

ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE

ALCOHOL IS A PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCE THAT AFFECTS VARIOUS PARTS OF THE BRAIN. POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL INCLUDE AGGRESSIVE IMPULSES AND LOSS OF BEHAVIORAL CONTROL.

THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL DEPEND ON VARIOUS FACTORS, INCLUDING:

The amount ingested;

The cultural norms related to the use of violence, including gender norms;

Aspects of the setting in which the alcohol is consumed, such as:

- Strong cultural associations between drinking and violence,
- Expectations that drinking will lead to violence,
- Alcohol being consumed in contexts where violence is more likely to occur,
- Greater tolerance of violence when people have been drinking.



AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE

- There is an enormous and unequivocal body of research supporting the relationship between all forms of aggression and alcohol use. This link is most prominently demonstrated in males.
- In 2016, there were 65,880 deaths from self-harm and interpersonal violence attributable to alcohol in the Region of the Americas.
- Experimental studies have found a dose–response connection between blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and aggression, with the effects becoming significant with a BAC of 0.05 g/dL and rising with higher BAC levels.



HOMICIDE

- Drinking by the perpetrator or by the victim or by both is frequently a factor in homicide.
- In societies where drinking to the point of intoxication is common, studies have found that 48% of both victims and perpetrators had been drinking when the homicide occurred, and that 37% of the offenders and 33–35% of the victims had drunk enough to be intoxicated.

Sexual Violence

- There are differences in the way men and women experience violence from alcohol. While men experience more harms to the drinker, women are more likely to suffer harms from others' drinking, including: sexual harassment; sexual assault; and family, marital, and intimate partner violence.
- Studies have found a strong causal link between alcohol use and intimate partner violence, particularly affecting the severity of the violence.
- Sexual violence can be associated with alcohol use and higher risk of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- Strong links have been found between drinking at harmful and hazardous levels and the maltreatment of children.
- Harmful alcohol use by parents and caregivers can impair their sense of responsibility and reduce the amount of time and money available to spend on the child.



Sources:

Pan American Health Organization. Regional Status Report on Alcohol and Health in the Americas 2020 [Internet]. Washington, DC: PAHO; 2020. Available from: <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52705>

World Health Organization. Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health 2018 [Internet]. Geneva: WHO; 2018 [cited 7 Oct 2021]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241565639>

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