

Q 1: Definition of Heavy Drinking?

Definition of *heavy drinking* is based on the frequency and amount of alcohol consumption. For man *heavy drinking* is typically defined “as average of more than two drinks per day”. For women this norm is lower and woman can be considered a heavy drinker if she consumes on average more than one alcoholic drink a day (Rod, 2004, p.3).

American Psychiatric Association defines alcohol dependence and heavy drinking by repetitive consumption of alcohol that result in failure of performing daily personal and professional obligation and/or generating situation that can be dangerous for the individual or people around him or her.

Q2: Diagnostic Criteria of alcoholic Abuse

American Psychiatric Association gives the following diagnostic criteria to alcoholic abuse (APA, 1994):

1. “Recurrent alcohol use resulting in failure to fulfil major role obligations at work, school, or home (e.g., repeated absences or poor work performance related to substance use; substance-related absences, suspensions or expulsions from school; or neglect of children or household).
2. Recurrent alcohol use in situations in which it is physically hazardous (e.g., driving an automobile or operating a machine).
3. Recurrent alcohol-related legal problems (e.g., arrests for alcohol-related disorderly conduct).
4. Continued alcohol use despite persistent or recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or exacerbated by the effects of the alcohol (e.g., arguments with spouse about consequences of intoxication or physical fights)”.

Q3: Diagnostic Criteria of alcoholic Dependence:

According to the American Psychiatric Association, there are seven diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependence (APA, 1994).

1. “Tolerance, as defined by either of the following: - A need for markedly increased amounts of alcohol to achieve intoxication or desired effect.
- Markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of alcohol.
2. Withdrawal, as defined by either of the following: - The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for alcohol (refer to DSM-IV for further details).
- Alcohol is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.
3. Alcohol is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than was intended.
4. There is a persistent desire or there are unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control alcohol use.
5. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, use alcohol or recover from its effects.

6. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of alcohol use.
7. Alcohol use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the alcohol (e.g., continued drinking despite recognition that an ulcer was made worse by alcohol consumption)".

Q4: Critical Analysis of Objective Criteria

American Psychiatric Association as many other organizations is trying to define and conceptualize definition for substance-related disorders. Generally, the definition and criteria meet expectation of the population. This criteria and diagnostic measures, however do not take into account specific characteristics of the regions, social classes and racial attributes. With that in mind, I strongly believe that in order to drive conclusions and strictly define level of alcohol dependence; any criteria should be linked to ethnical, social and mental attributes of an individual. By combining several above mentioned factors, that build individual perception and determine behavioural patterns of individual with strong drinking habits, one will be able to draw more complete and realistic picture.