

Signs, Diagnosis and Therapy of Alcoholism

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DESCRIPTION

Alcoholism is a chronic condition in which a person prefers alcoholic beverages and is unable to control consumption and an individual with this disease also requires more alcohol to obtain the same impact and experiences withdrawal symptoms after discontinuing alcohol use. Alcoholism has an impact on both physical and mental health.

Signs

People suffering from an alcohol use disorder tend to complain about challenges in interpersonal interactions. They also experience irritation and sleeplessness. Alcoholism is another major cause of persistent fatigue. While these signs are common, they are not required to make a diagnosis of alcoholism. Symptoms of alcohol abuse include inebriation and poor judgement, as well as chronic anxiety, irritability, and insomnia, all of which have a negative impact on the central nervous system. Alcohol's effects on the liver include abnormal liver function tests. Cirrhosis and liver failure result from long-term use. Patients with cirrhosis develop an inability to absorb hormones and poisons. A patient with alcoholic cirrhosis may have spider angiomas, palmar erythema and in severe cases, jaundice and ascites also occurs.

Endocrine system dysfunction causes breast hypertrophy in males. Alcohol abuse can cause brain damage, leading in impairments in executive functioning such as cognitive ability and visuospatial function, as well as the development of an abnormal personality and affective disorders. Excessive drinking is associated with individuals reporting well to poor health when compared to non-binge drinking people and this can get worse over time. Alcohol also impairs a people's capacity for critical thinking. In stressful situations, an individual's cognitive capacity is impaired, and they appear to be completely unaware of what is going on around them.

Because of the neurotoxic effects of alcohol on the brain, particularly the prefrontal cortex, alcoholism can cause severe impairment in individuals. The prefrontal cortex is in control of cognitive functions such as cognitive ability, impulse control, and

decision making. This brain region that is sensitive to prolonged alcohol-induced oxidative DNA damage.

Alcohol misuse can affect social skills such as difficulty in detecting responses, difficulty perceiving auditory emotions, and theory of mind deficits; it can also decrease the ability to perceive humour. Adolescent binge drinkers are particularly vulnerable to neurocognitive damage, executive skills and memory. Individuals who overuse alcohol are less likely to survive serious illnesses and are more susceptible to death during hospitalisation.

Diagnosis

Alcohol consumption during adolescents, particularly early adolescence (before the age of 15), may cause long-term alterations in the brain, placing individuals at an elevated risk of alcoholism later in life; hereditary variables may influence the age of commencement of alcohol misuse and the risk of alcoholism.

For example, approximately 40% of people who start drinking before the age of 15 develop alcohol dependent later in life, whereas only 10% of those who consume alcohol after the age of 20 develop an alcohol problem later in life. Alcohol consumption disorders frequently result in a wide spectrum of cognitive impairments that have a major impact on the affected individual.

If alcohol-induced neurotoxicity has occurred, abstinence for at least a year is necessary for healing the cognitive deficiencies caused by alcohol abuse.

Therapy

The anxiety associated with alcohol abuse is a significant barrier to obtaining treatment for persons battling with alcoholism. Alcohol abuse has been linked to increased levels of sadness, anxiety, low self-esteem, and bad sleeping patterns. While adverse cognitions and perceptions about alcohol consumption can prevent persons competing with this condition from seeking treatment, several things have been identified to alleviate this anxiety.

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