

Understanding alcohol dementia and its dreadful effects on cognitive functions

Story by Janvi Kapur - 5-Nov-2023

Alcohol dementia is a distinct and worrisome condition that arises from persistent alcohol abuse over a period of time. Many individuals grapple with substance abuse and its effects on physical and mental health.

This issue is a slowly spreading concern which demands immediate attention in the current day that often romanticize the usage of alcohol. Typically, we tend to ignore the darker implications that excessive drinking can have on the brain.

Social media also has a huge impact on how we consume substances and the pressure we feel to do so. However, with timely intervention, being sober, along with the right support systems, slowing down of the development of alcohol dementia is very much a possibility.

What is alcohol-related dementia?

Alcohol-related dementia, also referred to as alcohol dementia, is a unique [type of cognitive impairment](#) that develops out of persistent and extensive consumption of alcohol.

While Alzheimer's and other types of dementia are known to all of us, this particular issue is often overlooked and passed off due to its recreational usage in current societies.

Alcoholic dementia signs to look out for

Timely recognition of the alcoholic [dementia symptoms](#) can be difficult, as their signs usually overlap with those of other types of dementia. However, few particular signs are commonly found in alcoholic dementia.

These signs consist of severe memory loss, problem-solving challenges, weakening judgment ability and a decrease in social abilities. Moreover, people might also face sudden mood shifts, a lack of involvement and disorientation.

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The alcohol's toxic result on brain cells results in dementia caused by alcohol. Chronic drinking results in brain atrophy, impacting the hippocampus, which is responsible for memory and learning ability. The absorption of vital nutrients, like thiamine, can also be affected by the persistent use of alcohol.

Alcohol dementia stages associated with cognition

Alcoholic dementia usually develops through stages, with each stage accountable for a different level of cognitive decline.

#1 Mild cognitive impairment: This is the first level where people can showcase signs like being forgetful of things and difficulties in concentration. However, their everyday functioning remains almost unaffected.

#2 Moderate cognitive impairment: As the issue progresses, memory loss becomes more noticeable, and daily tasks become very challenging.

#3 Severe cognitive impairment: This is the final stage of the condition. People in this stage fail to identify loved ones, go through severe memory deficits and grapple with basic self-care things on a daily basis. The impairment may make them wander unnecessarily.

Alcoholic dementia treatment: Is there hope for recovery?

The important thing to remember is that, alcohol dementia is preventable and reversible in few cases. Abstinence from drinking alcohol is the most effective treatment.

However, this is also the most challenging to achieve. When a person quits consuming alcohol, further brain impairment can be prevented while some cognitive functions may improve as time passes. The person may also have to deal with [withdrawal symptoms](#).

Thiamine supplementation is usually prescribed to fight nutrient insufficiencies led by alcohol abuse. Cognitive rehabilitation therapy along with constant support from trained mental health experts are most vital for dealing with this condition.

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As individuals struggle with the effects of alcohol abuse, staying aware of the various risks factors associated with consumption of alcohol is crucial.

Education, timely intervention and an empathetic way of treating this condition can make a huge difference for the lives of those affected. That gives an opportunity to feel better.

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