

Is Alcohol Considered A Drug?

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Alcohol is often mentioned in one breath with drugs, especially when the subject is abuse or addiction. More often, alcohol is referred to as a separate substance and in fact, its abuse is often discussed separately from that of drugs. But can alcohol be considered a drug?

Drug defined

If a textbook definition is used, a drug may be defined as a substance that has an effect on living cells and their function and is also used for medical purposes for the diagnosis, prevention and cure of disorders and diseases. As such, alcohol may not be considered as a drug since it is not used directly to effect a cure. However, it is also a substance that can have similar effects to drugs to disinfect, act as an analgesic, a tranquilizer or rarely, a stimulant.

The link between alcohol and drugs

Alcohol is said to possibly be a contributor to health as some are some drugs, but alcohol, like some drugs can be addictive. When used in moderate amounts, alcohol has been said to improve cardiovascular health. However, health experts discourage non-drinkers to start drinking alcohol for the sole reason of benefiting the heart. They recommend that other methods such as exercising and eating a good diet, should be considered as the first line of defense.

As an addictive substance, alcohol can be as bad as drugs. Alcohol abuse and addiction, often referred in general terms as alcoholism, is a common problem in many communities, able to cut across economic and social barriers. It also produces a physical dependence and when it does, it becomes a chronic disease. The use of too much alcohol, like drugs, can also increase tolerance and produce withdrawal symptoms.

Like drugs, alcoholism can lead to family, health and social problems. It's not uncommon for alcoholics to destroy family and social

relationships, lose their jobs or turn to illegal activities in order to support their habit. It also causes health problems that are potentially life threatening, such as liver cirrhosis and cancer.

The danger of alcohol

Alcohol affects different people in different ways, and for some that may be trouble. Some individuals, for example, are more prone to suffer from the effects of alcohol compared to others who drink the same amount. However, the danger of using alcohol cannot be emphasized enough. The devastating effect of alcoholism on families and society is well documented and recognized.

Alcohol use is also often discouraged in pregnant women, older people, individuals who have heart diseases and hypertension and those who are taking certain medications. Alcohol, like drugs, not only produces physical dependence, it also promotes neurochemical conditioning, where an individual develops a tolerance to the substance, encouraging him to use alcohol in increasing amounts. Alcohol can also change an individual's perception in its true benefits, allowing a person to think that alcohol is needed in order for them to function socially and emotionally.

Getting help for alcohol addiction or abuse

Once the problem with alcohol addiction or abuse is acknowledged and accepted, the road to recovery may begin. There are plenty of local and national treatment centers and resources that may be tapped for help, either as a source of information or as a means for rehabilitation.

There are several approaches to the treatment of alcoholism, depending on how it is viewed. However, most treatments tend to focus on encouraging people to stop alcohol intake. It is often supplemented by social networking and group supports, along with life training, to effectively help alcoholics from using alcohol again.

Since alcohol, like drugs, often involves a combination of factors that lead to misuse and addiction, these factors are often considered first before a course of treatment is prescribed. It is often more effective in helping in alcohol treatment and in preventing future relapses.

<http://www.stopdrinkingadvice.org/guide/>

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