Alcohol Research Assignment Essay, Research Paper

Alcohol Dependence: Comprehension and Application.Outline the physiological effects of alcohol consumption, both short-term and Long-term: Short Term: The immediate effect of alcohol consumption is the alteration of mood. It may be surprising to discover that though it makes people feel a sense of euphoria, happiness and relaxation, it is in-fact, a depressant. The direct result of alcohol in the bloodstream causes impairment of motor co-ordination and suppresses central nervous system activity, which gives the impression of clumsiness and can lead to alcohol related accidents. The more intoxicated the person becomes the further their speech becomes slurred, vision blurred and loss of balance. Further more it switches off that part of the brain that controls judgement, leading to loss of inhibitions. This impairs the person?s decision making which can result in greater risk taking. However drinking in large doses can result in the suppression of vital bodily functions which can lead to coma, or even death. Additionally a drunken person vomiting while passed out, can lead to death by asphyxiation.

Alcohol also impairs the memory of an intoxicated person by inhibiting the transfer and consolidation of information in long and short-term memory. Therefore this reduces the drinker?s ability to remember information that he/she has learned before going out for drinks. Furthermore, the attention span of the drinker is dramatically decreased for periods of up to forty-eight hours after drinking. This can further affect the academic performance of a student and his/her ability to study outside of class. REM and deep sleep is also suppressed (extremely important for restful sleep, memory consolidation and emotional well being. Thus when REM is suppressed it will give a feeling of tiredness when waking up the morning after being intoxicated. Alcohol use also impairs the functioning of the immune system?weakening the body?s ability to fight off infectious disease. In the short term this will increase the number of colds that the drinker experiences.

Long term: Drinking for prolonged periods of time can have detrimental effects on the human body. Since alcohol is in fact a poisonous substance, having it circulating in the body will contribute to severe intestinal dysfunction. However, although alcohol alone is not the sole cause of the problems outlined below, it simply increases the risk of developing certain diseases/dysfunctions.

Brain

Memory Loss

Confusion, Disorganisation

Hallucinations, Fits

Permanent brain damage

Impaired ability to learn new things

Liver

Impaired liver functions

Severe swelling and pain

Inflamed liver (hepatitis)

Largely irreversible cirrhosis (scarring)

Liver cancer

Intestines

Inflammation

Bleeding

Ulcers

Pancreas

Painful Inflammation

Bleeding

Muscles

Weakness

Loss of muscle tissue

Heart

High blood pressure

Irregular pulse

Damaged heart muscle

Stomach

Lining becomes inflamed

Bleeding

Ulcers

Nervous System

Loss of sensation in hands and feet caused by damaged nerves (tingling)

General

Weight gain

Mood and personality changes

Drink related accidents

Feeling anxious or ?nervy?

Missing work due to hangovers, headaches

Family arguments

Impotence

Describe the differences between drinking and binge drinking:Binge drinking is the term to describe heavy drinking within a short period of time or drinking unremittingly over period of days or weeks. It can also be outlined in terms of standard drinks, being five or more drinks in one day for men and three or more drinks in one day for women. Binge drinking can be exceptionally harmful to the body as it causes immense strain on the liver to process excessive amounts of alcohol during one period. Normal drinking however, is the opposite of this and can be outlined as drinking moderately and is more constant over a period of time.

Describe the social consequences of drunkenness: Consuming extreme amounts of alcohol can have disastrous social consequences. ?Running of the mouth? is apparent while under the influence in that it can cause inappropriate things to be said to friends (secrets, putdowns etc) which could cause a breakdown in the friendship or loss of a friend altogether. In addition, the intoxicated person is less in control when under the influence and may do things that you may not normally do. This may cause people to view them differently by their bizarre actions and afterwards finding out about the embarrassing things that he/she may have done during the night. While under the influence intoxicated persons are more likely to engage in ?regrettable sex?? sexual encounters which are later regretted. Furthermore, this could lead to the spread of HIV or STD?s as you are less likely to engage in ?safe-sex,? while under the influence.

Drinking and Driving: Comprehension and ApplicationState the legal limit and how this relates to alcohol consumption: The legal limit has been stated to be a BAC level of .05 or less. For a female to stay under the limit they have to consume no more than one standard drink in the first hour and one standard drink every hour after that, to a maximum of three hours. For men it is no more than two standard drinks in the first hour and no more than one standard drink every hour after that, to a maximum of three hours. A standard drink is defined as containing 10 grams of pure alcohol. Using standard drinks as a measure of alcohol consumption can assist people to monitor their alcohol intake.

Type of DrinkVolumeNo. of standard drinks Low alcohol beerone can (375 mL)1 standard drink Regular beer(pot, middy, schooner or handle) 285 mL1 standard drink Table wineone small glass (100 mL)1 standard drink Portone small glass1 standard drink Mixed drinksone glass (30 mL spirits plus mixer)1 standard drink Spirits or liqueursone shot (30 mL)1 standard drink Champagneone small glass (100 mL)1 standard drink Alcoholic lemonadeone bottle (375 mL)1.25 standard drinks Alcoholic ciderone bottle (375 mL)1.5 standard drinks Alcoholic sodaone bottle (330 mL)1.5 standard drinks Premixed spirit & mixerone can (375 mL)1.75 standard drinks Describe how reaction times are affected by alcohol:Being under the influence can have various effects on the brain which can cause it to operate inefficiently, take longer to receive messages from the eye thus processing information becomes more difficult and instructions to the muscles delayed. Alcohol has been proven to reduce reaction time by ten to thirty percent and reduces the ability to perform two tasks at the same time. Furthermore, the loss of reaction time could have detrimental effects on ones ability to drive safely. In addition, negative effects on a person?s vision while intoxicated include: blurred and double vision, ability to see distant objects, night vision can be reduced by 25% and ability to perceive what is happening at the roadside is weakened. Being intoxicated creates a false sense of reality and gives the illusion of invulnerability. This overconfidence could lead to greater risks being taken, thus increasing the risk of road accident.

Compare the blood alcohol limits for different categories of drivers: It has been recommended that in order to avoid costly fines from over-the-limit BAC levels, if you are going to drink, you should not drive. In Australia, learner and probationary drivers, as well as drivers operating heavy trucks, buses, trains and trams must maintain a zero blood alcohol concentration (BAC). For all other drivers, it is illegal to drive with a BAC greater than 0.05.

List the behavioral changes that breathalyzers have had on people drinking and driving habits. Breathalyzers have had a major impact on society and have brought about considerable changes:

When various people go to venues where alcohol maybe available, designated drivers are now being selected to drive the others home safely. These designated drivers are either not allowed to drink or must to stick to one standard drink per hour in order to stay under the BAC limit.

Other transport is being arranged to avoid costly fines.

The drunken members are choosing to ?sleep? it off, and to drive home the next day.

People are giving their keys to the host of the venue when they arrive, so they are not tempted to drive home while intoxicated.

Managing Intake: Analysis and Synthesis.Evaluate the effectiveness of liquor licensing laws designed to prevent excessive amounts of alcohol consumption. I believe the effectiveness of the liquor licensing laws has been successful in preventing excessive amounts of alcohol to be consumed.

Laws have been put in place to ensure hotels and pubs do not serve intoxicated people. This ensures that intoxicated people do not get to a state where they are endangering the public or themselves with unintelligent behaviour, or drink to such excessive levels that they develop alcoholic poisoning. In addition, alcohol laws have been changed from the age limit of 21 to 18. This allows the more responsible ages (18-21) to drink, therefore allowing the police to concentrate their efforts on a more worthwhile cause, teenage drinking. This age has been proven to be the majority of the ?binge drinkers? and therefore needs to be dealt with.

Assess the influence of friends on drinking behaviour:Friends can both have a positive and a negative influence on a person?s drinking habits and behaviour. Peer pressure is a major cause of intoxication, which leads to people to drinking more that they anticipated. However positive aspects can be brought about from friends in that they can provide support for when you are under the influence and can further help you to get home safely.

A Schoolies Week Plan (for you or a friend): Synthesis and EvaluationThroughout schoolies week many alcoholic related incidents can be avoided by sensible drinking. Alcohol reduces judgements and ability to make rational choices which as a direct result can have many social consequences. The spread of HIV and many STD?s is at its peak during schoolies week and can be easily avoided. The table below will ensure that your alcohol consumption stays under the legal BAC limit of 0.05. It will also ensure that your reaction time and co-ordination is at a level that you can have a good time but still maintain control.

Do?sDon?ts Try low alcohol alternatives – either “light” beers or non alcoholic cocktailsBinge drink, drink sensibly Start with a non-alcoholic drink.Drink and drive – arrange alternative transport or stay overnight Monitor your drinking by converting what you are drinking into standard drinks.Operate machinery or vehicles under the influence of alcohol Make every second or third drink a non-alcoholic beverage.Let people top up your drinks, have one drink at a time. Eat before and whilst you are drinking to slow the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream.Swim whilst under the influence. An intoxicated person is less co-ordinated thus is less able to safely swim. Avoid salty snacks (eg: pretzels, chips, peanuts) that will make you thirsty and drink more