

Happiness Through Health A Theory On Alcohol And Sex

By Otto McClarrin

It is a paradox familiar both to Shakespeare and uncounted college men — that alcohol simultaneously hones the edge of sexual desire and blunts its effect.

An intricate series of experiments at Belmont's McLean Hospital suggests an explanation for this phenomenon, which the porter in Macbeth described in this way: "the performance; therefore much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery; it makes him and it mars him; it sets him and it takes him off; it persuades him and disheartens him; makes him stand to and not stand to."

The McLean experiments suggest that liquor's effects on arousal are no mere matter of uncorking inhibitions, but rather an intricate chain of events involving several parts of the hormonal system that governs men's sexual performance.

The experiments were undertaken to clarify the effect of alcohol on two hormones that play vital roles in sexual arousal and potency — testosterone and luteinizing hormone.

What they found was that a stiff belt, in this case of vodka, would regularly drive down the level of testosterone — which could explain temporary impotency. In a chain reaction, the alcohol would also produce a surge of luteinizing hormones. And that surge, other studies have indicated, could account for those unprompted feelings of sexual desire.

This "back door" form of arousal would explain the confusing sexual state described by the porter in Macbeth.

According to Dr. Jack H. Mendelson, of the McLean-Harvard Research Center, several earlier studies had shown that alcohol lowers the level of testosterone, on a long-term basis in chronic alcoholics and for short periods in the occasional drinker.

Testosterone, which begins to be produced by the male testes in large quantities at puberty, is the hormone that generates most secondary sexual characteristics. It also controls sexual potency.

The earlier studies have not gone unchallenged, however, and Mendelson and his colleagues tried to sort out the facts. The researchers enlisted sixteen male volunteers in the 20's with no record of alcohol or drug abuse. They placed small catheters into an arm vein in each to permit frequent blood sampling. They then took samples every twenty minutes for six hours, starting one hour before the volunteers had their drink — about four shots' worth of 100 proof vodka and juice — and continuing for five hours afterward.

The found that as the alcohol entered the bloodstream, peaking nearly two hours after the drink was finished, the level of testosterone in the blood dropped steadily.

Mendelson believes that the alcohol, enough to leave the volunteers in a state of "mild to moderate inebriation", does not affect the central mechanism controlling hormone production. Instead, he said, it may speed up the breakdown of testosterone in the liver or block a chemical used to produce it in the testes.

Although the level of luteinizing hormone showed no change at first, the researchers found, it suddenly surged when the level of testosterone dropped to its lowest point.

Luteinizing hormone, produced by the pituitary or "master gland" at the base of the brain, is a messenger hormone that tells the testes when to produce testosterone.

Scientists believe that when an erotic experience sets off normal sexual arousal, the brain send the pituitary a chemical signal, and the pituitary in turn send a dose of luteinizing hormone to the testes. They then churn out testosterone to produce an erection.

Mendelson speculates that when alcohol lowers the level of testosterone, this triggers a "feedback" signal to the pituitary telling it to shoot out more luteinizing hormone, which get the testes to replace the lost testosterone. It now appears, said Mendelson, that "receptors" in the brain also sense the increased flow of luteinizing hormone, and the result is a sense of sexual desire entirely independent of any "outside" erotic stimulus.



Links Honor Senior Citizens

National Trends and Services Committee of the Durham Chapter of Links sponsored a birthday party on April 6, honoring Senior Citizens at the St. Theresa Community Center on South Roxboro Street.

Prior to the celebration, everyone participated in a voter education program. Mrs. Elna Spaulding, a Durham County Commissioner and also a member of Links, spoke on the importance of voting and provided many answers about Durham County politics during a question-answer period.

In addition to the members of the committee — Mesdames Patsy Perry,

chairman; Martha Doods, Rebecca Edmonds, Elna Spaulding and Lottie Whiting — Mrs. Edna Ballard, coordinator of the center, and Mrs. Eula W. Harris and Mrs. Lella Miller, guests, shared this memorable event with the St. Theresa Senior Citizens.

From left to right are: Mrs. Lillie Lennon, Mrs. Verness Cotton, Wilbert Mininall, Mrs. Mabel Mabry, Rev. L.S. Thompson, Mrs. Iley Gooden, Mrs. Otelia Becton, Willie Mitchell, Mrs. Pauline Petteway, C.G. Mabry, Ben Hopkins and Rev. Gerald Ewing.

Durham Baha'is To Observe 20th Anniversary

Members of the Baha'i Faith will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the formation of the Baha'i Assembly of the City of Durham on Sunday, April 25 at 3 p.m., at the Edison Johnson Recreation Center, 600 West Murray Avenue.

Dr. Dwight Allen, professor of Arts and Letters at Old Dominion University and member of the National Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, will be guest speaker. The public is invited.

Marriage Satisfaction Drops in Middle Years

By CHRIS TIEDEMAN
N. C. State University

Research indicates a drop in satisfaction with marriage during the middle years, says Leo F. Hawkins, extension human development specialist at North Carolina State University.

Gradual deterioration of the relationship was identified as the major factor in the failure of marriage in a study of 138 divorced people in the middle years, Hawkins continues.

Seventy in-depth interviews with divorced men and women provided insight into what factors brought about the deterioration. Factors included excessive domination of the husband; failures to communicate; poor self-esteem; decreasing companionship; failure to express affection and appreciation; heavy involvement with careers; extra-marital involvement and midlife change, the specialist says.

HEALTH FOOD POPULAR

Health food stores and gourmet shops are prospering, says Rachel Kinlaw

extension food and nutrition specialist at North Carolina State University.

She explains that the U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates that the number of health food stores has grown from about 1,200 in the U.S. in 1968 to 7,500 today.

Gourmet shops that sell exotic meats, fish, baked goods, and homemade pastries are also doing a booming business.

TYPE OF HOUSEWORK

A recent study showed that women do 68 percent of the housework in America.

According to Dr. Thelma Hinson, extension family resource management specialist at North Carolina State University, the study also showed what type of work men and women do most.

Women do nearly all of the laundry work; more than 80 percent of meal preparation, meal cleanup, and child care; and 62 percent of shopping.

Men surpassed them only in work done on home repairs, Dr. Hinson said.

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LOS ANGELES: Six months old Andrew Singermun, tired and hungry after all of the official ceremony, eats his way through his diploma April 15, as he sits decked out in cap and gown after graduating from the "Baby Power" program at the Educational Resource & Service Center. The infant-parenting program is a totally unique program designed to demonstrate to parents how they can teach, interact and communicate with their infants in a constructive and positive way.

**Meet
Cash Micheals**

Hometown Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Birthday January 3
 Sign Capricorn
 Nickname "Cash"
 Education St. Frances Prep High School
 Brooklyn College
 Most Memorable Moment Wedding Day
 Pet Peeves Indifference, discourtesy
 Most Admired Persons Muhammad Ali
 Bill Cosby
 Sidney Poitier

Favorites:
 Color Brown
 Artist(s) or Group(s) Dionne Warwick, Lou Rawls
 Actor Al Pacino
 Actress Jane Fonda
 Food All
 Athlete Julius Erving
 TV Show M.A.S.H.
 Magazine Ebony
 Hobbies Basketball, Reading

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