

Alcohol & Cancer

One danger that may lead to another

Background

Alcohol

- Alcohol is a substance that is generated whenever fruits or grains and such become fermented, this in turn creates alcohol.
- Alcohol is used for purposes, such as disinfectants, perfumes or colognes, and of course the most popular use, as a beverage.
- When consumed, the substance gets dissolved into the blood, which in turn leads to the brain and the spinal cord.
- Since alcohol is a depressant it causes all the bodily functions to respond much slower.
- Alcohol can also become an addiction to some. The body grows more in need of it and people become alcoholics, in turn the body ends up needing the alcohol.
- Rise in tolerance can mean rise in dependence.

Cancer

- According to about.com, cancer is “a group of diseases characterized by cells that grow out of control; in many cases, they form masses of cells, or tumors, that infiltrate, crowd out, and destroy normal tissue.”
- Cancer can come in many forms such as, breast cancer, testicular cancer, lung cancer or liver cancer
- Cancer can be caused by many things, although depends on one’s susceptibility as well. For example (Smoking more increases chances of lung cancer.)

Links between Alcohol and Cancer

- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol in one’s lifetime increase increases one’s chances for upper-respiratory cancers, such cancers of the mouth, the larynx, and even breast cancer.

- Very heavy drinkers increase their chances of cancer. “75 percent of esophageal cancers in the United States are attributable to chronic, excessive alcohol consumption” (about.com)

Statement of The Problem

- Healthy People’s goal for substance abuse is to “Reduce substance abuse (Alcohol and other drugs) to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for all, especially children.” (Healthy People, 2007)
- According to Healthy People 2010, every year approximately 100,000 deaths occur as a direct result of alcohol-involved accidents. This does not include the deaths from cancer due to alcohol.
- “The risk for developing breast cancer, the second most common cancer in women in the States, rises with increased alcohol consumption.” (HealthCastle.com)
- Alcohol isn’t something that is avoided by many people. According to Healthy People 2010, “A substantial proportion of the population drinks alcohol. Forty-four percent of adults aged 18 years and older (more than 82 million persons) report having consumed 12 or more alcoholic drinks in the past year.” (Healthy People, 2007)
- Besides the obvious sickness that cancer can bring, alcohol also brings consequences to every part of the body not only the brain or spinal cord
- Cancer also is one of the top leading causes of death in the United States. On the charts it is the number two cause of death
- “One-half of new cases of cancer occur in people aged 65 years and over.” (Healthy People, 2007)
- 50% of cancers that happen in the region of the mouth, in the larynx or pharynx, all are associated with heavy consumptions of alcohol.
- This is a global problem

Epidemiological Picture

- In 2001 alone there were 75,000 deaths related to large amount of alcohol use. (CDC, 2007)
- According to Healthy People, alcohol is the substance that is mostly abused by children from the ages of 12 to 17.

- According to about.com, cancer kills about 526,000 people in America every year. Heavy consumption of alcohol increases the risks of cancer.
- In the year 2000, cancer was diagnosed in about 1,220,100 Americans, and about 50% of those people were expected to be killed by the disease. (Healthy People, 2007)
- Breast cancer is one of the many cancers that have been linked to alcohol. According to a UK report, “4 percent of all breast cancers — about 44,000 cases a year — in the United Kingdom are due to alcohol consumption” (British Journal of Cancer, 2002, as reported by Associated Press, September 27, 2007)
- Although heavy consumptions of alcohol does damage the liver, and can increase the risk of cancer, in moderate use, it can actually be good for the heart. (Healthcastle.com)
- To lower chances of getting cancer, one must drink in moderation, or not at all. Although woman cannot drink as much as men can, 1 drink a day for women and two for men in low moderation. (Healthcastle.com)
- “The median age for the diagnosis of cancer is 67 in adults, and six in children.” (Cancer prevention Coalition)

Solutions

- Alcoholics Anonymous
(http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.org/en_information_aa.cfm)
A.A is a nonprofit organization with the sole purpose is to assist alcoholics to stop consuming the alcohol. They do not preach and ask people to become sober, but more of a program to help people realize drinking is a problem, and to help them become sober for themselves. This is a program in which alcoholics and those alike, can help each other, talk to each other in hopes that they will soon be able to heal themselves and to be able to stop drinking all together. “AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.” (Alcoholics Anonymous) It costs nothing to join and be helped.
- Prevent Cancer Foundation (<http://www.preventcancer.org/>)
Since 1985 The Prevent Cancer Foundation is a group that focuses their efforts in helping the communities to become healthier through better lifestyles, and of course, to prevent cancer from harming people’s lives. “The mission of the Prevent Cancer Foundation is cancer prevention and early detection through research, education and

community outreach to all populations, including children and the underserved.” They provide the public with guidelines, suggestions and ideas, for people to begin doing activities better for their bodies, and avoiding ones that harm them. They suggest stopping smoking, being careful of the sun and of course to stop alcohol consumption for according to them, Alcohol alone accounts for up to 4% of cancer deaths. They suggest keeping in shape, and eating all of the correct foods, to better the community and to protect it from heart disease and cancer, the two leading causes of deaths in the U.S.

- Cancer Prevention Coalition (<http://www.preventcancer.com/>)
The Cancer Prevention Coalition has dedicated its efforts to showing the people about the dangers of cancers with statistics as to who are affected, and what we can do to prevent it. They give such information as “Cancer strikes nearly one in every two men, and more than one in every three women” (Cancer Prevention Coalition). They are an advocacy group, and they inform people of the injustices being done, and what is not being done to help find a cure, and help those in need of one.

Additional Internet Resources

About.com. (2006) *Alcoholism & Substance Abuse*. Retrieved October 2, 2007, from <http://alcoholism.about.com/cs/alerts/1/blnaa21.htm>

Health Castle. (2007, April) *Alcohol and Cancer*. Retrieved October 2, 2007, from <http://www.healthcastle.com/alcoholandcancer.shtml>

Nemours Foundation: Teens Health. (2006, November) *Alcohol*. Retrieved October 2, 2007, from http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/alcohol/alcohol.html

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British Journal of Cancer (2002). Retrieved October 9, 2007, from <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5iKaLptXF3J4J3GgWwY2ogYfUdbzA>

Cancer Prevention Coalition (2007 October) Retrieved October 3, 2007 from <http://www.preventcancer.com/>

CDC Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease control and Prevention. (2007) *Cancer*. Retrieved October 2, 2007 from <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/>

Health Castle. (2007, April) *Alcohol and Cancer*. Retrieved October 2, 2007, from <http://www.healthcastle.com/alcoholandcancer.shtml>

Healthy People 2010 (2007) 26 *substance abuse* Retrieved October 1, 2007 from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/document/HTML/Volume2/26Substance.htm>

Healthy people 2010 (2007) 3 *Cancer* Retrieved October 1, 2007 from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/document/html/volume1/03Cancer.htm>

Nemours Foundation: Teens Health. (2006, November) *Alcohol*. Retrieved October 2, 2007, from http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/alcohol/alcohol.html

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Alcohol & Cancer (Handout)

What is alcohol?

- Alcohol is a substance that is generated whenever fruits or grains and such become fermented, this in turn creates alcohol.
- When consumed, the substance gets dissolved into the blood, which in turn leads to the brain and the spinal chord.
- Alcohol can also become an addiction to some. The body grows more in need of it and people become alcoholics, in turn the body ends up needing the alcohol.

What is Cancer?

- According to about.com, cancer is “a group of diseases characterized by cells that grow out of control; in many cases, they form masses of cells, or tumors, that infiltrate, crowd out, and destroy normal tissue.”
- Cancer can be caused by numerous amounts of things, although depends on what your body goes through, as to what cancer you increase your chances of. Example (Smoking more increases chances of lung cancer.)

What are the links?

- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol in one’s lifetime increase the chances for developing upper-respiratory cancers, such as cancers of the mouth, the larynx, and even breast cancer.
- Very heavy drinkers increase their chances of cancer. “75 percent of esophageal cancers in the United States are attributable to chronic, excessive alcohol consumption” (about.com)
- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the U.S, and alcohol-related death is the third
- Alcohol is responsible for 4% of breast cancers.
- Nearly 1,000,000 people are diagnosed with cancer every year