number of infected individuals will exceed 560 million, leading to a global pandemic [1]. In Japan, the disease has also brought about major changes in social life. The Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (MHLW) and others conducted a survey before (January 2020) and after (March 2021) the spread of coronavirus infection. The survey results were from a group of people, and significant weight gain and lack of exercise were reported [2,3]. The prolonged coronary disaster has changed work patterns and lifestyles [4]. The survey results also showed that the number of people who have been infected by the coronary disease is increasing. However, no one has investigated and reported on the actual situation in detail. In particular, alcoholism and domestic violence are increasing due to the introduction of telecommuting and a working environment in which alcohol is always available. The number of consultations at hospitals is also increasing [5], but the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) and others have not clarified the details of this situation. Therefore, through case studies, this

study investigated changes in the working environment, exercise habits, and ways of dealing with alcohol among people with alcoholic parents.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The subjects of this research are people with alcoholic parents who work for Company A (a manufacturing company).

The occupational health nurse was interviewing them as a follow-up to their annual health checkup. Based on their drinking status, we understood that they had a parent who was an alcoholic. In addition to the annual interview, the occupational health nurse met with them once every two to three months for about 10 years to provide support. This study was conducted because the working environment changed drastically with the spread of the new coronary disease.

Interviews were conducted by an occupational health nurse regarding working conditions, living conditions, exercise habits, and especially how they deal with alcohol, comparing before and after the spread of the new type of corona infection. Age and other data are as of April 2022 (Table 1).

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Table 1: Age and other data in 2022 .

Case Type	Age	Age at First Drinking	Working style		Exercise Habits		Drinking Habits	
			2019	2020	2019	2022	2019	2022
Case 1	50s	The teens	Sale	Telecommuting	No	Yes, Every day	Yes, Every day 500 ml of 9% alcohol beer	No
Case 2	50s	The teens	Sales	Telecommuting	No	Yes, Every day	Yes, Every day 25% alcohol by volume shochu 200 ml on the rocks	No

Note: Exercise habit: 1 hour of walking.

## RESULTS

### Case 1

50s, male, sales representative, telecommuting, His father was an alcoholic and died in his 40s. He had been drinking alcohol since he was a teenager. He drank 500 ml of beer every day. On a heavy day, he sometimes drank 10 glasses of 500 ml of beer. He never took a day off from drinking. In addition, because he was a salesman, he drank almost every day, and he drank actively at that time. He was not in the habit of exercising. He was concerned that he might end up like his father, but he was unable to quit drinking. However, in January 2020, due to the spread of COVID-19, he was ordered by his company to work from home (working hours are from 7:00 to 19:00) and was prohibited from eating and drinking for entertainment. Taking this opportunity, he started walking for an hour every day and tried to reduce the amount of alcohol he drank. When he first started walking, He enjoyed a good beer after walking and drank 500 ml of beer as soon as he got home. First, He changed it to 500 ml of no-alcohol beer. Her wife, who sometimes walks with her, happened to be drinking a glass of cold, strong carbonated water after walking, so He tried it. It tasted better than 500 ml of no-alcohol beer, and he felt satisfied. He also felt satisfied because He could drink as much as he wanted without feeling guilty about drinking alcohol. Since then, when He doesn't need alcohol, strong carbonated water seems to be the drink. He also stated that strongly carbonated water has no sugar content and is more thirst-quenching than food and beverages for entertainment. Thus, he has not been drinking alcohol since January 2020. Walking continues daily. He also continues to work from home. He stated that he has been told that the company will not stop him from telecommuting.

### Case 2

50s, male, sales representative, telecommuting, His father was an alcoholic and had died in his 60s. He had been drinking alcohol since he was a teenager. He especially liked to drink shochu, which has a high alcohol content of 25 degrees. Originally, he preferred beer, but when he was in his 40s, the occupational health nurse pointed out during a medical checkup that he had a tendency toward diabetes, and under her guidance, he switched to shochu, which has no sugar content. He drank more

than 200 cc of shochu every day, in lots. The details of the amount were unknown. He did not take a day off from drinking and did not have an exercise habit. In addition, because he was a salesman, he was eating and drinking almost every day. Case 2 wondered if he would someday become like his father. He told the occupational health nurse that he thought he would not live long either way. Case 2 was told by the occupational health nurse that he had started walking for an hour every day and that in some cases, drinking strong carbonated water made him want to drink. Since Case 2 also started working at home (working hours are from 9:00 to 17:00) from January 2020, he started walking for an hour every day and drinking strongly carbonated water with a lotsuku after walking. Case 2 told the occupational health nurse, "I compared drinking with shochu and strong carbonated water, but I felt there was no difference. Therefore, he switched from shochu to strongly carbonated water after that. Case 2 told the occupational health nurse, "I can drink strong carbonated water anytime I want, and it has a refreshing taste and is satisfying enough. He also mentioned that prices have skyrocketed and alcohol has become more expensive, and the purchase of alcoholic beverages affects his family's finances.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding the significance and importance of this study, this research was conducted on two cases with alcoholic parents. It is clear from previous research that children of alcoholic parents are also more likely to become alcoholics [6].

The two cases studied in this research were college-educated, highly intelligent individuals who were themselves alcoholics. The two cases in this research were college-educated, highly intelligent individuals who understood that they were prone to alcoholism. Therefore, they were not necessarily thinking about reducing or abstaining from alcohol consumption. However, they had many opportunities to drink alcohol in the course of their work, and because it was their favorite alcoholic beverage, they drank it. This time, due to the spread of COVID-19, they shifted from working in an office or outside the office to telecommuting and conducting business meetings remotely. The most important factor was that the company, concerned about the spread of infection, prohibited its employees from eating and drinking on business entertainment and required them to refrain from drinking outside their own homes. Both two cases

have been exercising for about 3 years and have not consumed alcohol.

Various cases and countermeasures have been reported on alcohol dependence. In addition, the relationship between addiction and exercise is well known [7,8]. However, there is no report of a case in which a patient introduced an exercise habit, shifted to abstinence from alcohol, and continued to exercise as a result of a change in the working environment, as in the present case.

In Japan, the prolonged spread of COVID-19 and other factors have caused prices to skyrocket, and the impact on household finances may be one of the factors that led the patient to abstain from alcohol. A Japanese sake brewer that also sells soft drinks has reported that sales of alcohol have declined due to the prolonged spread of COVID-19, while sales of strong carbonated water have increased [9]. However, the fact that strongly carbonated water is an effective alternative to alcohol is not well known in Japan, and has not been reported at any related academic conferences. The results of this study were also supported by the fact that the occupational health nurse had been conducting interviews after annual health checkups for many years.

A limitation of this research is the small number of cases (two). Although the occupational health nurses asked the subjects to cooperate in the research, it was difficult to obtain their cooperation because of the private nature of the issues involved. Also, as in these cases, they will take many years until the results are obtained, but we would like to continue our efforts with a strong foundation.

## CONCLUSION

This research is the small number of cases (two). Although the occupational health nurses asked the subjects to cooperate in the research, it was difficult to obtain their cooperation because of the private nature of the issues involved. Also, as in these cases, they will take many years until the results are obtained, but we would like to continue our efforts with a strong foundation. This research found that changes in the working environment of people with alcoholic parents created an opportunity for them to

stop drinking alcohol. In addition, it became clear that the introduction of an exercise routine and drinking strong carbonated water as an alternative to alcohol were effective.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research will be conducted with the consent of the individual in writing, in such a way that the individual cannot be identified, and with the approval of the Ethical Review Committee of Wayo Women's University (approval number 2230).

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