

ALCOHOLISM, DRUG USAGE AND ABUSE - DETERMINANTS OF CRIME

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The attempt to define alcoholism has been almost permanently marked by uncertainties, conflicts and ambiguities, the definitions used reflecting the cultural, religious or scientific ideas of the moment. Multiple definitions of alcoholism represented a barrier in communication between doctors and researchers and prevented an accurate diagnosis. The term alcoholism is maintained signifying a behavioral disorder with complex determinism, socio-psychological and biological, manifested by repeated and excessive alcohol consumption, with individual repercussions, affecting the mental and somatic health of the drinker, as well as his/her family and professional relationships, its economic and social status. The type and amount of beverage are less relevant to the diagnosis of chronic alcoholism, as well as the duration of consumption, due to individual differences in “sensitivity” to alcohol, its rate of metabolism, the rate at which tolerance and dependence are established, and the time interval in which complications occur.

Keywords: alcoholism, drug addiction, addiction, pathology, mental disorder.

TOXICOMANIA, ALCOOLISMUL, NARCOMANIA - DETERMINANTE ALE CRIMINALITAȚII

Încercarea de a defini alcoolismul a fost marcată aproape în permanență de incertitudini, conflicte și ambiguități, definițiile folosite reflectând ideile culturale, religioase sau științifice ale momentului. Multiple definiții ale alcoolismului au reprezentat o barieră în comunicarea dintre medici și cercetători și a împiedicat un diagnostic de acuratețe. Termenul de alcoolism se menține semnificând o tulburare de comportament cu determinism complex, socio-psihologic și biologic, manifestată prin consum repetat și excesiv de alcool, cu repercusiuni individuale, afectând sănătatea psihică și somatică a consumatorului, precum și relațiile sale familiale și profesionale, statutul său economic și social. Tipul și cantitatea de băutură sunt mai puțin relevante pentru diagnosticul de alcoolism cronic, la fel ca și durata consumului, datorită diferențelor individuale privind “sensibilitatea” la alcool, viteza lui de metabolizare, viteza cu care se instalează toleranța și dependența, și intervalul de timp în care apar complicațiile.

Cuvinte-cheie: alcoolism, etilism, narcomanie, toxicomanie, patologice.

TOXICOMANIE, ALCOOLISME, NARCOMANIE - DÉTERMINANTS DE LA CRIMINALITÉ

La tentative de définir l'alcoolisme a été marquée presque continuellement par des incertitudes, des conflits et des ambiguïtés, les définitions utilisées reflétant les idées culturelles, religieuses ou scientifiques

du moment. Les définitions multiples de l'alcoolisme ont été un obstacle à la communication entre les cliniciens et les chercheurs et ont empêché un diagnostic précis. Le terme alcoolisme est maintenu signifiant un trouble du comportement au déterminisme complexe, socio-psychologique et biologique, se manifestant par une consommation répétée et excessive d'alcool, avec des répercussions individuelles, affectant la santé mentale et somatique du consommateur, ainsi que ses relations familiales et professionnelles, son statut économique et social. Le type et la quantité de boisson sont moins pertinents pour le diagnostic de l'alcoolisme chronique, tout comme la durée de la consommation, en raison des différences individuelles de "sensibilité" à l'alcool, de son taux de métabolisme, de la vitesse à laquelle la tolérance et la dépendance se développent et du délai dans lequel les complications surviennent

Mots-clés: alcoolisme, éthylisme, narcomanie, toxicomanie, pathologie.

ТОКСИКОМАНИЯ, АЛКОГОЛИЗМ, НАРКОМАНИЯ - ДЕТЕРМИНАНТЫ ПРЕСТУПНОСТИ

Попытки дать определение алкоголизму почти всегда были отмечены неопределенностями, конфликтами и двусмысленностью, используемые определения отражали культурные, религиозные или научные идеи того времени. Множественные определения алкоголизма представляли собой барьер в общении между врачами и исследователями и препятствовали постановке точного диагноза. Термин алкоголизм сохраняется и обозначает расстройство поведения со сложным детерминизмом, социально-психологическим и биологическим, проявляющееся в многократном и чрезмерном употреблении алкоголя с индивидуальными последствиями, влияющими на психическое и соматическое здоровье пьющего, а также на его семейные и профессиональные отношения, на его экономический и социальный статус. Тип и количество напитка имеют меньшее значение для диагностики хронического алкоголизма, а также продолжительность потребления из-за индивидуальных различий в «чувствительности» к алкоголю, скорости его метаболизма, скорости установления толерантности и зависимости, и временной интервал, в котором возникают осложнения.

Ключевые слова: алкоголизм, наркомания, потребление, злоупотребление, патология, психическое расстройство.

Introduction

The attempt to define alcoholism was almost constantly marked by uncertainties, conflicts and ambiguities, the definitions used reflecting the cultural, religious or scientific ideas of the moment. Multiple definitions of alcoholism represented a barrier in communication between clinicians and researchers and prevented an accurate diagnosis. Although the basic elements of the concept of alcoholism have been described since antiquity, from the time of Hippocrates, until the 19th century, scientific methods were not applied in its study. The use of psychiatric hospitals as a place of treatment for alcoholics, the development of the public health movement and the promotion of the disease concept in alcoholism encouraged research in the field of alcoholism.

The polymorphism of clinical manifestations and the multitude of psycho-social

problems, with etiological implications for the abusive consumption of alcohol, have determined numerous attempts at classification, by establishing various typologies or by differentiating according to the stage of the process. In the 20th century, the American researcher Elvin Morton Jellinek tried to emphasize in several works, more and more elaborated, the types of alcohol consumption, through the criterion of dependence. Thus, the last of these works [8, p. 56] is considered to be the most complex and practical for specialists in the fields of medicine, psychology and criminology. Jellinek distinguishes four phases of alcoholism. There is a pre-alcoholic stage, when someone will find relief in alcohol, after which consumption will become a pleasure and not any other, but downright sought and desired. In the prodromal stage, amnesias or

actions in short-circuit states of consciousness intervene. The subject does not frequently remember what he/she did or said (it is an extremely dangerous moment). In a third, crucial stage, alcoholism sets in. The subject drinks uncontrollably and a lot, frequently and at any part of the day; professional activity suffers great damage. Finally, the last stage is that of chronic alcoholism, characterized by continuity, systematic intoxication, psychotic centering of life on alcohol consumption.

Alcoholism, as a disease, was recognized in 1933 by the American Medical Association and the American Psychiatric Association and was introduced into the standard nomenclature of diseases so that in 1934 it was also included in the manual for the codification of the causes of diseases. In 1952, the first edition of the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual” (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 1st Edition - “DSM-1”) of the American Psychiatric Association where alcoholism was regarded as an alcohol „addiction” and was included in the non - psychotic mental disorders chapter.

Used materials and applied methods. The international normative framework was studied and used in the preparation of this paper, regional and national framework that ensures the legal protection of people with deviant alcoholism, substance dependence, drug addiction in matters of criminal law, legal medicine, psychology and criminology. The following methods were used: logical, comparative, analysis and synthesis, systemic.

Obtained results and discussions

Alcoholism is the set of pathological phenomena determined by alcohol abuse [4, p. 23]. Alcoholism or acute alcoholism is the transient condition caused by the consumption of a large amount of alcoholic beverages in a short period of time, usually characterized by excitement with mental confusion and, sometimes, by coma.

The harmful effects of alcohol on the human body are expected over time with greater probability, as the average daily dose of ingested alcohol exceeds approximately 40 grams of pure alcohol. And from a conceptual point of view, learning to drink alcoholic beverages repeatedly and in large quantities leads to alcoholism, to acute alcoholism. Therefore, an alcoholic is a person who abuses alcohol (also called hyperconsumption). A drinker, a consumer of alcoholic beverages is not to be confused with an alcoholic, although according to a US statistic, out of 70 million drinkers, about 5 million can be considered alcoholics.

On the other hand, according to the definition from 1949, given by the World Health Organization, the category of alcoholics can include “those excessive drinkers whose dependence on alcohol has reached such a degree that they present a sensitive mental disorder or an interference with their physical and mental health, with their interpersonal relationships and with their social and economic function that cannot be exercised normally or that presents developmental disturbances”.

More than a century ago, French professor and criminologist Georges Vidal stated that “alcoholism is not only a serious danger for the individual, whose health is ruined and death is hastened, it directly threatens the family and society, first the family through the disastrous effects of heredity, then through misery, the demoralization of its members, leaving and the corruption of children that always pushes them to begging, to prostitution, to vagrancy, through public demoralization, the increase of suicide, madness and crime”.

According to other authors, such as Robert Goldenson [5, p. 87], an alcoholic shows the following symptoms: increasing consumption, morning consumption under various pretexts, uncontrolled and absurd behavior, “white spots of consciousness”, the so - called “breaks of film” (amnesia episodes). Alcoholism

involves an intermittent but rhythmic drugging of the brain by alcohol, which over time leads to a series of organic and psychotic disorders: pathological intoxication, vitamin and nutritional deficiencies, vulnerability to various diseases, alcoholic delirium (“*delirium tremens*“), hallucinations, Korsakoff syndrome and Wernicke’s syndrome.

Specialists in psychology believe that alcoholism is a neuropsychic disease that requires appropriate treatment and recovery measures. It uses the method of conditioned responses (association of alcohol with repulsive reactions), psychotherapy and sociotherapy. However, the psychologist Anthony Ward Clare pointed out the confusing nature of the term “alcoholism”, showing that lately it has been replaced by the term “alcohol dependence syndrome” (“*dependent drinker*“). The latter defines a state characterized by seven essential elements [1, p. 76]:

- an uncontrollable need to drink alcohol;
- a stereotypical way of drinking, namely the ingestion of alcohol at regular intervals to prevent or remove the symptoms of abstinence syndrome;
- alcohol intake comes to the fore in relation to other activities;
- change in alcohol tolerance, which is usually increased, and its increase is an important sign of growth alcohol addiction;
- repeated abstinence syndromes that appear 8-12 hours after the last drink, as a result of the decrease of alcoholemia; characteristically - they appear in the morning upon waking up;
- *relief drinking* which represents the habit of drinking early in the morning;
- *reinstatement* after a period of abstinence.

Alcoholism represents an extremely important problem for medicine and psychology today, because the repeated consumption of alcohol transforms the ingested substance into

a drug, and it is very widespread throughout the world and at all ages (from childhood to old age). Having such a magnitude, the dire consequences of this monodrug alone or in combination with other drugs determine the destruction of human life, perhaps of creative destinies: in music, painting, plastic arts, science, fiction, etc. That is why the problem of alcoholism is a central health problem, which must concern public authorities in all countries. The negative effects are far too great and humanity must pay far too much for the misfortunes and dramas caused by this drug addiction, alongside of course the other abusive consumption of narcotics.

Chronic alcoholism is the state of intoxication due to long-term abuse of alcoholic beverages. It is characterized by damage to internal organs (liver, stomach, brain, etc.), nervous disorders (for example, tremors), decreased physical and intellectual capacity, mental disorders, etc. [2, p. 11]. A similar phenomenon is **dipsomania** (from “*dipsa*“ = thirst) and (“*mania*“ = madness), which represents a psychopathic manifestation consisting in the abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The deterioration of the personality with the loss of its characteristic features becomes more and more obvious and constant, and it is no wonder that eventually alcoholics come to resemble each other so strikingly. Memory, attention, ideation, the critical and self-critical sense decrease a lot, the will almost disappears and is replaced by an indolence with an inability to control and resist sudden impulses, their activity and behavior finally being reduced to how to be able to procure and ingest alcohol [6, p. 25].

Physiological addiction is earlier and signifies the imperative psychological need, with a pathological character, to continue drinking alcohol in order to resolve a subjective feeling of comfort to reduce mental tension. Physical dependence, later, means

the rapid appearance after no more than 24 hours of a withdrawal syndrome when alcohol consumption has been stopped or reduced. The withdrawal syndrome involves complex somatic and mental symptoms, embarrassing for the patient - digital and tongue tremors, sweating (often extremely serious), confusional - dream episodes, and “*delirium tremens*” [9, p. 14].

Specialists in the medical field and scientists have reached a consensus regarding the fact that alcoholism represents the initial stage of a disease. For example, the American Medical Association considers alcohol as a drug and stated that “drug addiction is chronic, it is a disease of the human brain characterized by the compulsive search for that drug and its use despite its devastating consequences. This results from a complex interconnection of biological vulnerability, environmental exposure and other favorable factors”. Currently, statistics have shown that in both men and women, alcoholism is a genetically determined disease in the proportion of 50-60%, the remaining 40-50% representing the consequences the influences of external factors [3 p. 151-157].

A study from 2011-2018 by the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism was conducted on a group of 4,422 adults considered alcoholics and discovered that, after one year, some of them were no longer alcoholics, even though only 25.5% of those analyzed had received adequate medical treatment, with the following results:

- 25% remained dependent on alcohol consumption;
- 27.3% are in the process of healing (some of the symptoms of alcoholism can still be observed in them);
- 11.8% are asymptomatic drinkers (those drunks considered clinically and psychologically abnormal, but not always pathological);
- 35.9% recovered completely, and of these approximately 17.7% were considered

alcohol consumers with a low risk of addiction, and another 18.2% were those coming after a long period of abstinence.

On the other hand, however, the results of a long-term study (of 60 years) carried out by George Vaillant from Harvard Medical School, during which the behavior of two groups of men was considered alcoholics followed, indicated the following: “the return to controlled alcohol consumption rarely lasted more than 10 years without returning to the two extremes - total abstinence or falling into alcoholism”. Also, G. Vaillant observed that “the return to controlled alcohol consumption, as reported in short-term studies, is often an illusion” [10, p. 1043-1051].

The number of people who use and abuse alcohol is constantly increasing, at the same time, a continuous decrease in the age of onset of consumption is noted. Also, in Romania and the Republic of Moldova (together), the number of alcohol-dependent patients is estimated at approximately 2 million, one in six men and one in twenty women consuming alcohol frequently and in large quantities [9, p. 14].

From a psycho-social point of view, but also from a legal point of view, many problems (in the family, marital, work or medico-legal) can be recognized as being related to alcohol consumption, and mainly to excessive consumption (which leads to alcoholism). The tense family climate generated by the alcohol consumption of one of the partners frequently causes neurotic decompensations in the non-drinking partner, which in turn burdens the case file of psychiatric hospitals. Alcohol consumption by one or both parents has negative consequences on the children’s personality formation, a large part of which will present behavioral, neurotic and even psychotic disorders requiring repeated hospitalizations in child neuropsychiatry and psychiatry departments. Fetal alcohol syndrome, encountered quite frequently in

alcohol-dependent women and especially in those who abuse alcoholic beverages during pregnancy, is characterized by a complex somato-psychic symptomatology, dominated by the disruption of the normal development of the structure of the future personality of these children [6, p. 25].

Among the medico-legal cases, a large share is represented by abusive consumers or alcohol addicts. One murder out of two, one suicide out of four, 15% of work accidents, one third of traffic accidents are due to alcohol. The number of work accidents is 4-5 times higher among alcoholics than among the general population, and 20% of crimes seem to be attributable to alcohol; however, the data are difficult to interpret due to the increased frequency of antisocial personality disorder among alcoholics [7, p. 11].

Conclusions

In today's society, there is a dramatic increase in alcohol consumption at all ages, in all socio-economic categories and in the case of both sexes. Alcoholism represents a problem with deep implications, which go beyond the clinical or psychological aspects, and are also interesting the social life of communities, within the peoples of the whole world.

The expenses borne by society for the consequences of excessive alcohol consumption, to which is added the cost of the treatment of traffic victims due to alcohol and the sums invested for the alcoholic beverages industry, represent an extremely important problem of every state, all over the world. There is no clearly determined border until the phase when alcohol becomes toxic for the human body, and this fact is depressing, as some drinkers become "addicted". Non-dependent and the so-called "small consumers" use alcohol for pleasure and for the benefit it brings. Dependent consumers, however, use the drink to fight against the unpleasant and very upsetting symptoms of frustrations

accumulated throughout life. The explanation lies in psychological factors, based on the anxiolytic effect of alcohol. The drama, however, lies in the addiction that alcohol creates.

A first distinction must be made between the acute and chronic effects of alcohol consumption. The short-term effects are the equivalent of acute ethanolic intoxication, from the state of alcoholic impregnation to drunkenness, its signs disappearing completely after the elimination of the toxic. Chronic alcoholism manifests itself over time and is due to important metabolic disorders, which regress slowly and not always completely. It generates serious complications, the most common of which are those of the nervous system (from polyneuropathy to dementia) and the digestive system (the most common being cirrhosis of the liver). Just before the appearance of somatic complications, in chronic alcoholics important mental disorders appear with serious repercussions on the level of social adaptation and sometimes on the medico-legal level. Chronic alcoholism implies, with defining value, the notions of tolerance and especially from mental and/or physical addiction.

Tolerance means the need to increase the doses of the substance over time, in order to achieve the same effect. The opposite of tolerance is sensitization, which involves achieving the state of intoxication with smaller and smaller amounts of alcohol. Alcohol tolerance is variable from one subject to another, it depends on age, sex, credit predispositions, eating habits, physical and mental state, oldness of intoxication.

The place that alcoholism occupies in psychiatric pathology is considerable. Knowledge of the problems raised by alcohol consumption, as well as the somatic and psychiatric complications induced or aggravated by alcohol, proves necessary not only for medical personnel, but also for

humans, who daily face situations in which alcohol plays the main role. Although it is viewed with tolerance, it is actually a real social scourge, which endangers certain categories of the population both through the mental and somatic degradation it causes, as well as through the medico-legal consequences.

High rate of psychotic complications disorders caused by the abusive consumption of alcoholic beverages is reported very frequently in the specialized literature of the last decades. A particularly important aspect is the therapeutic approach to this severe complication, since there is no universally accepted therapeutic scheme. In this sense, the comparative evaluation of different therapeutic schemes quantifying their effectiveness is particularly interesting. It should not be neglected that in addition to an adequate therapy of the patient's psychosomatic condition, it is also necessary to institute an individual, group or even family cognitive and persuasive psychotherapy to consolidate the results.

Epidemiological studies in all civilized or less civilized countries emphasize the wide

spread of the pathological level of drunkenness (alcoholism), with its harmful, organic and social consequences.

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