



Personality traits among alcoholics

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ABSTRACT

The findings of the study indicate that non-alcoholics and social drinkers differ on four personality traits, non-alcoholics and non-alcoholics differ on three personality traits and alcoholics and social drinkers differ on three personality traits on the sixteen personality factor test. As the normal population alcoholics are also seen as varying in their personality. There has not been much evidence on showing a predisposed personality type of an alcoholic.

INTRODUCTION

It has been observed from a long time that alcoholics have a dependent personality. Personality as defined by many renowned psychologists could be referred to as “a person’s projection of inner self”. The most widely accepted definition was given by G.W. Allport. Personality traits explain a more detailed parameter around which these projections are viewed. Our personality reflects our characteristics, our coping skills and emotional stability.

Anxiety in alcohol-dependent individuals varies in intensity and fluctuates over time. Sources of anxiety are low level of self-esteem, fear of disapproval from significant people, loss of position, prestige, stature or self-esteem. In personality the person’s self-structure plays an important role. For example, Skinner (1982) found a *sociopathic* variety of alcoholic. One typology of alcoholics related to anxiety has been offered by Petrie (1967), who claimed alcoholics were driven to drink in order to modulate the intensity of stimuli. Alcoholics require this modulation, Petrie’s research shows, because their natural tendency is to augment external stimuli which then strike them

as too intense. Without alcohol, these stimuli would be too painful or anxiety-provoking for them to tolerate.

Addict’s thinking, perception, and judgment were considered to be seriously impaired (Miller and Rollnick, 1991). Thus, we have not found a scientific basis for a common personality type predisposed to alcoholism. Alcohol and personality are quite interrelated as deviant drinking behavior may lead to conflict personal and social misery, person’s general adjustment, lack of impulse control. Excessive drinking is perceived as a problem that causes aggression, sadistic personality, insecurity, poor health. Alcoholics are observed undergoing insomnia themselves and the people around them are adversely affected also. As we see alcoholics being aggressive, dominant or anti-social is said to be due to there years of drinking and not due to there personalities.

Mc Cord and Mc Cord (1960) viewed alcoholics as being highly dependent. Goldstein and Linden (1969) view alcoholics as having poor anger management skills and low control in frustrating situations; Craig (1980) observed male alcoholics as high on having anti-social personality traits and light extroversion was concluded. Craig *et al.* (1985) conducted a