Behavioral and Social Consequences Related to the Consumption of Different Beverage Types

Reginald G. Smart

Objective: The purpose of this article is to review the literature on the effects of beer, wine and spirits on the behavioral consequences of alcohol consumption. Method: The methods involve library research and analysis of the various published articles relating to experimental and survey studies of different effects. Results: The major results indicate that (1) after spirits consumption blood alcohol concentrations rise more quickly than after beer; (2) for most behavioral tasks beer creates less impairment than brandy at the same dose levels; (3) brandy also leads to more emotional and aggressive responses; (4) those who drink beer or beer and spirits have more alcohol-related problems than others; and (5) beer drinkers are more likely than others to drink and drive, to be arrested for drinking-driving and to be in alcohol-related accidents. Conclusions: It appears that beer and spirits lead to greater problems than does wine consumption. However, there is a need for more studies of women and confirmed drinkers of various beverages. There is also a need to study the effects of wine consumption on behavioral impairment. Lastly, there is a need to determine if there is a beer-drinking culture which supports heavy drinking and driving after drinking. (J. Stud. Alcohol 57: 77-84, 1996)