ALCOHOL’S EFFECT ON SEX

Low Dose: BAC = 0.05
(1-3 drinks per occasion by weight and gender)
- inhibitions relaxed:
  - judgement is altered
  - some people are able to overcome shyness
  - easier to take risks
  - easier to talk about self
  - more comfortable touching and being touched
- greater feelings of arousal
- expectation of alcohol’s effects influences behavior regardless of specific BAC as long as it is at low doses
- actual physiological response may or may not influence behavior depending on the expectation of individual

High Dose: BAC = .10 and above
(6+ drinks per occasion by weight and gender)
- loss of coordination
- reduced reaction time
- noticeable clumsiness
- body is less ready for sex
  - decreased blood flow to sex organs
  - less intense orgasm (subjective)
  - orgasm takes longer to reach
  - more likely to experience unintended or unwanted sex (i.e. STL pregnancy or sexual assault)
- men: longer time needed for erection and ejaculation
- women: decreased vaginal lubrication

Note: This chart only addresses the effects of low and high doses of alcohol on sex. The effects of moderate doses of alcohol are too difficult to predict because of individual variations.

WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT?
“Candy is dandy, but liquor is quicker.”
-Ogden Nash

“Alcohol provokes the desire but takes away the performance”
-Shakespeare

Ever wonder what makes “liquor quicker” or “how alcohol provokes desire?” the writers of these quotes obviously had “some” understanding of the relationships between alcohol and sex and sex (gender). Although most people would agree with these statements, the explanation of them remains a mystery to many.

The information which follows will address questions like “how does alcohol affect men and women differently?” or “how can alcohol affect sexual performance?” or “what are some sexual alternatives to intercourse while intoxicated?”

PHYSICAL GENDER DIFFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>I.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE/WEIGHT</td>
<td>Usually weigh more, so more alcohol is required to maintain the same BAC as someone who weighs less.</td>
<td>Usually weigh less, so less alcohol is required to maintain the same BAC as someone who weighs more.</td>
<td>A 200 pound person who drinks twice as much as a 100 pound person will experience the same level of intoxication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLOOD VOLUME</td>
<td>More blood per pound of body weight</td>
<td>Less blood per pound of body weight</td>
<td>A 150 pound man who drinks the same amount as a 150 pound woman will have a lower BAC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOMACH ENZYME</td>
<td>Alcohol is more diluted in men than in women.</td>
<td>Alcohol is less diluted in women than in men.</td>
<td>A 150 pound man who drinks the same amount as a 150 pound woman will have a lower BAC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NIU SURVEY STATISTICS

Most women 72%* drank 0-4 drinks the last time they “partied.”
Most men 75%* drank 0-6 drinks the last time they “partied.”

*Based on a survey data from random sample of NIU students, Spring 2015 N=383.

Although a serious problem for those affected, reports of negative consequences related to alcohol are infrequent among NIU students.
(23% reported having unprotected sex and 28% reported doing something they later regretted as a consequence of drinking.)

SAFER SEX ALTERNATIVES

Tips to prevent uncoordinated, clumsy, impaired sex:

• Go to dinner, a movie, a park, or any place where alcohol is not the main focus of the event.
• Try sex after 1-3 drinks (depending on size, gender, etc.)
• If you have already had a few drinks and you want to “enjoy just one more drink,” have it after sex.
• Communicate openly with your partner about your sexual intentions, desires, and expectations.
• Remember that alcohol affects men and women differently.
• Don’t settle for “sex while intoxicated.”
• Read up on and experiment with other ways of having a satisfying sexual experience besides intercourse:
  • Sexual touching, massage, mutual masturbation, etc. all may be used in addition to or instead of intercourse.
  • Mutually exploring different and varied sex behaviors can have a positive and enhancing effect on an intimate relationship.

SOBER SEX IS SAFER SEX

For people who practice safer sex by using a condom, “putting one on” while intoxicated could be especially challenging. Just imagine what sex under those conditions might look like. On second thought, never mind.

Mixing alcohol and sex can be enjoyable, regrettable, or somewhere in between. The key to the combination is:

The positive effects of alcohol work only at lower dose levels.

Sex or gender issues related to ALCOHOLISM have not been addressed in this handout. Addiction to alcohol results in a variety of effects not seen in users who are not addicted.

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