

# Chronic Alcoholism: The Causes of Addiction and Implementing Effective Interventions in an Individual

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## DESCRIPTION

Alcoholism is a chronic disease characterized by uncontrolled drinking and a preoccupation with alcohol despite negative consequences. Chronic alcoholism, in particular, represents a severe form of this condition where individuals struggle with long-term addiction and its profound impacts on their health, relationships and overall well-being.

## Causes of chronic alcoholism

Chronic alcoholism often develops gradually and can be influenced by a combination of genetic, psychological and environmental factors. Some individuals may have a genetic predisposition to alcoholism, making them more vulnerable to developing addiction. Additionally, psychological factors such as stress, trauma or mental health disorders can contribute to the development of alcoholism as individuals may turn to alcohol as a coping mechanism. Environmental influences, including social norms surrounding drinking and easy access to alcohol, also play a significant role in the onset of chronic alcoholism.

## Effects of chronic alcoholism

The effects of chronic alcoholism extend far beyond physical health, impacting various aspects of an individual's life:

**Physical health:** Chronic alcohol abuse can lead to a multitude of health problems, including liver disease, pancreatitis, cardiovascular issues, weakened immune system, gastrointestinal problems and neurological disorders such as Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome. Prolonged alcohol consumption also increases the risk of cancer, particularly in the liver, esophagus, throat and mouth.

**Mental health:** Alcoholism often coexists with mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder. Chronic alcohol abuse can exacerbate these conditions and may lead to the development of additional psychiatric symptoms. Moreover, alcohol impairs cognitive function, contributing to memory loss, impaired judgment and diminished decision-making abilities.

**Social and interpersonal relationships:** The impact of chronic alcoholism extends to relationships with family, friends and colleagues. Excessive drinking can strain relationships, leading to conflicts, misunderstandings and social isolation. Individuals may prioritize alcohol over their responsibilities, leading to job loss, financial difficulties and strained familial bonds.

**Legal and financial consequences:** Chronic alcoholism often results in legal issues stemming from behaviors such as Driving Under the Influence (DUI), public intoxication or engaging in criminal activities while intoxicated. These legal consequences can further exacerbate financial instability, as individuals may face fines, legal fees or loss of employment.

**Risk of accidents and injury:** Alcohol impairs motor skills, coordination and reaction times, significantly increasing the risk of accidents and injury. Chronic alcoholics are more susceptible to falls, burns, car accidents and other traumatic injuries, posing a threat to both themselves and others.

## Treatment of chronic alcoholism

While chronic alcoholism presents significant challenges, recovery is possible with the right treatment approach. Treatment typically involves a combination of medical intervention, therapy and support systems:

**Detoxification:** In cases of severe alcohol addiction, medically supervised detoxification may be necessary to manage withdrawal symptoms safely. Detoxification is the process of eliminating alcohol from the body and managing withdrawal symptoms such as tremors, hallucinations and seizures.

**Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT):** Medications such as naltrexone, acamprostate and disulfiram may be prescribed to help individuals manage cravings, reduce alcohol consumption, or deter relapse. MAT is often used in conjunction with counseling and behavioral therapies to address both the physical and psychological aspects of addiction.

**Therapy and counseling:** Behavioral therapies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) can help individuals identify

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and change maladaptive thought patterns and behaviors associated with alcoholism. Therapy also provides a supportive environment for exploring underlying issues contributing to addiction and developing healthy coping strategies.

**Support groups:** Participating in support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Self-Management and Recovery Training (SMART) recovery provides individuals with a sense of community and accountability. Peer support can be invaluable in maintaining sobriety and navigating the challenges of recovery.

**Lifestyle changes:** Adopting a healthy lifestyle that prioritizes physical activity, nutrition and stress management is essential for long-term recovery from chronic alcoholism. Engaging in activities

that promote overall well-being can help individuals build resilience and reduce the risk of relapse.

Chronic alcoholism is a complex and debilitating condition that requires comprehensive treatment and support. By addressing the underlying causes of addiction and implementing effective interventions, individuals can overcome alcoholism and lead fulfilling, sober lives. It is crucial for society to reduce the stigma surrounding alcoholism and provide accessible resources for prevention, intervention and treatment. With awareness, compassion and support, individuals struggling with chronic alcoholism can embark on the path to recovery and reclaim control of their lives.