

If You Drink Alcohol, Your Children May Pay The Price

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I see alcoholism as a punishment to human society since time immemorial. It continues to cost countless human lives, and causes terrible misery to millions throughout the world. Alcohol is the basic cause of many problems facing society. The statistics of soaring crime rates, increasing instances of mental illnesses and millions of broken homes throughout the world bear mute testimony to the destructive power of alcohol. Yet if you interview any alcoholic, they will tell you that they never started to drink alcohol to become alcoholic. They wanted to be a social drinker, but unfortunately some of them could not keep themselves on the steady but slippery slope of alcoholism.

According to the 2010 estimation of Alcoholism by the world Health Organisation, 4.1% of the population over 15 years of age, are the victims of Alcoholism worldwide. That comes to staggering 208 million people. [1][2]. In the United States alone, 7% (17 million) of its population suffer from Alcoholism. It is higher in Eastern Europe at 11%. [3][4]. Alcoholism directly resulted in about 139,000 deaths and a total of 3.3 million deaths (5.9% of all deaths in the world) are believed to be due to Alcohol, during 2013.[3][5]. It is estimated that it reduces the life expectancy by around 10 years and it costed about US\$224 Billion in 2006.[3][6].

According to the National Crime Victimization Survey Bureau of Justice (U.S. Department of Justice) in the year 1996 alone every day, on average 2,713 rapes took place. The statistics tell us that the majority of the rapists, were intoxicated while committing the crime. The same is true in cases of molestation. According to statistics, 8% of Americans commit incest i.e. one in every twelve to thirteen persons in America is involved in incest. Almost all the cases of incest are due to intoxication of one or both of the persons involved. One of the major factors associated with the spread of AIDS, the most dreaded disease, is alcoholism.

We have known for a very long time that an individual's environment plays a very important role in alcoholism. These environments include, peer pressure, psychological condition, failure in life or recreational drinking becoming

something more. However, we did not know about the genetic factors until recently. Environmental factors and genetics are two components associated with alcoholism, with about half the risk attributed to each. Heavy consumption of alcohol can also result in congenital anomalies [7]. Someone with a parent or sibling with alcoholism is three to four times more likely to become an alcoholic themselves.

“Every response in the body is due to alterations in proteins. Binge drinking is an environmental trigger that negatively affects histones by altering the correct binding of DNA. The result is unnecessary replication in the copied structure”

(says Shivendra Shukla, a professor at the University of Missouri School of Medicine). The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings a person's blood alcohol concentration to 0.08 grams percent or above.

When a person drinks alcohol heavily or when the binge drinking is done then a sequence of changes happens in the genetic system. One of these are epigenetics modification. The latest research shows that epigenetic modifications in histone structures occur within the liver as a result of heavy binge drinking.

Epigenetic changes are also brought about by histone modifications, as well as by the role that noncoding RNA (ncRNA) plays. Histones are highly alkaline proteins found in eukaryotic cell nuclei that package and order the DNA into structural units called nucleosomes. They are the chief protein components of chromatin, acting as spools around which DNA winds, and playing a role in gene regulation. Without histones, the unwound DNA in chromosomes would be very long. By acting on these epigenetic markers, environmental factors such as diet (including alcohol), stress, and prenatal nutrition (also alcohol consumption) can make an imprint on the genes that are active in different tissues and at various stages of life. Even more importantly, these alterations may be passed along from one generation to the next. The result

is that the influences from harmful environmental factors can be extended beyond the individual and passed to his or her offspring [8].

Lets see what Islam says:

The Glorious Qur'an prohibits the consumption of alcohol in the following verse:

“O ye who believe! Intoxicants and Gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an Abomination – of Satan’s handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper.”
[Al-Qur’an 5:90]

The Prophet of Islam Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

a. In Sunan Ibn-I-Majah Volume 3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No. 3371:

“Alcohol is the mother of all evils and it is the most shameful of evils.”

b. In Sunan Ibn-I-Majah Volume 3, Book of Intoxicants, Chapter 30 Hadith No.3392

“Anything which intoxicates in a large quantity, is prohibited even in a small quantity.”

Now from the above information, we have concluded that alcoholism is not only catastrophic to the consumer but it can potentially destroy the life of their children as well by potentially altering the offspring’s genes. Therefore, the children have to pay the price of their parent’s actions. That’s why the Holy Quran mentions the alcoholism as the Satan’s handiwork and the Hadith calls it as the mother of all evils.

Conclusion:

1. All Alcoholics started as social drinkers.
2. Alcohol alters genes which causes the person to crave more alcohol.
3. The altered genes may pass to their offspring causing them to become four times more prone to become alcoholics themselves, even if they are removed from the alcoholic environment.
4. Heavy alcohol consumption during pregnancy could cause congenital abnormalities

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